



14486 c. 26.

T W E N T Y T H R E E

SERMONS

U P O N T H E

C H I E F E N D o f M A N .

T H E

Divine Authority of the sacred
S C R I P T U R E S ,

T H E

B E I N G a n d A T T R I B U T E S o f G O D ,

A N D T H E

D o c t r i n e o f t h e T R I N I T Y ,

Preach'd at PHILADELPHIA, Anno Dom. 1743.

By G I L B E R T T E N N E N T , A . M .

Jer. iii. 15. *And I will give you Pastors according to mine Heart, which shall feed you with Knowledge and Understanding.*

Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5. *Yea if thou cryest after Knowledge and listest up thy Voice for Understanding; if thou seekest her as Silver, and searchest for her as for hid Treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God.*

PHILADELPHIA: Printed and Sold by WILLIAM BRADFORD, at the Sign of the Bible in *Second Street*.
MDCCXLIV.

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF
COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY
AND ANATOMY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
U.S.A.



THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF
COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY
AND ANATOMY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
U.S.A.

P R E F A C E

Candid Reader,

SEEING that Corrupt Principles tend to infect the Heart and Practice, it is therefore highly necessary to beware of them; we read of damnable Heresies, as well as damnable Practices, (*2Pet. ii. 1.*) Seeing that the main Doctrines of Religion, have, in a Measure, the same Relation to Piety in Practice, as a Foundation to a Super-structure, it is therefore like building a Fabrick in the Air to inculcate the one without having regard to the other. It is doubtless a commanded and Important Duty to be Valiant for the Truth upon the Earth, and to contend for the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints: But how shall we be able to comply with this divine Precept, unless we know the Truths we are to be Zealous for? And how can we expect to know them without the Use of proper Means to that End, such as Reading, Meditation, Prayer?

We are commanded to *bold fast the Form of sound Words*, *2 Tim. i. 13.* The original Word *Hypotoposis*, signifies a Scheme or Skeleton. This plainly intends not only the Relation and Harmony of the great Truths of Religion to and among each other, but the Necessity we lie under of adhering to them; but how shall we do this without Knowledge? To suppose that we need not know but a few Principles, and that the Knowledge of many hinders our religious Progress, is to reflect upon the Wisdom and Goodness

§

of

The Preface

of God in revealing so many in the Scriptures: And to say in other Words that the chief Part of the Scriptures is Vain, or rather Prejudicial to our Souls benefit, which is an awful Position! If the Doctrines of the Scriptures need not be known, why have they been reveal'd? Can they be of Service to us without our Knowledge of them; but possibly some may Object that *Paul* asserted, he desir'd to know nothing among the *Corinthians* but JESUS CHRIST and him crucify'd. I answer that Place of Scripture is to be taken comparatively, *viz.* That he desir'd to know nothing so much among them as Christ and him crucify'd, he desir'd to make Christ in his Person, Natures, Offices, Relations, and Sufferings, together with the Benefits thereby purchas'd, the principal Subject and main Scope of his ministeral Labours. He desir'd to make all his Sermons on every Subject tend to promote the Knowledge of CHRIST, Love to him and Faith in him. Neither is it unusual in Scripture to take absolute Expressions in a comparative Sense. Thus the Almighty sayeth, That *he will have Mercy and not Sacrifice*, *i. e.* rather than Sacrifice. Now if we take the aforefaid Scripture in another Sense, *viz.* That *Paul* desir'd to know nothing more than the Doctrine of CHRIST'S Crucifixion: This tends to cast contempt upon the chief Part of the Scriptures and render them vain and useles. And it is likewise contrary to the Apostles Practice, for he preach'd and wrote by divine Inspiration many other Truths; and surely he may be reasonably suppos'd to know his own Intention best.

It is indeed our Wisdom and our Duty to proportion the Degree of our Zeal, for the several Truths of Religion to their respective Weight and Place in the Christian System, but without Knowledge and Judgment this is Impracticable. We are enjoyn'd to continue in the Faith, grounded and settled.

The Preface.

fettled. *Col. i. 23.* But how can this be expected without the Knowledge of the Doctrines of Faith, can we continue in that which we know not? Surely Ignorance is the Cause of Unsteadiness in the Principles of Religion; because of this, some are like *Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, by the Slight of Men and cunning Craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive,* (*Ephes. iv. 14.*) It is no new Thing for false Teachers by good Words and fair Speeches to deceive the Hearts of the Simple, (*Rom. xvi. 18.*) The false Apostles ensnar'd the Galatians by great Shews of Piety and Affection to them, as well as by unjust Reflections against faithful Ministers. *Gal. iv. 17.* They zealously affect you, but not well, yea they would exclude us that you might affect them.

Surely our Establishment in the great Principles of Religion, tends to the Glory of God and our own growth in Goodness. This is our Excellency, and indeed it is one great End of the Gospel Ministry. (*Ephes. iv. 11, 12.*) Whereas the Contrary tends to the Dishonour of God and our selves, and much mars our Growth in Holiness: For how can a Plant thrive that is often mov'd? Is it likely that those will glorify God by suffering for Truth who know it not? Let us therefore abhor these *Popish* Principles, viz. That Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion, and that it is our Duty to believe implicitly or simply. Surely without Knowledge the Mind cannot be good. Acquaintance with the first Principles of the Oracles of God enriches the Mind and is a Lamp to the Feet. The Knowledge of divine Truths in their due Series and Connection, much confirms our belief of them, and thereby inflames our Love, and Influences our Practice. To help forward that good Design I have been induc'd to offer the following Discourses to publick View; and would entreat the Reader to peruse the whole before he condemns.

The Preface

condemns a Part, that so he may have an Opportunity of judging for himself whether the Truths therein contain'd do not harmonize among themselves, and tend to promote the Glory of God as well as the Creatures self Abasement and eternal Happiness. And if they be found attended with these Characters, are they not worthy of Credit and Acceptance? Surely the Doctrines of Religion should not be judged of according to the prejudices of our Education or corrupt Byasses of Passion, but calmly and impartially weigh'd in the Scales of Scripture and Reason. For Truth will not vary according to our Humour: It is therefore undoubtedly our Interest to know it, whether we like it or not. In the mean time we should beware of resting satisfy'd with the Doctrinal Knowledge of Truth, without feeling the efficacious Influence thereof upon Heart and Life, *for such as know their Masters Will and do it not, must expect to be beaten with double stripes.* Now that the following Sermons may be blessed of the most high God, to the equal promoting of Truth and Holiness, is the earnest Desire and Prayer of thy Servant for CHRIST'S Sake.

Philadelphia,

June 23. 1744.

G. TENNENT.

SERMON I.

I Corinthians, x. 31.

Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.

THE Principal Thing in human Actions, that demands enquiry and deserves Attention, is their *Form*, or in other Words, the *Principles* we act from, and *Mark* we aim at in them. These are the Ingredients that do chiefly constitute their Goodness or Malignity; and these that God, who is a Spirit, principally regards; external Services without the Heart, will not be accepted of by God. (*Gal. vi. 15.*)

It is much to be lamented, that the generality of Mankind seem to be satisfied, if the surface or matter of their Actions be good, without searching into the Spring and Scope of them! But unless God be principally Eyed in what we do, however specious our Actions may be, we do but bring forth Fruit to ourselves, and so are, with *Ephraim*, empty *Kives*.

Now the great Mark at which we should aim chiefly in all our Actions, whether Natural, Civil or Religious, is the Glory of the most high God. And this indeed is the Point of Truth, which our Text expressly asserts, *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* If Gods Glory should be our main Mark, even in our nat-

tural Actions, such as *eating and Drinking*; how much more so should it be of our Religious ?

Now the Method I purpose to use in the Prosecution of this Subject, is as follows, viz,

I. I shall endeavour to shew, *what are the Kinds and Nature of God's Glory.*

II. *What is supposed by, and imply'd in our aiming at God's Glory.*

III. I purpose to shew, *how we should Glorify God.*

IV. *Why we should aim at his Glory as our chief Mark in all our Actions.*

V. *Answer Objections to the Contrary: And then proceed to some practical Improvement of the whole*

I return to the first proposed, which was to shew, *the Kinds and Nature of God's Glory.* And here it may be observ'd, that the Glory of God is twofold, viz, *Essential and Declarative.*

The *Essential Glory of God*, consists (at least principally) in the infinite eminence of the Supream Being. As Honour and Praise is due to any excellent Good, so Glory is due to the most eminent; now the highest or most transcendent Eminence belongs to God, both on the Account of his Essence and Attributes, he alone is *Jehovah*, infinite in all possible Excellency, his Perfections are underiv'd, immense invariable and eternal: Whereas the excellencies of all Creatures are derived, limited, dependant, variable, and therefore not worthy to be compar'd with the divine Attributes. Now the superior Eminence of the supream Being, is the Foundation of all the divine Glory, for which he deserves to be esteem'd and prais'd by his Creatures, and therefore he is call'd *the Father of Glory*; (Ephes. 1. 17.) *The King of Glory*, (Psal. 24. 8.) *The Lord of Glory*, (Act 7. 2.)

Some Divines are of Opinion, " that to the *essential Glory* of God, besides the infinite Eminence already spoken of, two Things concur, namely a *certain brightness of that Eminence, together with the Knowledge of it*. To illustrate the first of these, they mention Isa. 35. 2. *The Glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the Excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the Glory of the Lord, and the Excellency of our God*. Hence the Son of God is said to be *the Brightness of his Fathers Glory*, Heb. 1. 3. And hence *the Glory of the Lord is said to shine round about the Shepherds, at the Time of our Lords Nativity*, Luk. 2. 9. And hence it is, *the Almighty is said to dwell in Light, which no Man can approach unto*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. Which Brightness does not so much dazle the Eyes of the Body, (as the Sun doth) as of the Mind; tho' according to the Account we have in Scripture, of some extraordinary Appearances of divine Majesty, there was sometimes an outward brightness added, to be as it were a symbol or Sign of the divine Presence.

" But the other Particular which concurs to the divine Glory, is the Knowledge of his Eminence; hence the Face of God is call'd *the Face of his Glory*, Judg. 24. 25. and his Name is *Glorious*, Matt. 6. 9. because by the Face and Name, the Majesty and Eminence of a Thing is known; this Knowledge in the utmost Perfection belongs only to God, who on this Account is said to *dwell in Light inaccessible, which no mortal Eye hath seen or can see*; nevertheless a more imperfect Knowledge thereof by God's Word and Works, happens to Creatures in various Degrees, 1 Cor. 13. 12. *Now we see thro' a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face.*" But to proceed,

The *declarative Glory of God consists in the Manifestation of the Former, either objectively by God himself, in furnishing*

6. *What is suppos'd by aiming at Gods Glory*

nishing us with matter for Praise, in all the Fruits of his Bounty towards us and others, and particularly by engraving in legible Characters, the Footsteps of his divine Perfections, in his Word and Works, which induce intelligent Beings to Praise him; and hence the *Heavens are said to declare God's Glory, and the Earth his handy Work.* God's Glory is likewise manifested by rational Creatures two Ways, namely *actively* and *passively*. *Actively* when with design, they admire, adore and extol the divine Perfections; and say with the inspired Apostle, *Rom. XI. 33. O the Depth! of the Riches, of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out? The unsearchableness of the divine Attributes deserves our wonder, and their divinity our religious Reverence. God is glorify'd passively by intelligent Beings, either with Design when they suffer patiently and cheerfully for Truth and Duty, or without Design when they suffer for their Sins as Malefactors, surely the Glory of God's Justice is known by the Judgment which he executeth.* I proceed to the:

2d. Propos'd, which was to shew *what is suppos'd by and imply'd in, our aiming at God's Glory, as our highest Mark.* And;

1st. It *supposes* that intelligent Beings acting as such, design some End; which induces them to concert and improve such Measures as have a direct Tendency to compass the End they propose.

2dly. It *supposes* this, *viz.* That the ends of Actions may be various, yea and lawfully so, *viz.* *Supream* and *Subordinate*, if our highest End be right; we are safe; altho' with a less degree of Love we aim at lower Ends; which are in themselves lawful; for things that are Subordinate, do not clash or oppose each other, *e. g.* in our natural and civil Actions we may aim at our bodily Support and Comfort, if in the

the mean Time we make God's Honour our principal Mark, And so in our religious Actions we may, yea we ought to aim at our own Salvation as an End, if so be, we in the mean Time prefer God's Honour and Glory, to all our Interests in this and the other World, it is well.

3dly. It *Supposes* this, *viz.* that the last End can be but one, of two equal Ends or Marks, neither of them wou'd be the last, or Principal. When two Ends unequal in might and Dignity concur, the Laws of Reason and Justice require a Subordination; namely that the Inferior should give place to the Superior.

But our aiming at God's Glory in all our Actions, as our highest Mark and End, *implies* these Things following, *viz.*

1st. *A saving experimental Knowledge of God.* Untill we have an affecting Heart humbling Knowledge, of the divine Perfections by Faith, we are not dispos'd to love him aright, and direct our Actions to his Honour: For as the proverb is, (*ignoti nulla capido*) *after an unknown Thing there is no Desire.*

2dly, *A strong and transcendant Love to God,* because of his essential Excellency and communicative Goodness; as we cannot love God supremely, except we know him, so we cannot aim at his Glory as our highest End, until we love him with a Superior and transcendent respect; for our aims and desires follow our Love, and are proportion'd to the Degrees thereof.

3dly. Our aiming at God's Glory, as our highest Mark in all our Actions, *implies our preferring his Honour to all our Interests,* whether on Earth or in Heaven, whether of Body or Soul. As Love to God follows naturally after the experimental Knowledge of God, (in the manner before mention'd) so our preferring God's Honour to all our Interests, follows naturally and necessarily after, and flows from that

Love

Love to God, which is supream and transcendent in Degree. If we love God above ourselves, with all our Souls and Strength as *Jehovah* requires, we shall be easily induced to prefer his Glory, to all our Interests of every Kind. And,

4thly, It implies, our referring all we do to God, his Honour and Glory; desiring more that God should be thereby glorify'd, than after any benefit accruing to ourselves. The,

3d. Propos'd comes now to be considered, which was to shew, how we should glorify God? Here I shall mention a few out of many Instances, that might be enlarg'd upon. And,

1st. We should glorify God, by professing his Truth before Men, at all Times and in all Places, whatever Contempt and Hardships we are expos'd to thereby notwithstanding, if we are asham'd of CHRIST and of his Truths, in this adulterous Generation, we may expect that he will be ashamed of us, when he comes in the Glory of his Father with the holy Angels. My Dear Brethren, we should be valiant for the Truth upon the Earth, and contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints. O let us not betray the sacred Depositum of Truths that is in our Hands, which has been transmitted to us, thro' much Expence of the Labour and Blood of our Ancestors; to adhere firmly to the dear and precious Truths of CHRIST in the Time of a Tempest, when many make Ship-wreck of the Doctrines of Faith, and a good Conscience, and are like foolish Children toss'd about with every wind of Doctrine, by the Craft of those that lye in wait to deceive, is truly Noble, and reflects Glory and Honour upon God and Religion.

2dly. We should glorify God by confessing our Sins agreeable to *Jeshua's* Council to *Achan*, Josh. 7. 19. by this we Acknowledge, and thereby Honour God's Justice, Holiness,

Truth

Truth, Omniscience.—By this we own that God knows our secret Sins and might justly damn us for them, &c.

3dly. *We should glorify God, by a Strong Superlative and passionate Love to him, above all others, with devout Asaph, Psalm 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee!* And,

4thly. *We should glorify God, by a firm Faith and Hope in the Word of his Promise, with blessed Abram, notwithstanding of the most dark and contrary Aspects of divine Providence, Rom. 4. 18. 20. Who against Hope believed in Hope, — He staggered not at the Promise of God thro' unbelief, but was strong in Faith giving Glory to God.* And,

5thly. *We should glorify God, by obedience to Gods commanding and disposing Will; to the first actively, and to the latter passively. Now our Obedience should be humble, thankful, cheerful, charitable, fruitful, heavenly; with Abram, we should ever look upon our selves, to be less than the Least of all God's Mercy's, and with Paul far less than the least of all Saints: When God gives us the comfort of Mercies, we should give to God the Glory of them; with the Man who was healed of his Leprosie, who we are told. Luk. 7. 15. turned back and glorified God; with the Treasurer of the Queen of Candace, we should go on in our Way rejoicing. And does not Solomon inform us, that our Obedience should be attended with Charity? Prov. 3. 9. Honour the Lord with thy Substance, and with the first Fruits of all thine Increase; so shall thy Barns be fill'd with Plenty, and thy Presses burst out with new Wine. And does not our Lord inform us, that herein is his Father glorified, that we bring forth much Fruit, Joh. 15. 8. By a purity and heavenliness of Conversation becoming the Gospel, God is much glorify'd 1 Peter 2. 12. Having your Conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil Doers, they may by your good Works which*

B

they

they shall behold; glorify God in the Day of Visitation. Mat. 5. 16. Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. And it is likewise much to the Honour of God, when those that profess his Name, chuse rather to suffer than Sin. *1 Peter 4. 14. If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you; on their Part he is Evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.* I now proceed to the,

4th. Propos'd, which was to shew, *why we should aim at the Glory of God as our chief Mark in all our Actions?*

It is true eternal Salvation; or our enjoying God (which supposes our Propriety in, or rightful claim to God as ours; and implies our Communion with him here imperfectly, and in the Life to come perfectly) is a great Motive of religious Obedience, the Expectation thereof should doubtless influence and excite us in the Service of God.

And most certainly there is a Connection between glorifying and enjoying God, so that he who rightly performs the former, is not like to miss the latter. *Psa. 50. 23. Whoso offereth Praise glorifieth me; And to him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God.*

The enjoying of God may be likewise call'd an End, and that properly, (but a Subordinate one) which we may and ought to aim at in our religious Obedience. And it is doubtless an End, the Highest in its Kind, and next, in Order, Dignity and Importance, to that of the Glory of God. On this Account the venerable Assembly at *Westminster* in their larger Catechism, call it *the highest End of Man*; it is certainly that, which intelligent Beings should seek after, next to the divine Glory. The Assembly did not design to put the aforesaid Ends upon a Par or equal Balance, by their Answer to the first Question in their Catechisms, in which they are

both

both mention'd together; No, by no means, they intend only to represent the Connection subsisting between them, as well as their infinite Moment and Importance, and the Order in which we should seek after them; which is evident from their different Manner of wording them, the Order in which they place them, and the Scriptures they bring for the Confirmation of what they offer upon this Head. In the Larger Catechism the Question is worded thus, *What is the chief and highest End of Man.* *God's Glory* they signify by their Answer, *is the chief End of Man*; and enjoying God fully, the highest End; *i. e.* (as has been before observ'd) of its kind, next to the other: Their giving the Glory of God the first Place in their Answer, shews that they prefer it in point of Dignity to the other, altho' those Ends are *inseparably connected together*, (in the Manner before mention'd) yet they are *really* distinguished: It is one Thing to aim at Gods Honour, and another to aim at our own Comfort, as the aforesaid Ends are distinguish'd *really*; for one may aim at his own Comfort, and have no true regard to Gods Glory at all, therefore they cannot be both Supream; but one must be Chief and the other Subordinate or refer'd to it.

Now that the Glory of God is the chief End (above all others) at which we should aim in the whole Course of all our Actions, will appear by the following Arguments, *viz.*

1st. It is but reasonable that that End, for which Man and all the other Works of God were principally made, should be Mans chief End: But the End for which Man and all the other Works of God were principally made, was certainly the Glory of God, as the sacred Scriptures expressly testify. See *Prov. xvi. iv. Rev. iv. xi. Rom. xi. xxxvi.* Surely *Jehovah* is the best Judge of the End, for which he has made his Creatures, and to which he has adapted them, seeing his Understanding is infinite.

2dly.

2dly. That which God commands us to aim at principally, and prosecute unweariedly, is doubtless the chief End of our Actions; but that is the Glory of God, as the Words of our Text and other Places of Scripture do manifest. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* See 1 Pet. iv. 11. Rom. xi. 26. God's Authority of commanding his Creatures, is founded upon the strongest Claims of Right; namely, *creating, redeeming, protecting and providing Goodness.* (See Ps. ciii. 3. Ps. lxxvii. 89. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) Jehovah has an absolute Controle over us, because we are the Product of his Power, and Monuments of his Mercy; and therefore we cannot without equal Injustice and Ingratitude, dispute his commanding Authority.

3dly. That which the Saints of the old and new Testament principally desir'd, is the last End of acting (by right) but this the Scriptures inform us, was the Glory of God, by the following Instances or Examples, *viz.* of *Moses* who was willing rather to be blotted out of the Book that God had written, *than that Israel should be destroyed.* (Ex. xxxii. 12, 32.) and the Reason was because God's Name would have been reproached among the Heathen, by their Destruction as he himself elsewhere observes. How much was the *Psalmist* occupied in extolling the divine Praise and Glory, and exciting others thereto? Yea such was the Flame of his Devotion, that he even summons'd the inanimate Creation to conspire in celebrating the divine Honour! How memorable likewise to the same Purpose are the Words of *Asaph* Ps. lxxiii. 25. *Who have I in Heaven but thee, or on Earth that I desire besides thee?* In those Words it appears that he preferred God himself, and by consequence his Glory to Heaven and the Comforts of it! *Nehemiah, Jehosopbat, and Eliab*

job also express a generous and passionate solicitude respecting the Name and Glory of God, *Nehemiah* i. 11. *Be attentive to the Prayer of thy Servants, who desire to fear thy Name. What wilt thou do unto thy great Name* said Jehosaphat? *I have been jealous for the Lord God of Hosts,* said Elijah! *1 Kings* xix. 10. How emphatical and vehement are the Words of Paul, *Rom.* ix. 3. *For I could wish that my self were accursed from CHRIST, for my Brethren my Kinsmen according to the Flesh.* I may add the Example of all the Saints of the first Age of the Gospel Dispensation, *who lived not to themselves, but to Christ who dyed for them!* *2 Cor.* v. 25.

4thly. That which all other Ends serve as Means, must needs be the chief and last End; but this is the very Case in respect of the Glory of God, *our Election, Remission, Adoption, Redemption, Sanctification, Salvation, &c. is to the Praise of God's Glory,* *Ephes.* i. 3, 4, 5, ---12.

5thly. That which hath an after End, is not the last and chief it self, but our enjoying God hath an after End, namely, his *Glory*, and therefore it is not the last and chief. (See *2 Thes.* i. 3. *Rev.* xix. 5.)

Seeing that the great God himself is the best of Beings, and is self existent, it is therefore necessary, that he should be his own last End, for it would be absurd for him to aim at any Thing below himself, or his own Glory as his chief End; but all Things besides him are below him, and therefore cannot be his principal Mark.

6thly. That which is the best Good, ought to be the last and chief End of our Actions; it is contrary to Reason to make a less Good our last End: For that would be to prefer, a less to a greater Good. Now that the Glory of God is the best Good, appears evidently from the Almighty's making it the chief End of all his Works. To
say

14 *Arguments proving God's Glory to be the chief End.*

say that *Jehovah* did not choose the best Good for his principal End, would be to charge infinite Wisdom with Folly in his Councils and Conduct, which is as ridiculous as it is blasphemous! The divine Glory appears likewise to be the best Good, because of its near Relation, to the best of Beings.

7thly. *He who brings forth Fruit chiefly to himself, is an empty and baren Vine, Hos. x. 1. Zec. vii. 5, 6. When ye fasted,—did ye at all fast unto me? When ye did eat and drink—did not ye eat for your selves and drink for your selves?* Now he who in serving God aims at the enjoying of God, as it respects himself, above the Glory of God, he brings forth Fruit to himself, and not to God: For he aims at himself chiefly, and not at *Jehovah*. Neither does the different Kind of the Benefit, alter the Case; for both temporal and eternal Benefits, as they respect us under the Notion of a last End, are of the same Kind, and do differ but in degree.

8thly. If we ought to love God above our selves, than we ought to prefer his Glory to our Happiness, for Love when it is supream, includes both the chief Esteem and Prosecution in Affection and Practice. (See *Cant. v. 10. Phil. iii. 7, 8. Ps. lxxiii. 25, 84. Ps. ii.*) But it is evident, that we ought to love God above our selves, from those Words of CHRIST, *Mark, xii. 30. 31.* in which is explain'd, the Scope and Substance of the first Table of the Decalogue, or ten Commandments; there we are enjoyn'd *to love God with all our Heart, Soul and Strength, and our Neighbour as our selves.* Therefore the Consequence is plain and certain, that we should prefer God's Glory to our Happiness consider'd, strictly and subjectively, as a Comfort that respects us.

9thly.

9thly. To prefer our selves to God, is something very like to Blasphemy and Idolatry; but to make our *subjective* Happiness our chief End, and the Glory of God but as a Mean tending to obtain it, is to prefer our selves to God. As appears thus, *viz.*

God as he is the first and best Being and Cause of all the rest, merits the first Honours of his Creatures, by a two fold irrefragable Right; not only in respect of the intrinsic Dignity or inward Worth of his ineffable glorious Essence, but also in respect of his almighty Efficiency, and communicative Goodness towards his Creatures, now that which we make the last and chief End of our Actions, upon it we confer the first Honours. Because by this Instance, we declare it to be the chief Good in our esteem! Now if we make the enjoying of God, or our *subjective* Happiness, the last End of our Actions, we ascribe the Honours which only and essentially belong to God to our selves, because we attribute them to these Things that are ours, and as they are ours; contrary to the express Declarations of God. See *Isa. xxviii, Isa. xlvi. 11.* The Almighty ascribes us in the forementioned Scripture, *that he will not give his Glory to another.*

What can *Jehovah* expect of us, but to be glorified by us which consists in an internal Esteem, and external Acknowledgment of that infinite and supream Excellency, which results from all his venerable Attributes!

And now what is spiritual Idolatry, but the inward giving of this supream Esteem, Veneration and Love, either to other Creatures or to our selves? And what is Blasphemy, but the denial of some essential Attribute or Perfection of God? either by our Mind Speech or Practice, or an ascribing to the divine Nature, some Imperfection, contrary to its essential Perfection? Now when we make our
subjective

Subjective Happiness our last End, do we not give that supream Love to our selves, which is due to God only?

To be the chief Good is an essential Attribute of God, now when we esteem any Thing besides God, or his Glory, to be the chief Good, and prosecute it as such, do we not implicitly deny the aforesaid Attribute? And when we propose the divine Glory, only as a Mean to obtain another Good which we suppose to be supream; do we not make it, and by consequence God himself, (in our Opinion) a less Good? and so ascribe to him an Imperfection, contrary to the essential Perfection, and transcendent Eminence of his Nature.

Is it not a Maxim every where acknowledged, that the last End is better than all the Means, which tend to it; and that their Goodness both in respect of Kind and Degree, consists principally in a certain Relation to the End, and suitability to attain it. And therefore when we make our *subjective* Happiness our last and chief End we judge it better than the Glory of God, and so prefer it thereto, in Opinion and Practice; now if we prefer our Things, (consider'd as such) to the Things that are Gods, consequently we prefer our selves to God, which is a horrible Evil, contrary to the two first Precepts of the moral Law.

10thly. If our Happiness consider'd *strictly* and *subjectively*, (as a Good or Comfort respecting us) ought to be the last End of all our Actions, then nothing supernatural, is either requir'd or found in the whole Business of Religion. The Reason of the Consequence is this, Nature is so prone to self Interest, that it needs not a foreign Aid to excite or assist it in this Pursuit. Surely that which is agreeable to corrupt Nature, is not above it, and does not Scripture as well as sad Experience testify, that *self seeking*

is agreeable to Nature, is not this the Cry of those, who are in that State? *Pf. xlvi. Who shall shew us any Good, Phil. ii. 2. All Men seek their own Things.*

The Desire of Happiness is certainly innate in, and conatural to all, altho' many pursue wrong Measures to attain it; vainly imagining, that it is placed in the Honours, Profits or Pleasures of this uncertain Life! But this Error of the Judgment may be corrected by the Light of Reason, especially when assisted by external Revelation, so that Men may with more Decency seek their Happiness, that is themselves, by the external Performance of religious Duty, chiefly upon their own Account. What is necessary here, but the Light and Strength of Nature, but natural Pride and self Love? According to this Scheme, where is there any supream Love to the divine Majesty, where is there any Thing truly great, ingenuous, and supernatural in the whole Business of Religion? But on the contrary to love God, with our whole Soul whom we naturally hate, and intend his Glory above our own Happiness, is both against and above Nature, until it be renewed by supernatural Light and Grace! Here indeed is something truly great, good, ingenuous, and supernatural. For this the Infusion of a Principle of divine Life into the Souls of the Elect, is absolutely necessary, and to this indeed it bends freely (for the most part) of its own accord, as Streams from a living Spring. This divine Life inclines such as are Saints indeed, to live to CHRIST, and not to themselves.

The Scriptures positively and frequently assert that there is something supernatural in Religion! (*John vi. 44. Ephes. i. 19. ii. 10. John iii. 3.*) and to deny it, is to deny the Substance and Soul of Piety altogether, and to leave nothing but a selfish Husk, an empty Shadow, a dead Carcase in the Room of it! Again, another Argument may be this, *viz.*

C

To

To love Pleasures more than God, is certainly sinful, but to make our *subjective* Happiness our last End, and not the Glory of God, is to love our Pleasures more than God; and therefore it is sinful. (See 2. *Tim.* iii. 4. *Mark.* xii. 30, 31.) But to proceed,

Another Argument may be this, that which takes away the chief inward Differences, between *Sincerity* and *Hypocrisy*, is a false Doctrine; but the making of our *subjective* Happiness the chief End of our Actions does so, as appears thus. There are surely some Differences between *Hypocrisy* and *Sincerity*, otherwise we would not be so frequently exhorted in Scripture *to examine and prove ourselves*; but these Differences are principally found in the fountains of Action: For as to the external Form, who can go farther than a *Hypocrite*, now if there be no Difference in the Roots of Action, where are we? How can we know our State? are we not exhorted to impossible Things? And without the Knowledge of our State towards God, how can we attain a true and reasonable Peace? But the merciful Lord JESUS, has left *Peace* as a Legacy to his Disciples; and *Marks of Sincerity*, among which this is one, *viz. That the Love of CHRIST constrains his People.* 2. *Cor.* v. 14. and this Love is with the whole Heart; as was prov'd before.

One Argument more may be mentioned under this Head, and it is this, *viz.* If all Things are from God; and by God, and to God, then Man's *subjective* Happiness is not his last End; but the Case is really so, (*Rom.* xi. *and last ver.*) The Reason of the Consequence is this, our Salvation is one, among other Things, which are derived from God, and therefore by a parity of Reason should be referred to him, or which is the same to his Glory. God is the cause efficient, directing, and final of all Things, and especially of those, which relate to Salvation,

vation, concerning which the Apostle discourses in the afore-cited Place. If all Things are derived from God as a Cause *efficient*, and are dispos'd by him as a Cause *directing*, it is but highly reasonable, that they should be referr'd to him as a Cause *final*, namely, that they should be to him and for him, from whom they have borrow'd their original; and this is no other than a natural, rational, and necessary Circulation. *The Rivers return again to the Ocean, these Waters which they have received from it, Eccles. i. 7.* most certainly to do all Things to the glory of God, is to turn Necessity into Virtue, for that shall be the *final* Event of all, whether we will or *no*ll.

It is needless to add, that our Lord JESUS has taught the Doctrine, I have been labouring to establish, by the Order of that Pattern of Prayer, which he has left for our Instruction and Imitation.

To the Arguments that have been already offered, I shall add some *absurd Consequences of the contrary Opinion*, And

1st. One *absurd Consequence* thereof is this, that it *destroys entirely what it pretends to establish*, namely, the *Happiness of Mankind*; as appears thus, without a Conformity of our Wills to God, it is impossible to be happy in the Enjoyment of him, *for two cannot walk together except they be agreed. Without Harmony, there is no Happiness*, now where chief Ends are different, this cannot possibly be attained. Different chief Ends are contrary to each other, they have no Subordination, otherwise they can't be chief, and having no Subordination, they must needs be opposite, and being opposite, the whole Train of Means, or subordinate Ends, that have a Relation to them respectively, cannot but be contrary! And thus it is in the present Case, according to the Opinion I oppose: For hereby God is suppos'd, to aim at himself or his own Glory as his chief
End

End, and to this all his Councils and Actings have a principal Reference : On the contrary Man is ſuppos'd to aim at himſelf, or or his Happineſs (ſtrictly and *ſubjectively* conſider'd) as his chief End, and to this all his Conſultations and Actions have a principal Reference. Now here are two Beings, an uncreated and a created, ſet in a dreadful Oppoſition to each other, purſuing contrary Ends, having no acknowledged Dependance upon each other !

For the bleſſed God to aim at himſelf, or his own Glory chiefly, ſeeing every Thing elſe is infinitely beneath his Dignity, is juſt and reaſonable. But for an inferior Animal who has borrow'd his Being, his Breath, and all his Benefits from the Almighty Power, and unexcited Goodneſs of God ! to forget the Rock out of which he was hewn, and reject his Dependance upon, and Subordination to his great Creator, good Redeemer and liberal Benefactor, in his Aims and Actings, and ſet up for himſelf in Oppoſition to the Supream Majeſty, is as unreaſonable as ungrateful, as unjuſt as cruel, a Monster of complicated Wickedneſs, too big to be expreſs'd by a human Tongue, and not to be thought of without extream Abhorrence !

Dr. *Van Maſtricht* juſtly deſcribes the Will of God thus, *viz.* ' That it is nothing elſe, but his moſt wiſe Propenſion to himſelf, as his bigheſt End, and to his Creatures for himſelf as Means.' Now the Creatures Will, according to the Opinion I am oppoſing, is directly contrary, being propenſe to themſelves or their Happineſs as their chief End, and to God and his Glory only for themſelves as a Mean. Now in aſmuch as God is a ſimple Being, his will is himſelf, and therefore the Nature or Attributes of God are contrary to ſuch, as ſeek and ſerve him chiefly for their own Sakes ! And how then can they behold, or enjoy him with Pleaſure ? Nay, on the contrary it muſt needs fill them with Horror,

to

to behold all the divine Attributes contrary to them, and therefore engag'd against them to destroy them! And pray how can they enjoy him, whose being is so opposite to them? Does not Pleasure spring from the suitableness between the Object and Faculty, and Enjoyment necessarily suppose Harmony and Complacency? And how can this be without an Agreement between God and the Creature, in respect of their principal Aims? To speak with Reverence, what Complacency (can it be with Reason suppos'd) the Almighty should take, in a Creature who makes itself its chief End, and subjects his Glory to its Interests, and thus grasps at his Crown and Dignity, and sets up itself as his Rival and Competitor! But a

2^d. *Absurdity* which follows from the contrary Opinion is this, *viz.* that Man *proposes* to himself, *and pursues a lesser Good, as his last End!* Here I speak of Happiness abstractly, and for Arguments sake suppose it attainable, according to the contrary Notion. That the Happiness of Creatures is a lesser Good, than God's Glory is evident from God's proposing the Latter as his chief End, in all his Works; to say that he propos'd a lesser Good, as his highest End, would reflect Dishonour upon his infinite and unerring Wisdom. If therefore the Glory of God be the greatest Good; it is an Argument of great Folly and Weakness, to propose a less, as our last End! If it be *objected*, that tho' God's Glory be the greatest good *absolutely*, yet that it is not so relatively; I answer it is the greatest Good even *relatively* for the following Reasons.

1st. Because our Happiness is inseparably connected with our seeking it in the first Place, and highest Degree by divine Appointment.

2. It is a great Ingredient in Happiness itself. We cannot secure Happiness, (so far as I see) but in this Way;
we

we cannot love God as we ought, prefer him to our selves, or be sincerely subject to his Sovereignty ; and without these Things, we cannot reasonably expect to come to the Enjoyment of God. A

3. *Absurdity* is this, if glorifying God or the Glory of God, be but a Mean appointed to bring Men to Happiness as their last End, then when this is obtain'd perfectly, the Mean conducing to it ceases of its own Accord ; so that at this Rate there will be no glorifying God in Heaven ; but this Consequence is directly contrary to the Holy Scriptures, See 2 *Thef.* 1. 10. He will come *to be glorified in his Saints.* And are not the Heavenly Hosts said *to cast their Crowns at the Redeemers Feet ?* A

4. *Absurdity* is this, that the *Notion of Happiness* (consider'd strictly and subjectively) *being the chief End of Human Actions, destroys Self-denial*, one of the Terms of the glorious Gospel, *Mat.* 16: 24. these Words of Christ (*apartnefasthò eauton*) deny himself, signifies a Total or universal *Self-denial*. ' Thus Leigh, in his *Criticks* omnino neget *Prorsus Neget* says Reynolds, *Abdicet seipsum* says Beza.' but the Words of Pool in his *Criticks*, are remarkable upon this Place, viz. ' *That a Man is not commanded here to deny himself simply, but respectively, so far as he is contrary to God.*' Doctor Bates observes, ' *that Self-Denial includes all that in the order of Nature belongs to us.*' Now our subjective Happiness, consider'd strictly, is but self-sublimated, and therefore if we do not, in our aims and actings, subordinate it to the divine Glory, we deny CHRIST and not ourselves.

5thly. The aforesaid Doctrine destroy's *Christian Simplicity*, as appears thus, the Nature of *Simplicity* consists in directing the Mind to God in a direct Line, and in excluding all evil Design ; and hence it is call'd a *single Eye* by our Lord, *Mat.* vi. 22. 23. It likewise inclines to *constancy* and *uniformity*

formity in the pursuit of the single Scope or supream Mark it proposes, (*Philip. i. 20, 21. 2. Cor. i. 12.*) But on the contrary, Hypocrites have a double Heart, a squint Eye, which looks contrary Ways. A

6th. *Absurdity* is this that the Doctrine I have been opposing, destroys the necessity of that Love, which the Gospel requires so absolutely, and inculcates so pungently and frequently. For if we need not aim at God's Glory above our selves, or our subjective Happiness considered strictly, then we need not love him above or equal to our selves; the Reason is this, the highest Love necessarily includes the highest esteem and Pursuit, and so (e contra) a small degree of Love, little Esteem and indifferent Pursuit. And thus the very Heart of Godliness is struck at, by robbing it of those two principal Ingredients, without which it cannot subsist, viz. Transcendent love to God, and of its exalted view or aim; the Glory of God, (chiefly) and by substituting in the room thereof, sordid selfish Principles and mercenary aims: And thus Self is the Foundation and Scope of this Religion, which looks not like the sublime and supernatural Religion of the Holy JESUS, but is nearer akin to that of his inveterate Enemies the Pharisees, for what was their Religion, but a circle of lifeless Duties and Ceremonies, perform'd from selfish Principles and with selfish Views? Notwithstanding of their Learning pretence to and fame for Religion, they were Strangers to the Power and Life of it, having no higher Principles than Nature polished by Education and Art. Self was the Foundation and Scope of their Religion.

If it be objected, That these Men aimed chiefly at their own Honour and Interest in this World only.

Answer, It is true some of them did so, but not all: *Paul* Before his Conversion, and the *young Man* in the Gospel were,

of

of another Stamp; they had a regard to their eternal Salvation, and were serious in seeking of it. And the other Pharisees, who were such gross Hypocrites as to aim at the Honours and Wealth of this World, chiefly in all their Actions, whether Civil or Religious, (it should be observ'd, that they) aim'd at themselves in so doing, and not at God or his Glory, and so made themselves their highest Mark. It is likewise highly probable, that they aim'd at Wealth and Honour under the notion of Happiness, imagining that therein or thereby they should obtain Felicity: And this is no doubt the Scope of the grosser sort of Hypocrites of every Tribe and Order at this Day! Their cry is, *who shall shew us any good?* Now if we make our subjective Happiness in Heaven, our chief End, the Mark is formally the same in both, it is Self in both, it is Happiness in both that is aim'd at: The Difference lyes not in the End propos'd, but in a Mistake of the Judgment concerning the Means that lead to it. The Error of some of the old Pharisees was more gross, and this is more subtle, but it is but a chip of the same Block, there is as little Love to God, in the one as in the other.

And indeed the aforesaid Notion does well agree with the *Mabometan* imposture, for thro' the whole *Alcoran* there is a deep silence, about supernatural Principles of Worship, such as *Regeneration, transcendent Love to God*, as also of supernatural Aims, *at the Glory of God above all*; the chief Things that I find inculcated in the *Alcoran*, (its fopperies excepted) is some main Branches of natural Religion, inforced by the Consideration of eternal Pleasures, to be afterwards enjoy'd, as the Reward of good Works, and eternal Pains to be endured as the Punishment of bad. The chief Difference as to the Question under debate, is only this, (so far as I see) that *Mabomet* aim'd at *sensual Pleasures*, and such as hold the Opinion I am opposing, aim at *spiritual Enjoyments* principally

cipally, but both are of the same Mind, as to the Substance of the matter, viz. *Dependance upon Works, and aiming at themselves as their highest Mark, without a superlative Regard to God's Glory.*

A

7th. *Absurdity is self Worship*, if we must aim at our subjective Happiness, (or our selves) as our last End, then we must esteem, love, desire after, and pursue ourselves above all: For what we make to be the *chief End*, we declare to be the *chief Good*, and that must be so respected. Now, is not this inward Worship the most noble kind of Worship? and this we give to our selves, according to the Scheme I am opposing. We may indeed give the Cap and the Knee to our maker, but the Heart must be given to our selves. A lesser degree of Love, for our own sakes, we may allow our Creator, but the highest Degree must be given to ourselves forsooth, and is not this worse Idolatry then the *Papists* are guilty of in worshiping images, for this Reason, namely, the *Papists* (for the most Part) allow their Images but an inferior kind of Worship, (which they call *Dulcia*) but this is giving to our selves the supream (*latria* or) Worship. So that according to the aforesaid Opinion we are to allow the great God no more Regard and Honour, than the *Papists* do the Sign of the Cross, and their rotten ridiculous Relicts; for according thereto, God is not the terminative Object, but only the medium of Worship.

8. *Another Absurdity* which naturally flows from the aforesaid Opinion is this, viz. *Making that the chief End which is not the last.* After enjoying God in Heaven, the Saints do praise him, and aim at his Glory, and for this End they are sav'd, that the Glory of God's Grace may appear therein, (*Ephes. i.*) That which is the chief End, must needs be the last, for this Reason, because all other Things are referr'd to it, which they cannot be except it be the last: But on

D

the

the Contrary, the aforesaid Opinion, makes that the chief which is not the last, and is therefore absurd.

Seeing we are not our own in respect of Creation, *it is God that made us and not we our selves, &c.* We have therefore no Right to aim at our own Happiness above the Glory of that Being, who has brought us into Existence; therefore it is most unjust to do so, neither are we our own in respect of Preservation, Redemption, and Covenant Dedication, therefore it is most Ungrateful and Sacrilegious to aim at our own Happiness above the divine Glory, it is God who holds our Souls in Life, therefore should we *sing his Honours and make his Praise glorious*, Psalm lxvi. We are not our own for we are bought with a Price, and therefore should we glorify God in our Bodies, and in our Spirits which are Gods; we also belong to God by covenant Contract, (*Ezek. xvi. 8. Jer. xxxi. 33.*) and therefore cannot without Sacrilege seek ourselves above his Glory.

Forasmuch as the blessed God is possessed of the highest, yea infinite, incomprehensible and inexpressible Eminence, it is but equal and highly reasonable, that to him should be ascribed the highest Honours. Surely we should *render to God the Things that are Gods*, Matt. xxii. 21. And therefore it is most unjust and unreasonable to aim at our own Happiness, or any Thing that is ours, above our Makers Glory: And such as do so should remember God's Judgment upon *Herod*, because he would not give to God the Glory of his Gifts, but burnt Sacrifice to his own Nett, and offered Incense to his own Dregs, (*Acts xii. 23.*) And likewise the Curse which *Jehovah* denounces upon the Blessings of those Priests, *who will not lay it to Heart, to give Glory to his Name*, Mal. ii. 1, 2. It is very absurd to imagine that the divine Majesty should imbrace Enemies into his Bosom, and yet this will follow from the Scheme I am opposing; for a
Man

Man may hate God in his Heart, and yet externally submit to his Government, not for God's Sake but his own. Now the opposite Notion supposes that the Almighty would receive such selfish fordid Souls, into his glorious Imbraces, than which nothing can be more false and unreasonable.

But to draw to the Conclusion of this Discourse, I wou'd beg of my Hearers to examine themselves, by what has been offer'd, whether they act generally from a *right principle, Love to God, and to a right End, the Glory of God.* As also whether they habitually labour to glorify God in the manner before describ'd? viz. by *professing Christs Truths, confessing of their Sins, and likewise by Faith, Love, Obedience, Active and Passive?* If so, rejoice in God your Saviour, whatever your Affliction be! What tho' you be contemn'd, traduc'd and rejected by your professed Brethren unjustly; but yet with pious Pretences, as if God was thereby honoured, yet be not cast down, but consider that sweet Scripture, *If. lxvi. 5. Hear the Word of the Lord, ye that Tremble at his Word, your Brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Names sake, said, let the lord be glorified: But he shall appear to your Joy and they shall be ashamed!* But on the other Hand, such as are satisfied with an outward form of Religious Duties, and have no Solicitude about the Principle from which, and the End to which they act, and labour not to glorify God in the Manner before expres'd in the Course of their Lives, are certainly graceless Hypocrites, and may therefore expect to be cut asunder at last by the Sword of divine Justice. Consider these solemn Words of our Lord, *Matt. v. 20. Except your Righteousness exceeds the Righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees, ye can by no means enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And elsewhere *if your Eye be evil, your whole Body is full of Darknes;* your religious Performances are *wild Grapes,*

and have (comparatively) but a shew of Good ; with *Ephraim*, you are but *empty Vines*, because ye bring forth *Fruit to your selves*. Remember Sinners, that *the Ax is laid to the Root of the Tree, and that every Tree, that bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewn down and cast into the Fire.*

SERMON II.

1. Corinthians x. 31.

*Whether therefore ye eat or Drink, or whatsoever ye do,
do all to the Glory of God.*

THE Heart is certainly the main Spring of practical Religion ; when that is set right in its aims, then all the Wheels of Motion keep their proper Distances and Spheres, and answer a valuable End : But when this main Spring is wrong sett, all is wrong ; the Motion of the Souls Powers is irregular and vain, because it tends to a wrong Mark.

It is therefore of the last necessity that we be careful in chusing of and fixing upon a right Mark in our Actions : And what can this be but God and *his Glory* ? Let us therefore give him our Hearts, and make his Honour the chief scope of all we do : It will be but of little Service to us to cleanse the outside of the Cup and Platter, if the inside be neglected, and our aims be wrong.

Do not therefore think it strange my Hearers, that I dwell so long upon this Subject, for indeed it is the very turning Point and Foundation of all practical Godliness. We ourselves are surely such as our governing aims be.

You may remember that in the preceding Sermon, I observ'd the following Point of Truth, viz. *That the great Mark at which we should aim chiefly, in all our Actions, whether*

ther Natural, Civil or Religious, is the Glory of the most high God. And that the Method I propos'd to pursue in the Prosecution of it, was as follows, viz. 1st. I was to shew *the Kinds and Nature of God's Glory.*

II. *What is suppos'd by and imply'd in our aiming at God's Glory.*

III. *I purpos'd to shew how we should glorify God.*

IV. *Why we should aim at his Glory, as our chief Mark in all our Actions.*

V. *I was to Answer some Objections to the contrary, and then proceed to some practical Improvement of the Whole.*

The first four general Heads I have discours'd upon, that which yet remains to be treated of, as the Subject of the present Sermon, is the 5th general Head, namely to *answer Objections.*

But before I proceed to treat directly upon the 5th Propos'd, I shall beg Leave to cite some Sentences, extracted from the writings of divers worthy Divines, tending to confirm and illustrate what has been already offer'd. And here I shall first mention, the Glosses of some Annotators upon the Text I am discoursing from. Mr. *Pool* in his Annotations upon it; after having cited Prov. xvi. 4. *The Lord hath made all Things for himself*; observes, "That it is impossible
" it should be otherwise, for whereas every reasonable Agent,
" both propounds to himself some Reason of his Actions,
" and the best End he can imagine; it is impossible, but
" that God also in creating Man should propound to him-
" self some End, and there being no better End than his
" own Glory, he could propound no other to himself: The
" Glory of God being the End which he propounded to
" himself in creating Man, it must needs follow that that
" must be the chief and greatest End which any Man can
" propound to himself in his Actions. To confirm this

Gloss

Gloss, he in his Criticks cites *Menochius, Eslius, Grotius, Meed, and Rabi Jonab*, in his Book upon Fear, who says, "That we ought to believe in one God, and direct all our Actions to his Name, and that he who does not so, is not like to receive a Reward."

Mr. *Matthew Henery*, upon the Words of our Text says, "That in all we do, we should aim at the Glory of God, at pleasing and honouring him; this is the fundamental Principle of all practical Godliness; the great End of all practical Religion.—And upon Prov. xvi. 4. he says, "That God is the first Cause, and last End of all, all is of him and from him, and therefore all is to him and for him. He designs to serve his own Purpose by all his Creatures, and he will not fail of his Design, the Wicked he is not glorify'd by, but will be glorifi'd upon."

Mr. *Burkit* upon the Words of our Text sayeth thus, "The Apostle directs us, to refer all our Actions in general, both natural, civil and religious to the Glory of God; to make that our supream Aim, our ultimate End in all we do, in all we design, in all we desire. A Christian is to perform his natural Actions to spiritual Purpose, and whilst he is feeding his Body at his own Table, must have an Eye at his serving God, both with Soul and Body. But especially and above all in our religious Duties, we must propound the Glory of God as our principal Aim, our chief Scope, our supream End."

Doctor *Bates* in his *Harmony of the Divine Attributes*, p. 175,6. says, "That Godliness contains three Things, 1st. That our Obedience proceeds from love to God, as its vital Principle; this must warm and animate the external Action, this alone makes Obedience as delightful to us, so pleasing to God. 2dly. That all our Conversation be regulated by his Will as the Rule, 3dly, That the

“ the glory of God be the supream End of all our Actions,
 “ this Qualification must adhere not only to necessary Du-
 “ ties, but to our natural and civil Actions, *Our Light must*
 “ *so shine before Men, that they may see our good Works &c.*
 “ Matt. v. 16. 1 Cor. xi. 31. A general Designation of this
 “ is absolutely necessary. (1 *Pet.* iv. 11.) And the renewing
 “ our Intention in matters of Moment. For he being the
 “ sole Author of our Lives and Happiness, we cannot with-
 “ out extream Ingratitude and Disobedience neglect to glori-
 “ fy him in our Bodies, and Spirits which are his. (1 Cor.
 “ vi. 19. 20.) This religious Tendency of the Soul to God,
 “ as the Supream Lord, and our utmost End ; sanctifies our
 “ Actions, and gives an excellency to them, above what is in-
 “ herent in their own Nature.”

Dr. *Manton* in his second Volumn of Sermons p. 91 say-
 eth 1 “ The Glory of God must be regarded in the first Place
 “ 1 Cor. 10. 31. *whether in eating or drinking &c. If in eating*
 “ *and drinking sayeth he,* and the use of our ordinary Com-
 “ forts, much more in the Supream and important Actions
 “ of our lives, such as we would make a Business of, God
 “ must be specially eyed therein ; God only is independent
 “ and self sufficient of himself and from himself ; but self
 “ seeking is monstrous and unnatural in the Creature! They
 “ are of him and by him, and for him. (*Rom.* xi. 36.) the
 “ Motion of the Creatures is circular, they end where they
 “ began. 2 The saving of our own Souls, that must be re-
 “ garded next to the Glory of God, for next to the Love
 “ of God, Man is to love himself and in himself. 1 The bet-
 “ ter Part ; the great Errors of the World, come from mis-
 “ taking self, and misplacing Self, they misplace Self, when
 “ they seat it above God and prefer their Interests before the
 “ Conscience of their Duty to him. Then they mistake Self,
 “ thinking self is more concern’d as a Body than a Soul.
 And

“ And prefer the Satisfactions of the carnal Life, before the
 “ Happiness of the Spiritual, and *pag. 55.* he adds, that the
 “ End ennobleth a Man, and still the Man is according to his
 “ End, low spirits have low Designs, *Mat. vi. 22.* *The Light*
 “ *of the Body is the Eye, if therefore thine Eye be single, thy*
 “ *whole Body shall be full of Light; but if thine Eye be evil,*
 “ *thy whole Body shall be full of Darknes.*’

Dr. *Thomas Taylor* in his Catechetical Exercises, approved
 by twelve of the most eminent London Ministers *pag. 140.*
 proposeth this Question, *viz.* “ What are we to learn that
 “ God created us, for his Glory in a special Manner, a-
 “ bove other Creatures? gives this Answer, to refer our selves
 “ and all Things belonging to us, to his Glory as our chief
 “ End; in Imitation of God, whose Glory is so dear to himself,
 “ that he propoundeth it to himself, as the chief and prin-
 “ cipal End, of all his Decrees and Actions; so dear it
 “ should be to us, as to propound it in our first Intentions,
 “ as the Scope of all the Actions and Occurrences of our
 “ Lives.’

Dr. *Ridgely* in his Body of Divinity, *pag. 1.* speaking up-
 on the Answer, to the first Question, in the *Westminster*
 Catechism, *viz.* that to glorify God and enjoy him, is the
 chief and highest End, says. “ If it be enquir’d with what
 “ propriety these may be call’d *chief and highest,* the An-
 “ swer is *easy, viz.* that the former is absolutely so, beyond
 “ which nothing more excellent, or desireable can be con-
 “ ceived, the latter is the highest and best in its kind;
 “ which notwithstanding is referr’d, as a Means leading to
 “ the other: And *pag. 5.* thus having consider’d, that it is
 “ our indispensable Duty, to make the Glory of God, our
 “ highest End in all our Actions, we denying him that Tri-
 “ bute of Praise, abuse our superior Faculties and live in
 “ vain.”

Esq; *Leigh* in his Body of Divinity, pag. 244 says “ we
 “ should do all to him, and for him, even to shew forth
 “ our Apprehension of his Name, doing whatsoever Good
 “ we do, and leaving whatsoever Evil we leave that we may
 “ declare our high Esteem of him, and make it appear,
 “ that we judge him most wise good, excellent.—And what-
 “ soever is not thus done, with reference to the Name of
 “ God, wants so much of Goodness, as it does of this Re-
 “ ference! If we aim at only or chiefly, and be mov’d only
 “ or chiefly, by Temporal Benefits and Respects of this
 “ Kind; looking to our selves; our Deeds are hollow and
 “ seemingly good alone, not real; if we look to ourselves a-
 “ lone in respect of eternal Benefits; and not above our
 “ selves to him and his Name, that also is but Hypo-
 “ crisy; but this is Truth, to make our Ends and Motives
 “ the same with God’s, and to have an Eye still above
 “ and beyond our selves even to God’s Name.

Mr. *Watson* in his Body of Divinity, pag. 3. hath these
 Words “ It is a glorifying God when we aim purely at his
 “ Glory: It is one Thing to advance God’s Glory, another
 “ Thing to aim at it; God must be the *terminus ad quem*,
 “ the ultimate End of all our Actions, thus CHRIST (*John*
 “ viii. 50.) Its the Note of a Hypocrite, he hath a squint Eye,
 “ he looks more to his own Glory, than God’s Glory; he
 “ cites this saying of *Cyprian*, *quem non gula Philautia super-*
 “ *avit* (i. e. Self-Love has vanquished even those that have
 “ escaped gluttonous Excesses) let us take heed of this *au-*
 “ *tolatreia* self-worship, and aim purely at God’s Glory.

Mr. *Dolittle* in his Body of Divinity, approv’d by 20 of
 the most famous of the *London* Ministers, pag. 2 *Quest.* 7 says,
 “ Am I not such as my chief End is? If the World be my
 “ chief End, am I not a Worldly-Man? If Pleasure be my
 “ chief End, am not I a voluptuous Man? If Honours, am
 “ not

" not I an ambitious Man? If self-interest, am not I a car-
 " nal selfish Man? If God be my chief End, am not I a
 " Godly Man? And *pag. 3.* where there is a Subordination
 " of Ends, wherein that which is an End in respect of some
 " Means, is it self a Means to some farther End. Do not I
 " stop in any End till I come to the chief and highest End?
 " is not my reading the Scripture, and hearing the Word
 " preach'd, a Means to my knowing God's Will as my
 " End? Is not Communion with him a Means to my En-
 " joyment of him in Heaven, as my End? Is not my En-
 " joyment of God in Heaven, a Means to my glorifying
 " him in Heaven, as my last and highest End, beyond
 " which I cannot go?

Mr. *Gurnal* in his *Christian Armour*, *pag. 363. 4.* says,
 " look thou propoundest right Ends, in thy desire of Re-
 " conciliation with God. --- It is lawful for thee to look to thy
 " own Safety; God will give thee leave to look to thy self,
 " this thou mayst do, and yet not neglect him; but never
 " was any Peace true or sure, where only Self-Love made
 " it; whether it be with God, or between Man and Man,
 " thou seeest thou art undone, if thou keepest thy old Side,
 " and therefore thou seekest Peace with God, *as the Kings*
 " *that served Hadarezer, 2. Sam. 10. 19.* well this may be
 " all allow'd thee to come over to God, because his is the
 " surer Side; never any made Peace with God, but this
 " Argument weigh'd much with them; but take heed this
 " be not all, thou aimest at; or the Chief thou aimest at; this
 " thou mayest do and hate God as much as ever. Like those
 " who are said to yield feignedly to *David's* victorious Arms,
 " because no help for it. A Man taken in a Storm, may be
 " forc'd under the Rent-House of his greatest Enemy for
 " Shelter, without any change of his Heart, or better. Tho'ts

“ of him, than before he was wont.” *And then proceeds to observe,* “ that we must first eye the Honour of God Pl. lxxix. 9. “ *And adds,* Certainly if God could not be more glorified, “ in our Peace and Reconciliation, than in our Death and “ Damnation, it were a wicked Thing to desire it.’

Mr. *Flavel* in his first Vol. pag. 676 sayeth, “ There is “ two Ends in Duties, one supream and ultimate, viz. the “ glorifying of God, which must and ought to take the first “ Place of all other Ends. Another secondary and subor- “ dinate, viz. The Good and Benefit of our selves, to invert “ these, and place our own Good in the Room of God’s “ Glory, is sinful and unjustifiable, and he that aims at “ himself only in Religion, is justly censur’d as a mercena- “ ry Servant.’

Mr. *Baxter* in his *Saints-Rest*, pag. 18 9 sayeth, “ He “ that maketh not God, his chief Good and ultimate End, “ is in his Heart a *Pagan*, and vile Idolater, and doth not “ take the Lord for his God.’

Mr. *How* in his whole Works, pag. 154. 5. says, “ That “ to pray to him, (meaning God) that he would do this or “ that, finally and ultimately for any thing else, than his “ own Name, is humbly to supplicate him, that he would “ resign the Godhead, and quit his Throne to this or that “ Creature. 2. — That primitive Nature, was no doubt “ pointed upon God, as the last End. Otherwise a Crea- “ ture had been made with an Aversion to him, and in the “ highest pitch of Enmity and Rebellion; since there can “ be no higher Controversy than about the last End. *And* “ *adds,* that the Design of renewing Grace, is to restore “ us to our original State, and fix us in that absolute Subor- “ dination to God which was original and natural to us; “ *then he observes,* the Controversy is taken up, which was “ about no lower Thing than the Deity; who should be “ God

“ God he or we? Whether we should live and be for our
 “ selves, or him?—The only proper genuine Breath of the
 “ *New-Creature*, —is to thee O Lord be all Things, mayest
 “ thou ever be All in All, let the Creation, and all Things be
 “ Nothing, otherwise than in thee and for thee.”

Mr. *Willard* in his Body of Divinity, pag. 6. 7. sayeth,
 “ That Man can have no other last End, but God and his
 “ Glory, for then it must be either the Creature or himself, a
 “ third cannot be thought of; but it can be neither of
 “ these, as will appear. — 1. Because the Creature is infe-
 “ rior to him, a Man’s End is to be look’d for, above him-
 “ self, and not beneath him; but Man is superior to these.
 “ 2. Because that Man is the Creatures next End, that there-
 “ fore cannot be his last End, that that should be made
 “ for Man’s Service, and yet that Man should be to serve
 “ that, implyeth a Contradiction. 3. Because the Creatures
 “ cannot satisfy him, Man’s last End and objective Happi-
 “ ness is the same, (*Ecles. i. 8.*) 2. Neither can he be his
 “ own last End; For, 1. The End must be something
 “ better than the Means, that serve to it. 2. There is a
 “ better being, than Man, and therefore he cannot be his
 “ own chief End: The last End, and chief Good, are one
 “ and the same; there is therefore no resting, until we
 “ come there. 3. A Man cannot be his own Happiness,
 “ and therefore not his own chief End. An End that can-
 “ not happify him, is not worthy of that Name! Again
 “ he asserts, that Man’s next chief End, to the glorifying
 “ of God is to enjoy him forever!”

Mr. *Vincent* also in his Exposition of the Assembly’s Ca-
 techism, approv’d of by 40 Divines, is also of the same Sen-
 timent with the rest I have mentioned; as appears from
 the Reasons he gives, why Men should chiefly design the
 glorifying of God in all their Actions; which are these, *viz.*
 “ because

“ because God has made them; preserves them; has re-
 “ deem’d them, and given his Word and Spirit to direct
 “ and assist, and promised his Kingdom to encourage them,
 “ to glorify him.” See *pag.* 4. From the aforefaid Words
 it appears that Mr. *Vincent* look’d upon the Glory of God,
 to be the End and Happiness but as a Motive, exciting to
 seek after it.

I now proceed to the

5. *General Head*, which was to answer Objections. *Objec-*

1. “ *That which God promises on his Part in his covenant*
Dealings, with Man is Man’s chief Good, or which is the same,
Man’s chief End; but the Thing God promises is Salvation,
ergo. Had God promis’d any Thing less, it would not be call’d
the exceeding Riches of his Grace, and that Salvation is prom-
ised by God in his Covenant Dealings with Man; is evident
from Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth, shall be saved.

Ans. If that which God only or chiefly promised; in
 the New-Covenant was Salvation, consider’d strictly and
 subjectively; or separated from his Glory, then the Conse-
 quence would avail, otherwise not; but God has no where
 promised, a Salvation separated from his Glory, as appears
 from what has been before observed, to which I will add
 one Place of Scripture, *Pf.* 1. 15. *Call upon me in the Day*
of Trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Object. 2. *It is our first and most deeply Fundamental Du-*
ty, to take the Lord for our God; which most essentially in-
cludes our taking him, (the Enjoyment of him, and not our
glorifying him, or his Glory) for our supream Good; which is
acknowledg’d by all to be our chief End.

Ans. The Notion of enjoying God, separate from glo-
 rifying him, or his Glory; is an antisciptural ridiculous
 Whim! If it be a fundamental Duty; to take the Lord for
 our God, then it must be a fundamental Error (in practical
 Religion) to take our selves for our God; by preferring what
 respects

respects us, to his Honour, *viz.* our enjoying him, to his Glory : For here God is not regarded for himself, but only as he respects us, it is true the Word GOD is mentioned, in enjoying him, but that is only a Flaw, a Blind : For it's still in Subordination to the fordid *god-Self*!

Does not that Faith which is included, in taking the Lord for our God, draw us out of ourselves to CHRIST, and unite us to his Person, before it gives us Communion in his Benefits? (*Gal. ii. 20. Phil. iii. 8, 9.*) And does it not excite us to admire the Former more than the Latter? (*Cant. v. 10.*) Surely to those that *believe, CHRIST is precious!* And is it not the Sign of an Harlot, to do the contrary, *viz.* to regard in Marriage, the Portion more than the Person?

Object. 3. *Is praising God for Blessings, a greater Good than the Blessings for which they praise him? If so, the Saints have a hard Bargain, in giving a greater Good for a less, if not, than the Enjoyment of God is a greater Good, than praising of him, and so is our chief Good and last End!*

Ans. I will be bold to assert, that the Saints praising God, is (terminatively) more noble, than the Benefits they offer Praises for, considered strictly; because of its near Relation to the best of Beings; neither is the Consequence reasonable, that thus the Saints would have a hard Bargain, in giving a greater Good for a less. The Force of this Consequence, is built upon a suppos'd Analogy, between civil Bargains among Men and the Saints praising God for Benefits they receive from him, in the following Particulars. 1. In civil Bargains, the Commodity a Person gives in exchange, for Good he deserves, he no ways owes before to the Person he deals with. 2. The Good he gives is in his own Power, it is his proper Right by Inheritance or Purchase, which he can dispose of as he sees best, to advance his worldly Interest. 3. The Good exchange'd, is profitable

profitable to the Receiver. 4. In this kind of *Truck*, when there is not some Proportion in the Value of the Things exchange'd, it's said to be a hard Bargain. If the Case was so in God's Dealings with his People, there would be some Reason for the aforesaid Consequence, otherwise none at all! Are not Mens Praises a Debt they owe to God upon many Accounts, a Debt which they cannot pay, 'til Power be given them of God, and that brought into exercise by his gracious Operations, a Power which they have no hereditary Right to, nor are they able to purchase it by their Doings; a Debt which when paid, profits not the Receiver, for our Goodness extends not to God. Tho' Praise be the Creatures Act, yet it is God who works all our Works in us! And thus the Sophism evanishes.

Obj. 4. *The End and Scope of our Faith, is our chief End, for Faith is the greatest Duty, we owe to God, and the Foundation of all the Rest, yea it is the Gift of God, and the greatest Gift we can receive in this World; it hence follows, that the End of the greatest Gift, and the greatest Duty, is Man's chief End; but the End of Faith is Salvation* 1 Pet. i. 19. *Erg.*

Ans. That which is the final or supream Scope of Faith is our chief End, no doubt, But what is only its intermediate or subordinate Scope, is not; neither does the Place of Scripture aduc'd prove any more!

Obj. 5. *Man's greatest Motive to Duty, is his chief End, but his greatest Motive to Duty is his Salvation; Erg. the Actions of a rational Creature, must have a Motive or incitement, for whoever acts without a Motive, acts without Reason. It is the distinguishing Character of a rational Creature, to propose to himself an End, and then to pursue that End in proper Methods; hence Logicians tell us, the End is first in the Intention, and last in the Execution; which makes it evident, that the*

the Motive and the End are synonymous, consequently the greatest or chief Motive, is the chief End. Now that Man's greatest Motive to Duty is his Salvation, appears from the following Places of Scripture; are we commanded to be faithful to Death, what is the Motive? Why thou shalt receive a Crown of Life, Rev. ii. 10. are we commanded to walk uprightly, and what is the Motive? Why the Lord will give Grace and Glory; and lastly are we commanded to Love the Lord our God, with all our Heart and Soul, &c. And what is the Motive? Why this do, and thou shalt live, Luke x. 28.

Ans. The Places of Scripture brought to confirm the aforesaid *Objection*, do only prove, that the Expectation of obtaining Happiness in the Way of Duty, is a great Encouragement to the Performance of it; and that it is so propos'd by God himself in his Word, but what is this to purpose? The Thing to be prov'd is, that Salvation strictly and subjectively considered, is the greatest Motive to Duty: of this there is not a Word in the preceding Proofs. The contrary thereto appears in the following Scriptures. (*Mat. v. 16. John xv. 8.*) And let me farther add, that the aforesaid logical Maxim, serves to prove the Glory of God, to be the chief End, thus, if that which is last in Execution, is or ought to be the first in Intention, then by consequence God's Glory ought to be first intended by us, because it is last in Execution, (*Ephes. i. 6.*)

Obj. 6. That which the Saints, of both the Old and New-Testament made their great Motive to do and suffer for God, we ought to make our great Motive, &c. And that this is as aforesaid, our chief End, but the Saints, &c. made their Salvation their great Motive, &c. Erg. Its hard if we cannot find one Saint in the Old or New-Testament that will direct us, what we ought to make our chief End, and they all made their Salvation their chief Motive: For this Moses refused

to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, and chose to suffer Afflictions with the People of God, it is applicable to all these Heroes, mentioned in the xi. of the Hebrews, as appears by the first Verse of the Chapter. Now Faith is the Substance of Things hoped for; what was it that animated Paul, to press towards the Mark, through all the Difficulties he met with? why the Prize of the high calling in CHRIST JESUS, Phil. iii. 14. What was the Motive, that enabled the Hebrews to take joyfully the spoiling of their Goods? why because they knew they had in Heaven a better and an enduring Substance, Heb. x. 3, 4. What enabled the Apostles to bear with Patience, the Afflictions they suffered but this? that they work'd out for them, a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of Glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17.

Ans. The Scriptures adduc'd in the Objection, do not prove the labouring Point, namely, that Salvation considered strictly, was the highest Motive of those good Men mentioned, and therefore the Argument does not conclude. The *Objectors* Opinion concerning all God's People, is much what, with Satans concerning *Job*, as I humbly conceive; which appears thus, after God himself had given an honourable Character of *Job*, namely, that he was a sincere Man, one that feared God and eschewed Evil, which imply an unfeigned Love to God's Majesty, and transcendent Regard to his Glory. But *Satan* in Opposition to the just Encomium, that God himself had given of *Job*, suggests, that *Job* was not such an upright Man, that his religious Service did not spring principally from Love to God, or Regard to his Glory; but was directed to, by, and selfish Ends; and therefore that he was but a Mercenary and a Hypocrite. Does he fear God for Nought, said Satan, touch all that be bath, & he will curse thee to thy Face. The Devil here insinuates, that *Job* had no noble internal Principles of Love and Holiness, no
supream

supream and endear'd Regard to the Divine Honour, but that he was mov'd chiefly or only, by outward selfish Respects; and that if these were taken away, he would quit his Religion entirely, and curse his Maker; this is in Substance the same with the Representation given by our *Objector*, of all the Saints of the Old and New Testament, in the Objection which I am now considering; all the Differences between the Objector's and Satan's Opinion, are these; The Objector he holds, that the Saints eyed chiefly in all their Actions, the Happiness of the higher Part of self, the Soul; but Satan the Happiness of the lower Part of self, the Body, the Objectors Opinion, concerns the whole Army of the Saints in all Ages, which is very uncharitable, but Satan's only a particular Person, namely, *Job*. I know not that we have any Account in Scripture, that Satan has been so bold as to impeach all the Saints at once, with the aforesaid Charge! Again the Objector offers his Opinion as a Commendation of the Saints, which is not so sensible as could have been wish'd; but Satan as an Accusation against *Job*! Once more the Objector offers his Opinion, with a deal of Confidence, and Airs of Assurance; but Satan begins modestly, and holds it till just the Close of his Speech; but the Objectors and Satans Opinion are the very same in this substantial Point, namely, in excluding that transcendent Love to God for himself, and supream Regard to his Glory, which are essential to true Godliness, and constituting selfish Considerations in the Room thereof. It is true the Objector has the Advantage of Satan in this particular, namely, in believing that the Saints had a chief Regard, to the Interests of the higher Part of self the Soul, whereas Satan was of Opinion, that *Job* eyed chiefly the Interest of the lower Part of *Self* the Body. But again it must be own'd, that Satan had the Advantage of the Objector, in other Part-

particulars, viz. 1. In that he offer'd his Opinion as an Accusation and so the God of infinite Wisdom took it. 2. In that he did not accuse the whole Body of the Saints, by the Lump, but a particular Person. 3. That he manag'd his Argument with Modesty, for the most Part, for he propos'd and insisted on his Allegation, (mostly) by way of Query *does Job, said he, fear God for naught?* Thus it is evident that the Objector and Satan harmonize in Judgment substantially, and differ only in the Case aforesaid, in some Circumstances; which if compar'd and weigh'd it would be hard to determine, which had the better of it. But leaving the Decision of this to Persons of greater Capacities, I proceed to observe, that the Devils Accusation being offer'd, and the great God himself having another Opinion of *Job's* Integrity, puts the Matter to Issue, and lets Satan try him with all his Darts; (only to spare his Life) the Devil being full of Rage, and Desire to make his Accusation good, lest he should be posted for a Lyar or false Accuser, as indeed he well deserv'd; environ'd him with all his Terrors, and shot the most envenom'd Darts at him that he had in all his Hellish Quiver, he soon disrob'd him of all his Ornaments, and cruelly bereav'd him of his massy Wealth, dear Relations, Health and Ease, in a sudden and tremendous Manner! And left him nothing but a scolding Wife, who was almost as great a Tormentor as himself, and fain would allure him to make the Enemy's Impeachment good, *by cursing his God*, whose Language *Sr. Richard Blackmore* sets in just and flaming Colours, in the following Lines.

*Dost thou not see that thy Devotion's vain?
 What have thy Prayers procur'd but Woe and Pain!
 Hast thou not yet thine Interest understood?
 Perverfely righteous, and absurdly good!*

Thcfe

*These painful Sores, and all thy Losses show,
How Heaven regards the foolish Saint below!
Incorrigibly pious can't thy God,
Reform thy stupid Vertue with his Rod!*

But even when poor Job, was under a horrible Complication of all manner of Misery, that the subtilty and Malice of his formidable Enemy, could invent and inflict upon his Mind and Body; while in the mean Time, the God he loved, withdrew his beamy Smiles, and on the contrary shot Arrows dipt in burning Vengeance, into his perplexed Soul, and compass'd him with the most affrighting Terrors! I say while Heaven itself frown'd, and Earth and Hell conspir'd to distress and shake that gallant noble Soul, yet he remain'd, like a Rock impregnable amidst all the boisterous Billows, with which he was environ'd round: For notwithstanding some humane Weaknesses, that drop't from his troubled Soul, in the Height of his Anguish; yet he would never speak dishonourably of his God, or reproachfully of his Religion! He kept firm to the divine Majesty, in the midst of the terrible Tempest! And thus the Objector and Satan (respecting the Opinion aforesaid) are solidly confuted by the Book of Job. The Case now in controversy, has been fairly try'd and God himself the Judge of Heaven and Earth, has brought in the Verdict in Job's Favour, *Job. i. 21. in all this Job sinned not; nor charged God foolishly, and Chapt. xlii. 7. Ye have not spoken of me the Thing that is Right as my Servant Job hath!*

Obj. 7. *All the Works of God, were not made for one and the same End: For if they were, there had been Need of but one sort of Beings only; if the Wicked are made for the Day of Evil, ought that to be always in their Eye? ought all their Actions to tend to that, as their chief Good and last End?*
Ought

Ought that to fire their Affections, raise their Desires, and actuate their Wills? Secret Things belong to God, Things reveal'd to us! If there be a Covenant between God and Man, the Principal aim of both cannot be the same! In all Covenants there are two contracting Parties at least, a Mediator is not a Mediator of one, there is also the Thing covenanted for, and the Consideration, or what each party expects of the other, what God expects from us, is that we glorify him, and what he promises, is that he will be our God, or supream Good, which certainly can be nothing less than the Enjoyment of him!

Ans. The Different sorts of Creatures, serve indeed different subordinate or lower Ends, but what then, can't they in the mean Time serve one and the same highest End? Do not the brute Creation, while they serve the Good of Mankind, at the same Time *objectively* declare the Glory of God's Wisdom, Power and Goodness in their Formation, Order and Usefulness? The End which the Almighty had in View in the Formation of all, viz. His Glory, is answered by all, tho' in a different Manner: Rational Creatures do or ought to glorify God *actively*; and for this they had a Capacity given them and a command laid upon them, and if they do it not *actively*, as it is their Duty, they shall *passively*; as the Psalmist justly observes, *The very Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Earth sheweth his Handy Works*; the inanimate Creation offer Occasion to thinking Beings to praise God: Now tho' the Glory of God be differently expres'd according to their several Ranks of Existence, yet it is the same principal Design that God hath in all, namely his declarative Glory; and it is the same thing that is manifested by all, tho' in a different Manner, viz. The Honour of the divine Attributes, and indeed herein the unsearchable Riches,
and

and magnificence of divine Wisdom and Power are illustriously display'd, in conducting the various Orders of Beings within the vast Circle of the spacious Universe to one supreme uniform End, worthy of his Councils!

Now if Gods declarative Glory be his highest End, in the Creation of all, as both Scripture and Reason demonstrate, then it must be the Creatures last End too, otherwise these Absurdities will inevitably follow, viz. 1st. That God will miss his End, which would destroy the divine Felicity, and so is Blasphemous! And 2d. It wou'd be the Creatures Duty to contradict their Creator, which is monstrous Blasphemy likewise! Conformity to our Creator is equally our Honour and Duty! It is most evident, that God requires a great Part of our Submission to his Sovereignty, and Obedience to his Law in this very Thing, that we harmoniously concur with himself, in carrying on the same great design with him, of his GLORY, in that Way which best suits the order of our Being: And indeed when we do otherwise, we walk contrary to God, and may expect therefore, that, so continuing, he will walk contrary to us. Had Man still continued in his original Integrity, he had still made it his highest design to Glorify and Honour the Author of his Being! It is true we are now to consider Man in his fallen State, wherein he is expos'd to deserved Punishment for his Transgression, and therefore has just Reason to be anxiously concern'd about his escaping the Wrath to come; but the Transgression of the Creature, does not cannot dissolve his Creators claim of right to his Love and Homage. And when a Sinner is truly sanctified, he is again restor'd to much of that primitive rectitude which was lost by Sin, (*Ephes. iv. 24*) and consequently makes that again his highest aim and design, to which he was engag'd and inclin'd by the Law of his Creation.

Neither

Neither is it any Part of God's secret Council, that he hath *made all Things for his Glory*; this Truth is as plainly reveal'd as any in the Scriptures: Neither is it any part of God's secret Council, that it is our indispensable Duty *to do all to the Glory of God*: To aim and design chiefly that God in all Things may be glorify'd, consider the following Places of Scripture, Isa. xliii. 7. *I have created him for my Glory.* Pſal. l. 15. *Call upon me in the Day of Trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me.* God's Secret Council concerns subordinate Ends or the Means which compass the aforesaid great Ends, namely, *God's declaritive Glory*, either *actively* or *passively* by the whole Creation.

The Question in the Objection is Sophistical, viz. *If the Wicked are made for the Day of Evil, ought that to be always in their Eyes, &c.*

Answer, No! Here it is insinuated, that those who hold God's Glory to be the chief End of Man imagine, or maintain, that what is God's subordinate End, should be Man's principal End, which is false and unreasonab; they only hold that what God has made his chief End, should be ours; and we should pursue this, in that Way which is accommodated to our reasonable Nature, and to which we are under an Obligation by precept. The Damnation of any Creature, was never God's chief End in making it; to imagine so, is to reflect upon the Wisdom and Goodness of the divine Nature, namely, in aiming at something below himself, as his highest End, and in delighting in the Misery of his Creatures as such! Besides the method by which we ought to pursue or prosecute our chief End, (God's Glory) is prescribed to us, by the divine Precept, and that is by Faith and Obedience, thereby seeking our own Happiness, and that, principally, because God will be thereby more Glorify'd, than in our Damnation!

But

But it is farther added in the Objection, *That if there be a Covenant between God and Man, the principal aim of both cannot be the same.*

Answer, The contrary is evident. God's aim in the Covenant of his Grace, is both his own Glory, and his Peoples Happiness. (*Ephes. 1. 17.*) And the aim of God's People is the very same, but the Glory of God is the principal Scope of both: The seeming Strength of the aforesaid Argument, flows from a false Foundation, viz. A strict resembling of the Covenant of Grace with human Covenants, which gives Room to suspect those that form or use it, to be tainted with *Arminian Errors.*

Obj. 8. *Moses and Paul cou'd not aim chiefly at the Glory of God, or glorifying of him in those Expressions, of being blotted out of the Book that God had written, and of desiring to be accursed from Christ, &c. because by their suffering this, they could not glorify God, neither could the Almighty glorify himself in punishing the Innocent, and sparing the guilty; the truth is, the Words are only hyperbolical Expressions of their abundant Love to their Brethren, and Kinsmen according to the Flesh.*

Answer, The Instance as to *Moses*, mention'd *Ex. 32. 12.* is plainly this, That such was his Regard to the Glory of God, that he would choose Death rather than the Heathen Nations should insult the Almighty, and behave themselves proudly against him, upon the Occasion of his destroying the People in the Wilderness; which he foresaw they would be apt to do, and therefore plead that *Israel* might be spared, (*See Num. xiv. 13 to the 17*) much after the same manner God himself expresses his own Regard to his Glory. (*Deut. xxxii. 26, 27.*) As to the Instance of *Paul*, I shall crave leave to cite the Words of Mr. *Matthew Henery* upon it; which are these, "*I could wish*, he doth not say *I do wish*, for it was

“ no proper means appointed for such an End ; but if it were,
 “ I could wish *that I my self were accursed from Christ,* for
 “ *my Brethren* ; a very high pang of Zeal and Affection for
 “ his Countrymen, he would be willing to undergo the grea-
 “ test misery to do them good : Love uses to be thus bold
 “ and venterous, and self denying, because the Glory of
 “ God’s Grace in the Salvation of many, is to be prefer’d
 “ before the Wellfare and Happiness of a single Person.
 “ *Paul*, if they were put in Competition, would be content
 “ to forego all his own Happiness to purchase theirs.” thus
 far he. Whither we understand by the Word *accursed*, Ex-
 communication, or temporal Death, with *Chrisostome* and
Pool, or the loss of eternal Happiness, with *Estius*, *Toletus*,
Ludovicus dediu, *Calvin*, *Menochius* ; yet it shews a great Love ;
 what a fleshly Love ? No, the Chapter will inform us, that
 it was Love to their Souls, and a desire after their Happiness,
 and consequently he had an Eye to God’s Glory, which is
 thereby manifested ! The Reason offer’d to confirm the
 Objection, *viz. That by suffering those Things God could not
 be Glorify’d, &c.* is answered by considering, that the desires
 of those holy Men were not absolute and peremtory, but
 Hypothetical or Conditional, *viz.* that rather than God’s
 Glory should be eclips’d, they were willing to endure those
 Things, if they were appointed Means to obtain such an
 End. To suppose that their Love was wholly Carnal, is to
 confront the Context of the Places whence the aforesaid In-
 stances are borrow’d, and pass an uncharitable Censure upon
 those Worthy’s, as tho’ they were Persons of the most sordid
 Disposition and Character !

Objection 9. *Asaph acted chiefly from selfish Principles, in
 Religion, as appears from Psal’ lxxiii. 12. 13. 14.* Behold
 these are the ungoldly who prosper in the World: Verily I
 have cleansed my Heart in vain, and washed my Hands in
 Innocency

Innocency, for all the Day long have I been plag'd and chastned every morning.

Answer. *Asaph* only tells us of a past Temptation, what a posing Difficulty it had been to him, to consider how that the Godly had generally the hardest Lot, as to worldly Comforts: This (*arcanum* or) secret of divine Providence, had so exercis'd him, that he, thro' the Corruptions of his Nature and Temptations of the Devil, was like to have entertain'd hard and unbecoming Tho'ts of Religion; nay it appears that he had been guilty of this in some degree, *for his Feet were almost gone!* But in his more compos'd frame, he reflected upon the corrupt influences of those Temptations with abhorrence! He calls himself a *Fool* and a *Beast* on that Account (as well he might) ver. 22. *So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a Beast before thee.* In a time of violent Temptation, he was drove to be pretty much of the selfish Opinion I am opposing, *viz.* to think it was a poor Thing only to serve and glorify God, except it was attended with other Advantages; but afterwards when he grew more calm, and got out of the violence of Temptation, he calls himself a *Fool*, an *Ignoramus*, and a *Beast* (or as the Word is interpreted a *great Beast*) for it; and acknowledges, that such Speeches, would be an *Offence against the Generation of God's Children.* See ver. 15.

Object. 10. *It was Paul's Sentiment, that the chief if not the only Motive to Obedience, was the hope of eternal Life,* for if the Dead arise not to receive their Reward, let us eat and drink, walk in the Way of our own Heart, and in the Sight of our own Eyes, and give a loose to all our Desires! If in this Life only we have hope, we are of all Men most miserable; what advantageth it me, that I have fought with Beasts at *Ephesus*, if the Dead arise not.

Answer, The aforesaid Passage of the Apostle *Paul's* Writings (1 *Cor.* xv.) are foreign to the labouring Argument; for what he says in them, is upon the Supposition of no future State at all after this Life; and upon the Supposition of the consequent Falsehood of the Doctrines of the Gospel, (ver. 14. 15. & seq.) Upon this Hypothesis he observes, that the Christians of that age were indeed the most miserable of Mankind, to expose themselves to such heavy Persecution for nothing, for an imposture. Whereas in this Argument, we consider a future State as most certain and the Doctrines of the Gospel as most true and worthy of all Acceptation; and that there is an inseparable connection between believing Obedience in this Life, and compleat Happiness in the Life to come: And so the Question is, which ought to be the chief and last End of our Obedience, the Glory of God, or the obtaining our own Happiness merely consider'd as such, without any respect to the Glory of God, or eternal glorifying of him in Heaven?

Now if the aforesaid Expressions of the Apostle *Paul*, be supposed to favour the latter of these Opinions, they must be taken in the following Sense, viz. That were his Obedience to God nothing concern'd, with his future Happiness; but that he could be sav'd without Holiness, as well as with it, that then he would be at no pains, or care to serve God at all; but on the contrary give a loose to all his vitious Inclinations.

But by this Sense of the Words, the Objector makes (in his Opinion) the Apostle *Paul*, to be a Hypocrite, and an Epicure; for hereby it's necessarily suppos'd, that he had no Supernatural Principles of Action, such as divine Life, Love, Holiness; but that on the contrary he had a superior Inclination to live after the Flesh, but was restrain'd from acting

accordin

according thereto, meerly by the external Consideration of Advantages, to be had by it in the next State !

Besides the blessed Apostle is condemned, as an *Epicure* by the Objector ; what has been already said gives Weight to this, to which I may add, that of ascribing the *Epicures* proverb to him as his fix'd Judgment, only that he was diverted from acting accordingly by selfish Considerations. The Proverb that was very Familiar among the *Epicurians*, was this.

“ *Lude, bibas, comedas, post mortem nulla voluptas. i. e.* play, eat, drink, for after Death there is no Pleasure,” and that of Martial.

“ *Vita nimis sera est, crastina vive Hodie.*

Life to-morrow is too late, live to day.

Now the Apostle *Paul* used the aforefaid *Epicurian* Proverb, namely, *let us eat and drink, &c.* with a design to confute it, as appears from the 33 and 34 verses of the Chapter. Possibly the Force of his Reasonings may be carried thus far, *viz.* that supposing the *Dead rise not*, the *Epicurian* Notion would be then more tolerable : But to suppose that he spoke absolutely here, is, in other Words, to say, that he believed there was no intrinsic Excellency in Holiness, or Comforts attending the sincere Practice of it in this Life, but that it was only eligible, because of the Advantages ensuing upon it, in a future State. And is not this the Sentiment of a selfish fordid Soul ? But the Apostle appears to be a Person of a very different Character by his Writings. See *Rom. 6. 2.* *How shall we (i. e. how can we) who are dead to Sin, live any longer therein ?* Those that are Regenerated have an inward fix'd Principle, termed in Scripture, *the Seed of God*, which creates a habitual Aversion against Sin, and propensity to Holiness !

Obj, II. Self Love is the Foundation of all the Love, we owe or pay to God, *what God is in himself we know not : The only*

only thing to determine our desire, love, and fear of God, is his Attributes, as manifested to us in Creation, Protection and Redemption; its nothing to the Purpose to tell how lovely and excellent God is in himself, absolutely considered; for tho' we consider him as cloth'd with all possible Perfections, without having to do with us, it will only raise our Admiration; if we consider him as able and willing to make us happy, this will raise Desire; if we consider him as just and powerful, and are under Apprehensions that he will punish us, this raises Fear; if really punished by him, without hopes of release, this raises Aversion, &c. if we consider him as good and merciful, and we are really possess'd of it, this raises Love, 1 Job. iv. 19. We love him because he first loved us.

Answer, The falsehood of the Position, contain'd in the above Objection, will appear by the following Considerations, viz. 1st, Then we owe no love to God because of his essential Excellency, which is absurd; for what is infinitely amiable is a proper Object of Love, and because it deserves it, it therefore demands in Reason and Justice our supream Affection. 2dly, The aforelaid Position, destroys entirely the necessity of supernatural Principles of Action, infus'd by Regeneration; for if we must love only for Benefits receiv'd, and not for the sake of the Giver considered abstractly, than there is no need of any thing but Nature, to excite to this. The *Pagans* who had nothing but natures Light to direct them, taught and practis'd this. *Lycurgus* the *Lacedemonian* Law-giver, would make no law against Ingratitude, because as he observ'd, *It was a prodigious Impiety, not to repay a Benefit: And Seneca*, in his Boock *de Beneficiis*, says, *Not to return one good Office for another, is inhuman; but to return evil for Good, is diabelical*, p. 104. and in p. 54. 5. 6. he says, *all benefits must be gratuitous*, a *Merchant*, says he, *sells me Corn, that keeps me and my Family from starving, but he*
seld

old it for his Interest, as well as I bought it for mine, and so I owe him nothing for it.—This, says he, is more properly the driving of a Trade, than the cultivating of a generous Commerce; thus far he. Now tho' I believe that we may eye our own Happiness, in our religious Service; yet when we do this above the divine Glory, it comes under *Seneca's* lash, and is solidly confuted by him in the preceeding Lines.

3dly. The aforesaid Position, justifies the Devils, and damned's hating God, for they are punished by God, without Hopes of release, and therefore may have an Aversion to him, according to the preceeding Objection. And farther if we are to love him only because of the Love he expresses to us, then when he punishes us, tho' most justly for our Offences, and therewith deprives us of all hopes of Mercy, we may hate him Law-fully, (for there is no Medium between love and hatred) that is, we may hate infinite Holiness, Justice and Excellency, which is absurd!

4. If we are bound to love God only, because of the Benefits we receive or hope for from him, then we are not bound to love him at all; for the Respect we offer to him is not for himself, but for the Benefits we receive; and thus true Love to God, which is the Fulfilment of the Law, and Scope of the Gospel, is destroy'd entirely by this Notion. For according to it, our Love ought to be wholly center'd upon the Benefits we receive for our own sake; and so upon ourselves: Even *Seneca*, the Pagan Stoick, could say, this for that, is rather a truck than a Benefit.

5. The aforesaid Position destroy's the Creators Right to the Creatures Love and Obedience, when he does not perceive them to be profitable to himself and therefore if a Person in despair, should hate God, even in this Life, he is justified by the aforesaid Position in so doing. But,

6. The

6. The aforesaid Objection is inconsistent with itself, for while it allows, that a view of the divine Perfections, without any Relation to our Benefit, may cause Admiration, this Opposes the other Part of it, for what is Admiration, but a high degree of Esteem, and is not this the Foundation of all rational Love ?

7. The aforesaid Position contradicts the Experience of true Believers, who even in the dark Hours of Desertion, when they think they are forsaken of and hated by God, yet thro' that inward Principle of divine Life which is infus'd into them by Conversion; feel workings of Desire in them after God, and Love to him: *Jonah* was an Instance of this, *Jon. 2. 4. Then I said, I am cast off out of thy Sight, yet will I look again towards thy holy Temple.* When *Asaph* fear'd that God had forgotten him, and that his Mercy was clean gone from him, yet he wou'd acknowledge his infirmity, remember God, meditate upon his Works, and talk of his wondrous Doings; and *Job* in his Distress profess'd, *that tho' God should slay him, yet he would trust in him.*

8. The aforesaid Position destroys the Reasonableness of loving our Enemies *of blessing them that curse us* and doing good to those *that despitefully use us!* For if Self-Love, be the Foundation of all the Love we owe or pay to God, then it follows unavoidably that it is more so of all the Love we owe or pay to Man, than the hating those that hate us, and cursing those that curse us, &c. is in itself Reasonable; for there is no selfish Motive if we consider those Things simply to excite us to do otherwise. But does not this Notion expressly contradict the Gospel of CHRIST as well as the true Interests of Society, and justify the dreadful *Pagan Principle of hating our Enemies!*

And as for the Text cited in the Objection, it will not bear the weight that is laid upon it, for it says not, that the Saints

Saints of old, lov'd God either *only* or *chiefly*, for his love to them, and yet this is the thing in Question; the *Tendency of the aforesaid Objection is to sap the Foundations of the whole Gospel, and to put natural Religion or Deism in the Room of it.*

Obj. 12. *The Difference between Hypocrisy and Sincerity may be known according to the Scheme of making Man's subjective Happiness his last End thus. 1. From their Works; Hypocrites do all to be seen of Men, and consequently have nothing, but outward Performances, but the sincere Christian, Glorifies God in Thought as well as in Word and Action.*

Ans. This Proposition is indefinite and so equivalent to a universal, it is as much as to say, every Hypocrite does as aforesaid. And this is not true in fact; we have no Reason to believe that *Paul* before Conversion did all to be seen of Men! Besides if the Proposition were true, it would then follow by the Law of contraries, that every one that had, or hath good Thoughts and Resolutions, which are Acts of the Mind and Will, or any Desires after his own Salvation, must be a sincere Christian: By this rule, *Abimeleck the Pagan, Balam the Wizard, Saul the Tyrant, Simon the Sorcerer, and Judas the Traytor* are dub'd for good Men! But a 2. Sign of Sincerity that is offer'd is this, "The Hypocrite doth it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but the Sincere an incorruptible."

Ans. Both the aforesaid Signs are the same, for both respect the End of Action, & both respect a temporal Reward; tho' there be some Difference in Specie, yet the Genus or Kind is the same: What view to Honour or worldly Interest, had the foolish Virgins or those graceless Jews, whom the Apostle Paul speaks of (*Rom. x.*) *who had a Zeal, but not according to Knowledge?* But pray observe and see if the Objector, does not prove himself to be a Hy-

H

pocrite

pocrite by his own Signs! *Thus*; If he be a Hypocrite, who makes the Interest of the lower part of *Self, the Body*, in this World his chief End; will it not follow, that he is also a Hypocrite, who makes the Interests of the higher Part of self, *viz.* the Soul, (without regard to God's Glory) in the next World his chief End? Are they not both built on the same *Foundation of immoderate Self-Love*? all the Difference between them is this, that the first respects the lower Part of Self, and so is more gross; and the Latter the higher Part of *Self*, and so is more subtil and plausible; but is there any more Love to God for himself, in the one than in the other?

But I proceed to the Improvement of this Subject. And

1. Methinks what has been said, serves to inform us of the Difficulty of Religion; and of the great Danger we are in of being deceiv'd, as to our State and Condition towards God. *Surely strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way, that leads to Life and few there be that find it, there is a Generation that are pure in their own Eyes and yet are not cleansed from their Filthiness!*

2. From what has been said we may learn, the absolute Necessity of the New Birth, in order to serve God acceptably here, and enjoy him hereafter! For without a Principle above nature, we cannot aim at God above our selves. A Fountain may send out Water upon a Level with it self, but not above the Level; and thus all that is done by us, while in a State of Nature, being done chiefly upon our own Account; it is but (in some Sense) a serving of ourselves, and therefore cannot be acceptable to God; and hence the Apostle asserts *that he that is in the Flesh cannot please God.* The Church of *England* in their Articles of Faith, justly say, "That Works done before the Grace of CHRIST, are not pleasing to God, but have in them the Nature of Sin." However tho' they be sinful in respect of their Manner of Performance,

Performance, yet when we conform to the Command even in Externals, the Matter thereof is good, because commanded; and it is in this Conformity that unconverted Sinners can only with Reason expect supernatural Grace; for *Yehovah will be enquir'd of by the House of Israel to do it for them.* And

3. We may therefore learn, the Necessity of examining ourselves; whether indeed we do aim at the Glory of God, in what we do? Now we may know this by the following Marks, *viz.* 1. When we are content to be outshin'd by others in Gifts and Esteem if so be God's Glory may be thereby advanced. (*Phil. i. 15.*) 2. When we habitually prefer God's Glory, to all other Things, that come at any Time in Competition with it, such as Credit, Estate, Relations. 3. When in the General, we can be content, that God's Will should take Place, tho' it cross ours, (*Mat. xxvi. 33. John xii. 28*) 4. When the Reproaches that come upon God's Name, by the Falls of Professors, & declining State of Religion, distress us more for the General than all our worldly Concerns! 5. When we find at Times hard grappling, to come at this Disposition, because of the Opposition of selfish Corruptions. And can after experiencing the Work of Conversion feel sometimes the witnessing of our Conscience *that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, we have had our Conversation in the World.* 2 Cor. i. 12. 6. When we feel the Love of CHRIST, sometimes sweetly constraining us to Duty. 7 when we bewail over the Remains of Hypocrisy in us!

4. If we find the aforesaid Characters in us there is ground of Hope and Comfort for us; and tho' we have many Weaknesses to lament, yet we are compleat in CHRIST, and *he who hath begun a good Work in us, will carry it on to the Day of the Lord JESUS. He that seeth in secret, will by and by reward us openly, and make our Righteousness shine as the Light, and our Judgment as the Noon Day.*

But alas how doleful and dangerous is the Case of all that want the aforesaid Signs! Their selfish Services are rejected, that *God, who is a Spirit*, casts them back as Dung upon their Faces, he will at last tear off their Hypocritical Masks, and condemn their Persons to eternal Burnings, except they repent! O consider, with trembling those dreadful Words of **CHRIST**, *Mat. xxv. Go ye accursed into everlasting Burnings, prepared for the Devil and his Angels!* What shall become of those who bring no Glory to God? But are as *Bernard* speaks (*aut Peccatum aut Sterilitas*) either Sinfulness or Barrenness, an unprofitable Burden to the Earth, and Poison to the Air! O let such think on these solemn Words of our Lord, *Mat. xxv. 30. Cast ye the unprofitable Servant into utter Darknes!* And how dismal is the Case of all such, who by open Impieties bid Defiance to Heaven who declare their Sin as *Sodom* and refuse to blush! *Surely Indignation and Wrath shall be upon every Soul that doth Evil, upon the Jew first and also upon the Gentile!* But what shall I say of those Monsters of impiety, who cast inglorious Reflections upon the very Work of God's holy Spirit, in convincing and converting Sinners; and comforting Saints? And call it *Hypocrisy, Mechanism, Enthusiasm and Disorder!* *Woe to these proud Potsherds that thus contend with their Maker, that like brute Beasts speak Evil of what they understand not!* O let such think on the Words of our Saviour to persecuting *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me, it is hard for thee to kick against the Pricks!* This Opposition is a dreadful Step, to the unpardonable Sin.

In fine let us be all exhorted to aim at God's Glory and to glorify him. For this is of absolute necessity, to obtain true Comfort, in Life, at Death and throughout Eternity!

SERMON III.

2. TIMOTHY. iii. 16. 17.

All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.

That the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.

THE Apostle having in the preceding Verses inform'd Timothy of the Apostacy of many from the Truth, and exhorted him to *constancy* in cleaving thereto, in the Face of all Opposition; does in the Words before us, as a Mean and Motive, propose an ample *Commendation* of the HOLY SCRIPTURES, in which we may observe, these Particulars,

1st. The Subject *commended*, all Scripture, (*pasa graphe*) i. e. *all the Holy Scripture*, not only the Old but the New Testament, in all their Parts.. The Word *Scripture* signifies Writing. And

2d. We have the *Commendation*, which represents three Things, viz, the *original*, *use*, and *design*, of the Scriptures.

And 1st. The *Original*, it's given by *Inspiration* (*theo pneustos*) i. e. by the immediate and infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit, 2. Pet. i. 20, 21. *Knowing this first, that no Prophecy of Scripture is of any private Interpretation, for*

the

62. *The manifold Use of the Scriptures describ'd.*

the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man, but Holy Men of old, spake as they were moved to it by the Holy Ghost.

2d. The Use of the Holy Scriptures, they are *profitable*, (*ophilemos*) which does not only signify, a certain Conveniency, as some imagine, but their *Necessity*, *Sufficiency* and *Perfection*! Here a fourfold profitableness of the Scriptures is mention'd, viz. 1st. For *Doctrine*, (*pros didascalian*) i. e. as Mr. Pool observes in his *Synopsis, for Instruction in the sound Truths of the Christian Religion*. The Original Word is derived from a Verb, that signifies *to teach*; this Sense of the Word is confirm'd Rom. xv. 4. *For whatsoever Things were written aforetime, were written for our Learning, that we thro' Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope!* Here observe, that the first Use of the sacred Scriptures, is to *instruct*: And the first Duty of those who Minister in Holy Things, is to *Teach*, and afterwards to *Exhort*.

And thus we may see, that every Religion that is not grounded upon Knowledge, is a false Religion! And that all such who would work upon Men's Passions, and *exhort* them before they *instruct* their Minds, act contrary to the holy Scriptures, and to right Reason! Such do but delude Mankind, and build a Babel of Confusion, but God is a God of Order, and not of Confusion! But 2dly, the Scriptures are profitable for *reproof*, (*pros elenckon*) i. e. to convince and confute Hereticks, and reset their Errors. This Word respects the polemical Use of the Scriptures, to convince gain-sayers and stop their Mouths, Tit. i. 9, 11. *Holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound Doctrine both to exhort and convince the Gain-sayers, whose mouths must be stop'd.*—Here the Word *Convince* is the same in the Original, with that in the Text which is translated *Reproof*, add hereto, that a Principal use of the Scriptures, is to convince
of

of Sin, of Righteousness and of Judgment, Joh. xvi. 8. 9. The original Word translated *Reprove*, is the very same with that in our Text, and signifies to convince démonstratively: Now altho' the holy Spirit is the efficient Cause of this, without whose energy the Word has no Influence upon Mens Minds, yet the Scriptures are the Instrumental Cause, for *by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*. Now that the Reproof in the xvi. of *John's* Gospel, before mention'd, respects not only evil Actions, but a State of Sin, appears from these Words of our Lord in the 9th ver. *of Sin, because ye have not believed on me.*

3dly, For *Correction*, (*profs epanorthosin*) Correction presupposes Evil, and seeing that this is Two-fold, viz. either of *Sin* or *Punishment*, therefore Correction is also two-fold: By the one we are freed from the Evil of Sin, which is call'd *Reprehension*; and by the other from the Evil of Sorrow, which is call'd *Consolation*. Both these the original Word (*epanorthosis*) includes.

4thly, For *Instruction in Righteousness*, (*profs paideian ente dicaiofune*) the Word (*paideia*) signifies both Instruction and Direction. The word *Righteousness*, every *moral Good*. This Phrase seems to import the exhortatory Use of the holy Scriptures, those who have *begun Well*, the holy Scriptures both direct and exhort to persist in their pious Course; and therefore in these four Uses all the Business of the Scriptures is describ'd.

But 3dly, we have in these Words the End and Scope of the Scriptures, and that is, *that the Man of God may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished.*—Who are we to understand by the *Man of God*?

Answer, In general all pious People; but especially Ministers of the Gospel. The Word perfect (*Artios*) is explain'd by the following Sentence, the holy Scriptures give sufficient Direction

Direction for all Goodness of every kind, that may be call'd *Perfect*, which has all its Parts. It is the manner of the *Hebrews* to use many Words in expressing that which they have a mind to impress on their Readers !

In discoursing upon this Text of Scripture, I shall according to the Order of it,

I. Labour to prove the *divine Original of the holy Scriptures.*

And,

II. Speak of *their Use.*

The

1st. General Head of Discourse, is *the divine Original of the Scriptures*, or to prove that they have been given forth by *divine Inspiration*, and are therefore infallibly true, and of *divine Authority*. To this End let it be considered,

1st. That a divine Revelation is necessary, seeing that nature teaches that there is a God, or some first Being, from whom are all things as their first Principle, and to whom all things tend, as their last End, and who is therefore above all. It is but reasonable that this supream Being, should be worshiped if he is above all, more excellent than all, and we have received our All from him, (as it is uncontestibly evident;) then these Things should be acknowledged with due Reverence, and what is this but the Worship of God? Surely he from whom our Beings and all our Benefits do proceed, has a just Right to our Homage and Service. And seeing he has made rational Creatures, in some sort, capable of it, is it not reasonable to conclude, that the supream Being, who always acts with the wisest Design, does and will require that moral Service for which he has given a Capacity? the Case must be so, otherwise the Almighty has given a Capacity to no Purpose, which is unworthy of his infinite Wisdom!

Well, seeing the Almighty does require some Worship and Service of his reasonable Creatures; may we not infer from

from his infinite Goodness, that he has given them some certain and infallible rule, to direct them therein; especially considering, that there are some things in Religion, which cannot be known by the Light of Nature, viz. all those Institutions which Spring from the meer Will or good Pleasure of God, cannot be found out by the force of human Reasoning, without some special Revelation from God. As *Jebo-
vab* makes his unatainted Purity manifest, in moral Laws, so the Glory of his Sovereignty appears in his positive Injunctions, respecting which his Pleasure cou'd not be known, without some divine Revelation. And thus all that tribute of Honour, which redounds to his Sovereignty thereby, would be entirely lost; from all which Considerations, the necessity of some supernatural Revelation, some divine Law to direct Mankind in the Affairs of Religion, is of the last Necessity.

Neither, 2dly. Is it impossible that the Almighty should communicate his Mind and Will to his Creatures by immediate Revelation: If a Creature can impart his Mind to another, much more the Creator; for surely there is no excellency in Creatures, but what is eminently in him. If it is not inconsistent with the Glory and Majesty of God to *behold and be present with all Things*, then surely it cannot be injurious to his Honour to communicate his Mind to reasonable Creatures: Nay, on the contrary, it is an Indication of his Goodness and Wisdom, to favour intelligent Creatures with such intimations of his Will, as are suitable to the Capacity he has given them, and subservient to promote their Happiness.

Neither is it in any respect absurd or impossible for the Almighty to communicate his Mind to Mankind by immediate Revelation. Surely he that made the Soul can find easie access to the Work of his own Hands, and form what Impressions on it he pleases! If a finite Spirit can communicate its

Ideas to the Soul of Man, as all confess, except *Sadduces*, how much more can the Father of Spirits? To deny the reality of Inspiration, is not only to reject the credibility of Scripture History, but to confront the avowed Sentiments of the Pagan World, who all declar'd it to be agreeable to Reason!

Having premis'd these few particulars, I shall proceed to mention those Characters of Divinity which are impress'd on the Scriptures. And

1st. Methinks the *Antiquity* of the Scriptures, is an Argument of their divine Authority: The Books of *Moses* (next to the *Decalogue*) are the most ancient Writings in the World. This *Justin Martyr*, who liv'd in the second Century, and *Eusebius* after him, makes fully evident. But the Words of *Tertulian*, in his Apology, are very memorable! “ *Our Religion*, says he, *far out does all that you can boast of in that Kind*; for the Books of one of our Prophets only, viz. *Moses*, “ (wherein it seems God hath inclos'd, as in a Treasury, all “ the Christian Religion preceeding so many Ages together) “ reach beyond the antientest you have; even all your publick Monuments, the Antiquity of your Originals, the establishment of “ your Estates, the Foundations of your Cities, all that are advanced by you in all Ages of History and Memory of Times.— “ I think I may say more, they are older than your very Gods, “ your Temples, Oracles, and Sacrifices! Have you not heard “ mention made of that great Prophet *Moses*, he was cotemporary with *Inachus*, and preceeded *Danaus* (the antientest of “ all that have a Name in your Histories) 393 Years: He lived “ some hundred Years before the ruin of *Troy*; and *Homer* the “ oldest Writer among the Greeks; lived, as *Pliny* sayeth, “ 250 Years after the subversion of that City. Every of the “ other Prophets, succeeded *Moses*, and yet the last of them was “ of

“ of the same Age with your prime wise Men, Law-givers and
 “ Historians ! thus far he.”

It is certain, that neither the Writings of *Homer, Trismegistus, Pythagoras, Berosus, Plutarch, Cicero, Seneca*, or any other can vie with the Books of *Moses* for Antiquity! Now is it not Reasonable to believe, that to be the best Religion which was first? Is not Truth always the first born? Is it not absurd to imagine that the most early Notices of Religion should be counterfeit? How can it consist with the divine Goodness to suffer Mankind to be thus impos'd upon, under pretence of his Authority, in a Matter that concerns their everlasting Interest, without any Thing from him, either before or since, to detect the Fraud? Certainly this is unworthy of God, and contrary to the Reason of Men; and therefore the Scriptures, being the most Antient, must needs proceed from the God of Truth. But

2. *The Majestick Stile of the Holy Scriptures speaks them to be of a Divine Original.* The Stile of the Scripture is very different, from all human Writings, in it we find a stately plainness, a majestick Simplicity, commanding Reverence from all intelligent Beings, who do without Prejudice attend thereto. God is represented as speaking with a Sovereignty, Grandeur, and Majesty, becoming the Dignity of his Being and extent of his Government. *e. g. Isa. i. 2. Hear O Heavens! And give ear O Earth! For the Lord hath spoken. Isa. lxvi 1. Thus sayeth the Lord, the Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth my Foot-Stool! Isa. xl. 12. 15. Who hath measured the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand, and meted out the Heavens with a Span; and comprehended the Dust of the Earth, in a Measure; and weighed the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance; Behold the Nations are as a Drop of a Bucket, and are counted as the small Dust of the Ballance! Behold he taketh up the Isles as a very little*

little Thing, Pl. lxxvi. 12. He shall cut of the Spirit of the Princes, He is terrible to the Kings of the Earth, Pl. xcvi. 1, 5. The Lord reigneth let the Earth rejoyce, let the Multitude of Isles be glad thereof. Clouds and Darknes are round about him, Righteousness and Judgment, are the Habitation of his Throne, a Fire goeth before him, and burneth up his Enemies round about, His Lightnings enlightned the World, the Earth saw and trembled, the Hills melted like Wax, at the presence of the Lord, at the Presence of the Lord of the whole Earth! Here are no Apologies, begging Pardon of the Reader, or any Arts us'd to insinuate into his good Opinion as is common in human Writings. *Augustine* says, "That the Holy Scriptures seem'd rude and unpolish'd to him, because he did not understand its inward Beauty; but when converted to Christianity, he declar'd, that when he understood them, no writing appear'd more wise and eloquent." *Gregory Nazianzen*, a Man of great Learning, when he became acquainted with the sacred Scriptures, judged, "All the Ornaments of Literature among the Greek Philosophers, to be vastly inferior to them." *Iliricus* observes, "That altho' we find not in the Holy Scriptures, that delicate Itch of Words, that numerosity of Sounds or those pleasing Trifles with which the vain glorious Orators of Greece and Rome beautify'd their fam'd Harangues, yet we find there a grave and masculine Eloquence, exceeding all others." Thus far he: 'Tis true a great Part of the Scripture, is destitue of the Sweetness of Sound, and Pomp of Diction. But yet there is more Beauty in that plainness, than in all the Flowers of *Ciceronian* Rhetorick. Neither would it become the Majesty of Heaven, to use the Philosophical Subtilties of *Plato* and *Aristotle*! A Pearl needs no painting.—A Prince need not play the Orator! Plainness well becomes Royal Power and Majesty in the

the Publicaion of Laws. In the sacred Scriptures Commands are issu'd forth with Sovereign Majesty, and Obedience peremptorily requir'd, and no other Reason assign'd but the Legislators Will. Here are Promises to the Obedient, of all needful Blessings here, & immortal Glory hereafter. Here are Threats denounced against the Disobedient of every Order, from the Prince on the Throne to the Beggar on the Dunghil; and that of no less than eternal Miseries! Here Injunctions are introduc'd, with *thus saith the Lord! He that hath Ears to hear let him hear.* Where do we find any Thing like to this, in any human Writings?

3. *The Matters therein treated of, are so sublime and transcendent, that they could never be devis'd by a human Mind.* Here the essential and personal Glory of the great Three ONE, is represented in a surprising Light. Here a rational and consistent Account is given of the Original *Source* of that *Depravity* and *Misery*, which taints and infests the whole human Race! *viz.* That both were occasion'd by the Apostacy of *Adam*, the federal Head and Representative of his whole Offspring. This the Pagans groan'd under, but ascrib'd it to a Fabulous Cause! Here a *Method of Cure* is open'd, every Way worthy of God, and every Way suited to all the Maladies under which our fallen Nature labours; namely, that the Son of God should assume the human Nature under its ruinous Circumstances, into an inseparable Union with his Deity, and therein mediate and satisfy for the Sins of Men, by his Suffering and Obedience! What finite Mind could invent a *Scheme* in which the Divine Attributes shine forth with such humble Beauty and harmonizing Glory? A *Scene* which gives Room for the displays of Sovereign Mercy, without infringing upon the unalienable Rights of Justice! Besides the sacred Scriptures give us

rational Account of the *Origin* and *End* of the World.

The

The infinite Grandeur of the Almighty is most nobly represented, in the Manner of the Worlds Formation; he did but speak and behold it existed, his single sovereign Beck caused it to spring in a Moment, from the Womb of empty Nothing into Being; and how awful and affecting is the Representation which the Divine Oracles give us of the Resurrection of the Dead, and the general Judgment! And where else can we find these solemn Scenes open'd, which are so terrible to the impenitent, and comforting to all that truly fear God?

4. That Holiness the Scripture inculcates, is an Argument of its divine Original. The divine Oracles do not only recommend Holiness in Speech and Practice, but in the inward Sentiments and Thoughts of the Soul; and that not only by its Precepts, which are just and equal, but by Threatnings of the most dreadful kind, and Promises of the most important Good; as well as by examples of most unblemish'd Vertue and strictest Piety. The Words of Holy Scripture are pure as Silver try'd in a Furnace and purify'd seven Times. The most sublime universal and perpetual Purity, is the golden Center to which all the Lines in the Circumference of Scripture bend and terminate. And it ought to be observed, that the sacred Scripture urges a Holiness, which springs from the noblest Principle, *viz. LOVE*; and aims at the highest End, *viz. The Glory of God*; whereas divers of the Pagans have held a multiplicity of gods which is impossible in the Nature of Things, and observ'd impure Rites in their religious Worship, and allow'd of Revenge and Self Murder! And all their *Motives* to the Vertues they recommend, are of a selfish Nature. But the Scripture allures us to the Love and Practice of Vertue and Goodness, from the sublime and endearing Consideration of redeeming Love! I may add, that the Pagan Moralists, *viz. Socrates, Plato*

Plato, Plutarch, Seneca, Tully, Aristotle, are silent about Heart Purity, so far as I know, without which, a regular Life has but a Shew of Goodness. As to the *Mahometan* Religion it may be observ'd, that it was propagated among a barborous, rude and uncultivated People, and spread no farther than the Force of the Sword carried it. It is evident that *Mahomet*, the Author of the *Alcoran*, did nothing to prove himself to be a Prophet: What Mysteries did he reveal? What Prophecies did he express? What Miracles did he perform? How many Things in the *Alcoran*, are contradictory and ridiculous? Besides its Precepts indulge Mens sensual Inclinations with *Polygamy* here, and its Promises flatter Men's vain Hopes with the Proposal of a carnal Paradise hereafter; a Paradise more fit for Swine, than reasonable and immortal Souls! Well if the Scriptures be absolutely and comparatively Holy, and tend to make us so above all other Writings, is it not an Argument of their divine Original? Surely Satan, who is an impure Spirit, would not invent what is so prejudicial to his Kingdom, nor the Wicked who are under his Influence: It can't be reasonably suppos'd, that they would, if they could, devise a System of Doctrines and Laws which directly controls their corrupt Inclinations, and dooms them to perpetual Misery for them! Nor can Angels or good Men be the Authors of the Scriptures, because they would be guilty of frequent lying, in ascribing to themselves and their Sayings a Divinity, which the Scriptures frequently attribute to itself, therefore it must derive its Original from none else but God!

The Necessity of some Divine Revelation has been before observed. And indeed he that denies this, does not only deny the Christian and Jewish, but all Religion in general, for all have alledged this as their Foundation; and besides he must acknowledge, that the Almighty has left Man

in a worse Condition than the meanest Creature, to whom he has given sufficient Means, to attain the highest End of their Beings: But sure this is incompatible with infinite Wisdom and Goodness! If any should say, that Reason may suffice, I answer no! It is corrupt, and therefore cannot be the Rule of Right, without a Revelation. The absurd Opinions of many who have the Help of a Revelation, shows the insufficiency of Reason without it, to be our Guide in religious Matters; but if it be granted, that there is some Revelation, then surely it is the Christian, for this alone bears the Character of Divinity; all the Rest carry the manifest Tokens of Imposture upon them, as has been before observ'd. But

5. That *Harmony* and *Agreement* which subsists between all the Parts of the sacred Scriptures, is another Proof of their divine Authority. This blessed Book, was Sixteen Hundred Years a writing; it was written by a great number of Persons of various Conditions, in different Tongues, in different Ages, in distant Places, and yet all the Parts whether Historical, Prophetical, Perceptive, Promisory, Minatory, Typical, Doctrinal, sweetly harmonize and tend to the same noble End! This could never be the Issue of human Contrivance; it must needs be the Result of infinite Prescience, and divine Guidance! How often do uninspir'd Men contradict themselves in their Writings, and how much more would they contradict one another? If many Persons of inferior Attainments, did at various Times and Places write upon religious Subjects, considering their natural Blindness in such Matters, and their lyableness to blunder, even in reporting Matters of Fact; and indeed if the Penmen of the Scriptures had been left to themselves, in the Composition, the Bible would have been but a Bundle of Confusion and Contradiction, But

6. Another

6. Another Argument for the divine Original of the Scriptures, may be taken from the *Penmen* thereof ; and here it may be asserted, that they were Men of such blameless Lives, that their Enemies could not fix such Charges upon them as might justly weaken the Credit of their Writings. It is likewise evident, that they were Men of great Candor and Integrity, and that from their discovering their own Faults, *Moses* Records his Backwardness to comply with the divine Call of going to *Egypt*, his Infidelity, his Murmurings, (*Num. xi. 11, 15.*) and *Jeremy* informs us, of his cursing *the Day of his Birth*, *Jer. xx.* *David* makes mention of his Crime in the Matter of *Uriah*, (*Psal. li.*) nay they do not only mention their own Crimes, but those of their dearest Relations ; which carnal Policy would have inclin'd them to conceal ; thus *Moses* mentions his Brother *Aaron's* making the *Golden-Calf*, (*Exod. xxxii 25.*) They also acquaint us, with the means of their Extraction, thus *Amos* tells us that he was among the Herdsmen of *Tekoah* ; the Evangelists inform us that they were Seafaring Men, when call'd to be Disciples.

Neither were the Penmen of the Scriptures, designing Men, they sought not their own Honour, as appears from what has been said, neither did they seek their own Interest. Altho' *Moses* had the Burden of Government, yet he did not affect the pomp of a King, neither did he advance his Family to that Wealth and Honour which was in the Power of his Hand to confer ! No, the Laws he made, depriv'd his own Tribe of kingly Government, and the highest Honour of the Priesthood he conferred on his Brothers Children, not his own ! Its certain that Instead of Honour and Profit, many of the Penmen of the Scriptures, exposed themselves by their writing and preaching to great Contempt and Hardships !

Besides many of the Penmen of the Scriptures, were of such Inferior Abilities that they were not able to form an

K

Imposture,

Imposture and palm it on the World. And some of them were Kings, and so above the sneaking Meanesses of Lying and Forgery! And to conclude this Argument, I may farther observe that the very Writers of the Scriptures appear to be under a Subjection to the Doctrines they delivered, which argues them to be of a divine Original! But

7. The *exact accomplishment* of *Prophecies*, proves the Divinity of the Scriptures; to foretel Events that depend upon arbitrary Causes, exceeds the reach of a human Mind, and is the Prerogative of that God only, who is *panopthalmos*, all eye and has no Succession in Duration; but there are many Instances of this kind in Scripture, *e. g.* *Moses* and *Joshua* foretold the Idolatrous Apostacy of Israel, (*Deut.* xxxi. 29. *Jos.* xxiii 15.) which the Book of Judges shews was accomplished. *Isaiab* and *Jeremiab* foretold the *Bablonish* Captivity, with the Time of its Continuance, and the Deliverance from it by *Cyrus*, which accordingly came to pass, as other Parts of the Old-Testament do witness. The Prophecy of a Reformation by *Josiah*, and his burning the Bones of the Idolatrous Priests at *Bethel*, did exactly come to pass three Hundred Years after. (*1 Kings* xiii. 2. *2 Kings* xxiii, 15, 16.) And many Prophecies respecting the Time and Manner of our SAVIOUR's coming, his Birth, Life, Miracles, and Death, are punctually fulfilled. It was near two Thousand Years, before that famous Prophisy, (*Gen.* xlix. 10.) had its Accomplishment, *Hircanus* was the last of the Tribe of *Judah*, who sway'd the Scepter of Government over the People of *Israel*, and this Man *Herod* a Stranger, an *Idumean* slew; and so cut off the Line of *Judah*, and usurp'd the Government, as *Josephus* testifies; and then did the MESSIAS come. An ingenious Writer glosseth excellently upon the aforesaid Prophecy, in the following Manner. The Jewish Rabbins sayeth he, “ do not deny that by SHI-

“ LOH is meant the MESSIAH ; now at the Time of Jacob's
 “ uttering these Words, there was little Probability that a-
 “ ny of his Posterity should have a Sceptre,—being poor, few,
 “ and in a strange Land ; or if they should thrive so as to be-
 “ come a Kingdom, why should Judah have the Government ?
 “ Seeing there were three elder Brothers, viz. Reuben, Si-
 “ meon, and Levi ; nor was there any likelihood of this Pro-
 “ phecy's being accomplish'd when Moses set it down in Writ-
 “ ing, for then he himself who was of the Tribe of Levi was
 “ in the actual Possession of the Government, and put into it
 “ by God himself, who appointed for his successor Joshua, not of
 “ the Tribe of Judah, but of Ephraim, whence we have a no-
 “ table Evidence, of the Truth and Sincerity of this Pre-
 “ diction : For had not Jacob really uttered it, we cannot
 “ imagine that Moses would have put it in Writing, to the
 “ Disparagement of his own Tribe.” Thus far he.

We see with our Eyes the ingathering of the Gentiles, and Dispersion of the Jews ! But the Time would fail to relate the accomplishment of those numerous Prophecies that respect our SAVIOUR : I must therefore proceed to observe.

8. That God himself has attested the Divinity of the Scriptures by *Miraculous Works*, and surely if we receive the Witness of Men, the Witness of God is greater. A Miracle is an extraordinary divine Work, whereby something is produc'd contrary to the common Course and fixed Laws of Nature ! Now that many such have been wrought by the Prophets, by CHRIST, and the Apostles, for the Confirmation of the Divinity of their Mission and Doctrine, we have all the Evidence that such past Facts will admit of, and more cannot be reasonably desir'd. *Elijah* expressly appeal'd to God for the Determination of the Controversy between him and the Priests of *Baal*, by a miraculous Work, and our Lord appeal'd to the Miraculous Works

he performed in Confirmation of his Mission and Doctrine, as particularly in the Case of *John Baptist's* Disciples, *go and tell him*, said he, *that the Blind receive their Sight, and the Lame walk, &c.* We have Information by many credible and disinterested Witnesses, that the Miracles which our Lord wrought, were many in Number, beneficent in Kind, that they were wrought before Multitudes of Enemies, who, had there been any fraud, would surely have detected it. They were wrought frequently in open Day, and of this the Relators were Eye and Ear Witnesses. A Miracle is certainly the broad Seal of Heaven, which could never be given to a forgery! And therefore, as *Dr. Owen* observes, “*When any Doctrine which is in itself such as becometh Holiness and Righteousness, is confirm'd by a Miracle, there can no greater Assurance be given even by God himself of its veracity!*” Could the infernal Spirits imitate the miraculous Works which our Saviour wrought? Is it not utterly inconsistent with the divine Goodness to suffer them to use the Seal of Heaven in seducing Mankind, without giving some evident Notices of the Imposture, but this has never been done in this Case: The *Turks* do acknowledge the Miracles of our Lord, and the *Jews* also; but the latter ascribe them, thro' Malice, to the Power of Magick! But then, as our Saviour justly observes, *Satan would be divided against Satan, and so his Kingdom could not stand!* Satan would do that which is contrary to his Interest, which is absurd! *Irenius*, who lived in the second Century, affirmeth, “*That the Dead were raised to Life, and other Miracles wrought in his time, by laying on of Hands.*” And *Tertulian*, in his Apology, hath these Words, “*Let any one be brought before your Tribunal who is apparently possess'd with a Devil, that Spirit being commanded by any Christian, shall confess himself to be a Devil.*” But to proceed,

Another

Another Argument of the Divinity of the Scriptures, is their *almost miraculous Preservation* for so long a tract of Time, notwithstanding the rage of numerous, powerful and politick Opposers, while many other esteemed Composures, which never met with such Opposition, have long since perished. *Antiochus Epiphanes*, in the Days of the *Maccabees*, made diligent search for the Book of the Law, and where ever he found it, burnt it, and threatned those that conceal'd it with Death and Torture. And about the Year of CHRIST 300, the Emperor *Dioclesian* being determin'd to root Christianity out of the World, us'd the same Barbarities to destroy the Scriptures. But the gracious God has preserv'd them to this Day, maugre the combin'd rage of Hell, and Earth ! yea to preserve them whole and entire, so that those to whom they were committed, have not been suffered to corrupt them, altho' they fell into Opinions inconsistent with them, they have therefore fled to *unwritten Traditions* as the *Patron* of their erroneous Opinions. The Jews to their *Talmud* and *Cabala*, which, they say, *Moses* delivered by Word of Mouth. And the *Papists* to *oral Traditions*, which they say were delivered by *St. Peter*. But I proceed to observe,

That the *early Success* of the *Gospel* notwithstanding of all the Opposition and Contempt which was made against it, and cast upon it, gives additional Force to what has been before offer'd. What less then Omnipotence cou'd make such self denying Doctrines, preach'd by illiterate Men, become victorious over the Pride and Prejudice of multitudes of divers Nations, and that without the Arts of Persuasion or Influence of civil Power?

And indeed that divine *Energy* that does frequently attend the *Holy Scriptures*, is a pregnant Argument of their divine Authority. By these the Minds of Men are enlightned, their Consciences alarm'd, their Hearts comforted and renew'd, having

having their general Byass turn'd towards God, and Heavenly Objects, and their Lives reform'd! These Effects which have appear'd in Millions of Men, do surpass the Force of Nature, and must therefore be ascrib'd to an omnipotent Cause. And is it consistent with the Wisdom and Holiness of God to use a forgery to produce such noble Effects, and thereby to confirm an imposture? no surely! most certainly the Almighty uses Instruments adapted to the Effects produced. *Tuly* justly complains, "That the *Pagan Morallists*, wanted Authority to enforce their Sentiments and Precepts, and that they were rather for Ostentation than Practice.

And indeed the general Tendency and Scope of the sacred Scripture, being to *exalt God* and *abase the Creature*, is no inconsiderable Argument of its divine Original. Had Men been the Contrivers, they would have fram'd a Scheme more agreeable to their corrupt Inclinations! They would have represented it as an easy Matter to be sav'd, and that the Creature is not so beholden to the Almighty for his Happiness as the Scriptures signify.

Likewise the constant *Testimony* both of the *Jewish* and *Christian Church*, to the Truth of the Scriptures, serves to confirm and illustrate our present Argument. Here let it be considered, that the Truth of Christianity depends much upon certain Facts, such as the Miracles which *CHRIST* wrought, and his Resurrection from the Dead. These the Apostles were eye Witnesses of, and had there been any fallacy in them, could have easily discover'd it; for the Connexion we observe in their Writings, proves that they had the regular exercise of their Reason. Now how can it be suppos'd, that Men in their Senses would constantly assert what they knew to be false, and that in the face of Danger, when they had no Prospect of Honour or Interest by so doing? But on the Contrary, of Reproach, Poverty and Pain, and at last Seal
it

it with their Blood! To which let me add, the constant Testimony of Millions of Men ever since, many of whom suffer'd great Hardships, yea and Death itself, rather than they would deny the Truth of the Scriptures!

Besides some learned Men observe, That divers Matters of Fact recorded in Scripture, are also acknowledged by Heathen Historians, e. g. " *The Creation of the World*, by Ovid " *in his Metamorphosis*. *The long Lives of the Patriarchs*, " by Manetho. *The Flood*, by Berofus. *Noah*, by Herodotus, " *under the Name of Janus*. *The Destruction of Sodom*, " by Pliny and Justin. *Circumcision*, by Herodotus, Strabo, " Diodorus, Siculus, and Tacitus. *Israels departure out of " Egypt*, by the antient Record of the Egyptians, Phenicians, " Caldeans, and Grecians. *Mention is made of Solomon*, " by Dionisius Casius. *Of the Slaughter of Senacherib*, by " Herodotus. *The famous Roman Historian Tacitus*, in his " *Annals*, speaking of Nero's Persecuting the Christians, under pretence of their burning the City of Rome, says expressly, That the Author of that Name or Sect, was " CHRIST, who when Tiberius was Emperor, was put to " Death by Pontius Pilate, the then Procurator of Judea. " *The Appearance of the Star is mention'd* by Calcidius. " *Herod's Slaughter of the Children*, by Macrobius. *The " Eclipse of the Sun at our Lord's Crucifixion*, by Dionisius " *the Areopagite*. Tertulian, in his Apology, appeals to the Roman Records for the certainty of it. And Josephus in his History, gives Testimony to the Miracles of our Saviour.

Once more, if the Scriptures were not of divine Authority, wherefore do wicked Men rage so much against them? and why are we assayed with so many Temptations from Satan to doubt and object when we apply ourselves to the serious Study of them? Would Satan so much oppose them

above

above all other Books, did they not come from God and tend to destroy his Kingdom? No surely!

But notwithstanding of all that hath been said in order to give us full Satisfaction, there is a necessity of the internal Testimony of the holy Spirit, whereby Persons are made to feel the Power of the Scriptures, forming holy Dispositions and sweet Sensations in them, answerable thereunto, and thereby enabling them to believe its divine Authority, and hence it is said, *that those who believe have the Witness in themselves.*

But I proceed to speak, and that but briefly, of the 2d. General Head, which was to discourse upon *the Use of the Scripture.*

And here I may summarily observe, that the sacred Scriptures are the perfect and only Rule of our Faith and Practice. Hence in our Text they are said *to make the Man of God perfect and thoroughly furnish'd to every good Work*; and hence they are call'd *a Light to our Feet and a Lamp to our Paths*, and expressly, a Rule, Gal. 6. 16. *And as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be upon them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God.* From this we must not swerve to the right or left Hand. Isa. viii. 20. *To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.*

And indeed the holy Scriptures, have only the Nature and Property's of a Rule, which are these following, 1st. a Rule ought to be *prescrib'd* by God alone. Mat. xv. 9. A Religious Rule cannot be prescrib'd by another than him to whom the Persons ruled belong. And indeed the Sublimity of the matter which such Rules concern, sufficiently manifest, that they cannot be well made by Creatures.

2dly, A Rule ought to be *receiv'd* and *Publick*; otherwise how shall it determine Controversies? And thus it is in respect

respect of the Scriptures, they have been prescrib'd by the publick Authority of God himself, and receiv'd by the common Consent of the Christian Church, as has been before prov'd; and hence the Church is call'd the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, 1. *Tim.* iii. 15.

3dly, A Rule ought to be *clear and plain*, otherwise how can we know what we have to believe and do? And so are the Scriptures, especially in the Explication of such Things, as are of absolute necessity to Salvation. And hence they are call'd *a Light*, and said *not to be hid from us*, *Deut.* xxx.

11. Where we meet with Obscurity, this arises from the Sublimity of the Things treated of, or the Weakness of our understanding rather than from the Scriptures themselves.

4thly, A Rule ought to be *perfect and adequate*, or equal to the *Thing ruled*, so that it need never to be augmented or diminish'd in the least, otherwise it will be unfit to measure its Object. Such is the Holy Scripture, there is nothing to be believ'd or done, but what it contains and prescribes. Now the Perfection of the Scriptures is two-fold, *viz.* *integral* or *Systematical*, and *Essential*, the first consists in its full Number of Books, which is now compleat and the Canon Seal'd, (*Rev.* xvii. 18. 19.) the latter respects the Doctrine contain'd in those Books; and this most certainly is compleat, as our Text asserts, and many other Places. And hence we are bound to the Scripture alone as our Guide, by the strictest Injunctions. (*Deut.* xvii. 18. *Isa.* viii. 20.) And forbid to add to it or detract from it, under the severest Penalty's! (*Deut.* iv. 2. *Rev.* xxii. 18. 19.) And inform'd that we shall be at last judg'd by it. *John* xii. 42. And Reason will inform us, that it must be perfect, seeing that it is the first Principle, and last Explication of our Faith. 2 *Pet.* i. 20, 21. If it were not so, true and perfect Conclusions cou'd not be drawn from it, for the Effect cannot be

L

better.

better than its Cause. The sacred Scripture has all its essential Parts, viz. *Matter* and *Form*, and all its integral, viz. *Law* and *Gospel*, and is therefore Perfect.

5thly. A Rule ought to be *constant* and *immoveable*, evermore and every where like to itself, otherwise how can any certain Measure be rul'd by it, and such is the Holy Scripture; 2 *Pet.* i. 19. *We have a more sure Word of Prophecy, (bebaiateron propheticon logon.)*

Now the aforesaid Characters cannot be justly ascrib'd to any thing else that is obtruded for a Rule either by *Jews, Papists, Turks, Pagans, Deists, Quakers, Antinomians*: The *Jewish Talmud* and *Cabala* are private Things, destitute of divine Authority, full of Absurdities, Falsehoods and Impieties against God and Man, as *Gallatinus* and *Sextus Senensis* have made evident. The *oral Tradition* of the *Papists* is of the same Stamp, they are extremely uncertain; for while some of the Fathers assert a particular Tradition to be Apostolical, others of them deny it. They are also contrary to the Written Word, and many of them changed according to the Circumstances of Times, Places, and Persons. The *Turkish Alcoran* is also utterly destitute of the aforesaid Characters; the Author of it was a Monster of Lust, having eleven Wives at one Time, besides Concubines, a base Adulterer and a cruel Robber, as *Andreas Maurus* in his Treatise against them, makes evident; and he was also an encourager of Robbery in his followers, as appears from the 19 and 71 *Surat* of the *Alcoran*, and in many Things it contradicts the Scriptures. The *Pagan Moralists* are likewise absurd and contradictory in many Things, as I have observed before. Neither can *Reason* be our Rule, as the *Deists* and *Socinians* dream; because it is obscure and imperfect, (1 *Cor.* ii. 14.) And the absurd and contrary Sentiments of those who had no other Guide, is a sufficient Confirmation of this. Besides,
some

some Things in Religion are Sublime and Myste-
 rious, and so transcend the reach of Reason ; yet they are not contrary to it :
 But tho' on the one Hand, we disclaim the *Socinian* Opinion,
 in making Reason the supream Rule of Faith and Practice ;
 yet on the other we equally detest the Foolry of *Enthusiasts*,
 who reject it altogether in the Affairs of Religion. Surely
 Religion is a reasonable Service ; Reason may and ought to
 be humbly us'd, in order to understand the meaning of the
 Rule God has given us. The *Quakers* notion, of the *Spirit*
 without the Word to be be our Rule, is a dangerous *ignis*
fatuus, which may lead Men any where. Neither is the
 pretended *new Nature* and *Love* of the *Antinomians* and
Moravians, while they reject the Blessed Law of God and
 slight the Old Testament, a whit safer Guide than *wit*
with the Wisp! Christ has not come to destroy the Law
 as these Men pretend ; neither does Faith make void the
 Law !

If it be enquired, whether the Old Testament be abroga-
 ted, or less necessary to be read, and less useful than the
 New ? It may be observ'd, that the *Manichean Hereticks*, and
 some *Ana-Baptists* rejected it altogether, the Former as
 proceeding from a bad Principle and the latter because we
 are said *not to be under the Law, but under Grace* ; con-
 founding the Law, considered as a Covenant of Works, and
 the old Testament together, tho' Believers are not under the
 Curse of the Law, yet by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin,
 and the Law is Holy, Just and Good. The Heretical *Soci-*
nians imagine also, that the Religion of the New-Testament,
 differs essentially from that of the Old, and therefore that the
 Old is not necessary to be read. The enthusiastical *Mora-*
vians do also slight the Old-Testament, and do endeavour
 to invalidate all Arguments drawn from thence. On the
 Contrary the reform'd Churches, believe that the divine

Authority of both Testaments is the same and that therefore the Old is necessary and profitable to be read as well as the New: Their Reasons are these, 1st. ' The Books of the Old as well as the New are divinely inspired, this our Text confirms; and therefore both are of infallible Truth and Authority.

' 2dly, Because the Old as well as the New was given for a Rule of Faith and Practice to the Church, *Psa.* cxlvii. 20.

' 3dly, We no where read in the New-Testament, that the Old was abolish'd. But

' 4thly, On the Contrary it is confirm'd by the Precept and Practice of CHRIST. (*Joh.* 5. 39. *Luk.* 24. 17.) He directs us to the Old-Testament, (*Luk.* xvi. 29.) and confuted his Adversaries by it. (*Mat.* iv. 7.) And the same was done by the Apostles *Peter* and *Paul*. (*Acts* iii. 20. *Acts* xviii. 28.)

' 5thly, The whole Doctrine of the New, is contain'd in the Old. The Apostle *Paul* profess'd, that he preach'd nothing besides what the Prophets and *Moses* did say should come. (*Acts* xxvi. 22.) The *Bereans* were commended for examining the Doctrine of the New by the Old, (*Acts* xvii. 11.) All the Prophets are said to give Witness to Christ, *Luk.* xxiv. 27.

' 6thly, The Old-Testament is said to be the Foundation of Faith, and of the Christian Church, (*Ephes.* ii. 20. *Acts* xxiv. 14.) So that such as slight the Old-Testament, endeavour to overthrow the Foundation, of the Christian Religion: For the New is confirm'd by the Old, and is a Fulfilment of the prophetical and typical Part of it.

I proceed to a Word of Improvement. If the Scriptures be of divine Authority; then let us love them with a *sincere* Love from the Heart, with a *superlative* Love above any Thing else, they should be sweeter to our Taste than Honey from the Comb, and more precious than Gold, with a *constant*

stant Love, as it happens in *Hunger* and *Thirst*. (*Psa. i. 2.*) with a *universal Love* extending it self to the *Law* and its *Threats*, as well as to the *Gospel* and its *Promises*, the *Psalmist* glory'd in this, *O how love I thy Law, it is my Meditation all the Day*. Our *Love*, should be *effectual* exciting us to *gratitude* to *God*. for so excellent a *benefit*, which we should express with *Words* and *Actions*. Let us fear the *threatnings*, and if *Gracious*, depend upon the *Promises*, and whatever our *State* be; let us conform to the *Precepts* of the *divine Word*; if we have no *Grace*, this is the *Way* to obtain it, and if we have, to increase it. Let us read the *Scriptures* with *Care*, and meditate frequently on them.

• We may be excited to the *aforesaid Love*, by considering the *Perfections* of their *Author*, the *Excellency* of the *Doctrines* contain'd in them, with their *Tendency* and manifold *Use*, *They are the Wisdom and Power of God to Salvation*. *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.*

SERMON

SERMON III.

PSALM xiv. 1.

The Fool hath said in his Heart there is no God.

THE Knowledge of the divine Existence is the Foundation of all Religion, without this we cannot come to God, and sincerely seek his Favour; wherefore it appears by the Law of Contraries, that the denial of a Supream Being must needs be the fatal Source of all Impiety and Perfidy. And this the *Psalmist* confirms *Psalm 10. 4. The Wicked through the Pride of his Countenance will not seek after God: God is not in all his Thoughts.*

The Evidences of a supream Being, are so many and manifest, that it must needs be an Instance of the greatest folly and impiety to call it in Question: And yet this our Text informs us is the Practice of some, whose Character and Course we have therein a Description of, *the Fool*. This ignominious Epithet or Character is frequently and justly assigned to wicked Men in Scripture; for the Contraries of true Wisdom really belong to them, as appears thus, Wisdom directs to an End in the full Enjoyment of which we are compleatly Happy, as well as to Means that directly tend thereto, and excites to the Improvement of the aforesaid Means in their proper Season; whereas ungodly Persons either propose to themselves an End which cannot yield compleat Satisfaction, namely some earthly Entertainment;

or

or if they propose the Enjoyment of God in a future World as their End; they pursue contrary Measures to attain it, viz. Sin and Impiety, and postpone the earnest Use of proper Means to secure an Intetest in the divine favour, until the golden Seasons of divine Grace are elapsed, It is certainly a property of true Wisdom, to exert principal Care and Labour to secure the most valuable and enduring Good, and to avert the greatest Evil: Whereas impenitent Transgressors on the Contrary, bend their principal Labour and Solitude in quest of Trifles, which are of no Importance and Duration; while in the mean Time they are supinely and profusely Negligent of immense and immortal Good, and thereby expose themselves to interminable Misery, and intolerable Vengeance! But this methinks is one of the most astonishing Instances of the folly of Impenitents, which our Text records, namely, their questioning the Existence of a supream Being, *the Fool bath said in his Heart*: This Expression seems to denote rather a Desire that there was no God, than a Belief that there is none. When Persons go on in a course of crimson Impiety, as it is said of *the Fool* in our Text, *they are corrupt, they have done abominable Works*. Then they are disposed to Question the Existence of an avenging Judge, that so they may Sin without Controut or Reluctance: Doubtless some refractory Transgressors incessantly labour entirely to extinguish the native Notices of a supream Being in their Minds, that so they may give a lawless unbounded loose to their sensitive Appetites, without the uneasy allay of a future Judgment.

In discoursing on this Text I purpose 1st. To prove *the Being of a God* by some Arguments. And

II. To expose *the Atheists folly in Questioning it*.

And 1st. Methinks the Subordination of Causes which we behold, and their Succession, manifestly point to a first Cause

Cause; there hath been for some standing of Time, and there yet is, a succession of Creatures in the World: Now these Creatures cannot make themselves, for that which is not; cannot act: Nothing cannot be the Cause of something. To suppose a Creature could produce itself, involves a manifest Absurdity in it, *viz.* That it is, and is not at the same Time, and that it acts before it exists, which is impossible: As it produces it must be, for nothing cannot act; and as it is produc'd, it must not be, and as these Creatures cannot make themselves, so neither can they make each other, for this Reason, because to create Something out of Nothing, is a Work that requires infinite Strength. (the distance between nothing and something being infinite) Now no Creature hath this Property of Almightyness, therefore it cannot act contrary to the fixed Laws of Nature in Creating: All that a Creature can do is only, in a natural Way, to give particular Forms to fit Materials, but the Matter itself he cannot produce. If the Creature could make himself, then it would follow, by a parity of Reason, that he could preserve himself, for the latter is no greater than the former. But manifold Experience proves the latter to be false, and therefore the former is so from which this proceeds.

But farther, upon the supposition of the Creatures making himself and others, it may be enquir'd, why he has made himself and those of the same Species, so Indigent and Dependiant on other Creatures for Support? Likewise how it comes to pass that he knows so little of himself and others? Surely he that makes Things must needs Understand them: From all which it appears, that Man could not make himself and other Creatures.

But to bring this Argument respecting the Succession of Creatures, to a Crisis, it may be observ'd, that one or other
of

of these *four* Particulars respecting it will hold good *viz.* Either that the Succession is Infinite, or that the same Thing produces it self, or that there is a Circulation of Causes, *viz.* That *A* should be the Cause of *B*, *B* of *C*, *C* of *D*, and *D* of *A* again, or some first Being who proceeds from none, whom we call *GOD*, there is not a fifth. Now the Three first Particulars cannot be admitted without Contradiction, as for Example, an infinite Subordination or Succession of Causes, 1st. infers that while that continues nothing can exist, than which nothing can be more false: Now the Justness of the aforesaid Consequence appears thus, *viz.* nothing can exist except by its next Cause, which produces the Effect; But if an infinite Number of Causes must precede the next Cause, that next Cause would never exist, for there is no end to Infinity, and then it would follow, that therefore nothing now exists, which is absurd, and then 2^{dly} That which is infinite would be rendered more, inasmuch as to the supposed infinity of Causes we see daily new ones added, and thus there would be an infinite which was not Infinite, which is absurd; and further 3^{dly} That order of prior and posterior which is in succession would be destitute of a first, from which all Flux or Motion in its own Nature exists; where there is not a first there cannot be a second or third, neither can there be a second or third, where there is not a first; and hence there would be a Succession, which is not a Succession; which is absurd: Therefore an infinite Succession can by no Means be allow'd; neither can it be admitted without the greatest Absurdity, that a Creature can produce it self for the Reasons aforesaid. If an Atheist should object and say, that according to our Opinion God is of himself, we answer, it is true, He is of himself, yet he has not produced himself, He is of himself *negatively*, inasmuch as he is produced by no other; but he is not of

M

himself

himself *positively*, so as to produce himself; and if the aforesaid Circulation of Causes were admitted, then the same Creature would indirectly and mediately produce himself, inasmuch as *A* by *B*, *C*, and *D*, would be the Cause of himself. If the Atheist against the aforesaid Reasonings objects, that we do not see the Sun, Moon, and Stars to be produced by others, to this it may be reply'd, that altho' we perceive not by our Senses that those have been produced, nevertheless by reason we may certainly infer this, and that from the following Topick, *viz.* We observe all these Things to be finite, and seeing that nothing can limit itself and its own Perfection, it is necessary that it should derive its Being and Limitations therein from another. But more particularly, A

2d. Argument to prove the Being of God is this, *viz.* The World is created, therefore God exists: Here we suppose what no Atheist will deny, *viz.* That the World exists, well then this World that now exists has either produced itself, or has been from Eternity, not produced or is produced by another, and that either of somewhat pre-existing, or of Nothing: If the latter holds, it is created, for Creation is but a Production of Something out of Nothing. Now to enforce this Argument let us briefly consider its Parts, and 1. that the World did not produce it self appears from what has been before observed: For then it would be and not be at the same Time, which is impossible from the Nature of Things. And 2dly that it did not exist from Eternity, the following Particulars demonstrate

1st. Eternity is an Infinity, which a finite World is incapable of: If the Atheist affirms the World to be infinite, he may be easily confuted from the Parts of the World, which are either infinite or finite; if they be said to be infinite, then

then there are many Infinites and by Consequence none, which is absurd; each Part would have all the Perfection of the Parts joyned with it, or not: If yea, then they would not be different, but one and the same, which our Eyes beholding the Parts of the World prove to be false, if nay, then it would not be infinite, but finite, and if the Parts of the World, be finite how can it self be infinite, can finite Causes produce an infinite Effect? No surely! that is contrary to the Nature and Reason of Things.

2. If the World existed from Eternity, then an infinite Number of Years, which Eternity implies, must necessarily have preceeded this Day, and seeing that Number could never have been compleat, by consequence this Day could never succeed, but we see it does succeed; And

3. From the Supposition of the Worlds Eternity it would follow, that something can be added to what is infinite, & therefore that there is an infinite which is not infinite, which is Ridiculous! For is not Eternity an infinite Duration, and yet according to the aforesaid Hypothesis, Years, Months and Days are added to it; from which it follows, that infinite can be more than infinite, inasmuch as the World which was before one Thousand Years agoe infinite in Duration, is now older, therefore it cannot be that the World should exist from Eternity.

4. The Corruptibility of the Parts of the World, proves that it is not eternal, for what exists externally exists of it self, and so exists necessarily, and thus is not liable to Corruption. That which borrows its Being of no other needs not & so depends not upon any other for the Continuation of its existence, for that no other can destroy. But we see the Case is contrarywise with the Parts of the World, and therefore it is not eternal. *It must necessarily be acknowledged says*

M 2

“ *Lucretius*

“ *Lucretius, that the World had a Beginning, otherwise those Things which are in their own Nature corruptible, had never been able from all Eternity, to have held out against those forcible and violent Assaults, which in an infinite Duration must have happened.*” I add, without the superintendance of an Almighty Being.

5. If the World was eternal, “ *How comes it to pass, says Lucretius, that the Poets speak of nothing before the Trojan and Theban Wars?*” Was there nothing memorable done in infinite Ages worthy to be communicated to Posterity, or could they find no Ways in that vast Space, to effect this till of late? How improbable are these Things? It is certain that divers profitable Inventions have been of late Years found out, such as Printing, the Gun, the Virtue of the Loadstone, and divers other Particulars; what should be the Reason that no Genius in infinite Ages should luckily hit upon these before, if the World was Eternal? Had not Men the same Incitements to seek after such Inventions before as now? And to say that Men of late Ages have more Wit than a suppos'd infinite Number of Predecessors, is too great and groundless a Compliment upon the present Generation, and some few that have preceded it.

But a

3d. Argument is this, The World is preserved to this Day, therefore God exists: For what is the Conservation of the World, but a continued Creation? with this Difference only, that the one includes a newness of existing, which the other excludes. If the Atheist should deny that the World is preserved, and say, that it endures only, as we say our God endures, without another's Support: In answer to which we say, that it endures indeed but by Preservation, and that because it was produced by another, as has been before proved: And therefore the Difference between the Duration

of

of God and the World is very vast ; God is simply of himself, and therefore the First, and so an independant Being, who needs not, and cannot receive Support from any other : Whereas the World is from another, and therefore must be preserved by him to whom it owes its Original. The World must be either preserved by it self or by another ; not by it self, that which could not give to it self a Being, cannot preserve the Being it has received from another ; and therefore it must be preserved by another, and who can this other be, but he who gave it its Existence ? But if it was any other Thing that without doubt would be a Part of the World, and thus a Part would preserve the whole which is absurd !

Surely that which preserves a Part must needs preserve the whole ; moreover seeing there are in the World divers Parts which are not only of a different kind, but contrary to each other, such as Fire and Water, &c. which do contend against one another with all their Strength, what could keep them from destroying each other, but the Power of their Almighty Former ?

A

4th. Argument for the Existence of a God may be drawn from the Government of the World. Here we presuppose what no Atheist will deny, *viz.* that the World consists of various Parts, not only different but contrary, and many of them irrational, which nevertheless harmoniously concur to promote their own particular Perfection, and the general Good of the whole Universe, and that without their Design, and contrary to their Nature, of Necessity therefore they must needs be governed, either by themselves or another, not by themselves, for many of them want Reason and cannot be their own Guides, therefore it must be by another, and who is he that is fit for such a spacious and important Province, but an omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent

potent and infinitely wise Being? When we behold the various Wheels of a Watch mutually helping on one Design, by their contrary Motions which they know not, we presently conclude, that some Workman has been there, and has formed the Wheels and adjusted them to their proper Distances, and by a Spring has put the Whole in Motion. If an Atheist should say, that the former Order results from the peculiar Nature of the Parts, we may easily reply and say, but from whence is that Nature, Wisdom and Order? When we behold the Harmony and Subserviency of the several Parts of the Creation to each other, we may justly use the *Psalmist's* Exclamation, and say, *How manifold are thy Works O God, in Wisdom hast thou made them all!* The Sun enlightens and warms the Earth, which else would be but a melancholy and barren Place. The pregnant Clouds shed their balmy Dews and gentle Drops, which prepare the Earth to produce its Fruits, which would be mar'd, if the Water descended from the Clouds in Torrents, which it naturally tends to! And what less than Omnipotence, can support those vast Cisterns of Water, I mean the Clouds, without any Stronger Prop than the thin Air? Surely if they were left to their natural Gravity only, they would soon inundate the World with a second Deluge! Dr. *Bates* observes respecting the Situation of the Sun, "*That if it was nearer the Earth it would scorch its Surface by too near an Approach, and if farther off, it would be oppressed by such a multiplicity of cold moist Vapours as would obstruct its Fruitfulness.*" It is also observable, that the Sun by its exhaling Vertue, supplies from the Sea and moist Places of the Earth the empty Bottles of the visible Heavens, that thus by this constant Circulation, the Earth being refreshed, the Meads may laugh, the Fields be adorn'd with a grateful Verdure; and indeed the Winds are no less remarkable for their manifold Usefulness,

fulness, in carrying the ponderous Clouds to their Places, Vessels to their Ports, and in refreshing the Earth and the various Animals that live on its Surface, this serves as a Fan to assuage the summers sultry Heat.

And does not the natural Instinct of acting in a different Manner, which we behold in various Animals, give further Light and Force to this Argument? *e.g.* The more fierce and formidable, such as the Lyon, Bear, &c. who could easily devour Men, fly from them, and inhabit Desert Places of their own accord, while the more useful Animals such as the Horse, the Ox, &c. being ignorant of their Strength to resist, are tame and easily submit themselves to the Rule of weaker Men. With what surprising Sagacity does the Bird build her Nest, the Spider frame its Web, the Bee form its numerous Repositories to receive and preserve the Sweets which with much Diligence he extracts from the opening Flowers? With what prudent careful Providence, does the Ant lay up her Winter-Store before its approach? And likewise the Squirrels, and yet these Creatures act without Reason or Design, must it not then necessarily follow, that there is a divine Government.

But methinks it still illustrates this Argument, when we consider that the Wants of all Creatures are supply'd: Creatures can no more provide for themselves than they could make themselves, and who is equal to this Task, but an all sufficient infinite Being? If there was no Providence, how could this be effected? And can there be a Providence without a God? Is it not owing to this all governing Providence, that the weakest Schemes are sometimes crowned with Success, and the best concerted prove abortive? *Is not the Wisdom of the Wise sometimes destroyed, and the Understanding of the Prudent brought to nought? Surely the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong! Surely Promotion comes neither*
from

from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South; but God is the Judge, he putteth down one and setteth up another!

How amazing is the Conduct of Providence, in implanting in all Animals, rational and irrational, a natural Care for the Provision of their Young Ones, which even the most Savage sort do surprisngly manifest? and do they not generally bring forth their Young in the Spring? A Season when they are most likely to be provided with Food for their Support! To what else than a divine Providence can we ascribe the Provision of the Breast, the Udder with its Milk for their Sustenance? with their natural Instinct without Instruction, to seek Nourishment that Way? And it should not be pass'd over with Silence and Negligence, that those Things which are absolutely necessary for the Support of Man's Life are common, and may be attained by the poorer Sort by Labour and Industry, while curious Dainties, fit for the Support of Luxury, are costly and beyond their Reach.

Is it the Effect of Chance that some of the Beasts of the Field have Weapons for their Defence? And that others have a natural Swiftness to fly from Danger, and that there be Caverns provided for their Security? Is it meer Chance that the Earth is stor'd with a variety of Medicines and Man endued with a Capacity to use them for his Cure?

If the Sea, as some say, be higher than the Earth, what is it that puts Boundaries to its proud Surges and prevents a second Inundation, but divine Providence? And what but this keeps the Elements about us, and Humours within us in a due Temperature? What but this that restrains the Wrath of our Enemies and preserves us from Ruin? If Hurtful Insects were not destroy'd by each other, or by the Cold Season of the Year, would not they by their Numbers devour the Fruits of the Earth and destroy us? Now
what

what can we ascribe this Prevention to, but a superintendant Providence?

5. Another Argument for the divine Existence may be drawn from the visible Heavens, *which do declare the Glory of God.* With what inimitable Pomp and stately Magnificence does the azure Canopy sparkle forth its various and amazing Glories! The Motion of the Heavenly Luminaries is so regular and steady, that an Astronomer may tell for a Hundred Years to come their Eclipses to a Minute! But from whence does this Order this Law proceed, but from some infinitely Wise and Almighty Legislator?

6. Another Argument may be deriv'd from both the Parts of the Compound Man. And

1st. From the Body. How curious and beautiful is its Structure? Infinitely exceeding all Works of Art! Surely *we are fearfully and wonderfully made!* While the Brutal Herds have a prone and grovelling Aspect, the Countenance of Man is erect, to contemplate the Heavens, where his Creator has his chief Seat of Residence! To signify as it were, where his chief delight should be fixt, and that he should as much exceed the lower Creation in the nobleness of his Sentiments and Affections, as he does in the natural form of his Aspect! This the Poet expresses elegantly,

Os homini Sublime dedit, celumq; tueri.

Jussit et erectos, ad Sydera tollere vultus.

The surprising variety of Features in the small compass of the Face, where all the Parts are the same, manifests the infinite Wisdom of the Architect! Without this we cannot know each other: And thus all the social Offices on which human Happiness depends, must forever expire and terminate! The rudest Barbarities and Impieties must ensue, and Men degenerate into a Herd of Beasts!

How excellent are all the Parts of the human Body fitted, by their Form and Situation for Beauty, and all the Uses design'd by an intelligent Mind? The misplacing of any Part, would make it as Monstrous as Ufeles! *Galen* justly observed, "That if a Person studied an hundred Years to place any Part of the human Body in a different Situation, that it could not be done without marring its Beauty and Service." But there are some Parts of this Structure, which especially challenge our Admiration! The *Brain* in its mazy Labyrinths, which is the Seat of the Nerves and spring of Motion, who can enough admire or sufficiently explain! The *Eye* with its various Coats, Humours and optick Nerve, by which our Sight is form'd. The *Ear*, with its Tymponum or Drum, on which the disturbed Particles of Air vibrate and Cause a diversity of Sounds. The quick and constant Circulation of the Blood by the Diastole and Systole of the Heart, through certain large Veins or openings and shuttings of it, Causes Pullation and preserves the natural Heat! When this grand Wheel is broken at the Cistern, the Stomack ceases to digest its Food, the whole Body grows cold and livid, and all the Offices of Nature fail. How different is that natural Heat which the Circulation of the Blood promotes from all others? Fire will gradually consume itself, and all others which only have acquired Heat, will soon grow Cold; whereas the former is preserved many Years without Wasting the Parts of the Body; and least the Heart should be over heated by its continual Motion, which would be prejudicial to the whole frame, to preserve a due Temperature, does not the Lungs serve as a Fan to cool and refrigerate it?

And do not the Union of the Body with the Soul, a Being of a different Nature, deserve our Wonder, and manifestly point to an infinitely Wise and Almighty Being as
its

its Author? And thus I am led to speak of the other Particular before mentioned, or the other Part of the compound Man, and indeed the most noble, viz. *the Soul*, whose excellent Powers and Capacities, if we do attentively survey, we shall be obliged to conclude, *that it is God that has formed the Spirit of Man within him*. How raised and noble a Faculty is the *Human Mind*, which can form Ideas of Things above its own Nature? It reflects on Things past, and this incites either our Pleasure or Regret. It aims at the Prospect of Things to come, and thus it alarms our Fears or swells our Hopes! It beholds the Connection between Causes and their Effects, Premises and their Conclusion: It discerns the moral Beauty and excellency of Virtue and Religion!

The Will, through the Aids of divine Grace, can choose what is Good and refuse what is Evil. The Soul by its Reasonings evidently appears to be an Immaterial, and therefore an immortal Substance; for it is impossible from the nature of Things, that meer Matter, however modified and put in Motion, can produce rational Reflections: And if so, then it must be formed by an All-wise and Almighty Being who is God.

The Soul, by Reason of its spiritual and rational Nature, is capable of moral Government and Religion, it desires after God and indeed can be only Happy in the Enjoyment of him. And the immense and boundless desires of the Soul evidently argue the reality of a Supreme Being: All the Enjoyments of Sense, in their greatest Affluence and Variety, do not satisfy the cravings of our vast Desires! We still reach after a more immense and adequate Good! Then either there must be an infinite Being, in whose Embraces we may attain the compleat Happiness we in vain seek elsewhere, or else Nature has done something in vain, contrary to *Aristotle's* just Maxim: And thus the most noble Creature of this

lower World would be made in its primitive Constitution more miserable than the Brute-Creation, which is very absurd.

7. Another Argument to prove the Being of a God, may be the exact Accomplishment of certain Prophecies concerning future contingent Events: This the Mind of Man cannot perceive without the Assistance of Divine Revelation: It's true we may judge that necessary Causes will produce Effects according to their Nature, but respecting *Arbitrary*, we cannot determine. Now that several such Prophecies have come to pass, the Scriptures assert, which ought to pass for a credible History, till the Atheist proves the Contrary.

8. The Miraculous Works that have been wrought, prove the Being of a God; for who but he can give check to the course of Nature, and controul it's fixed Laws and Order? And that such have been wrought is not only evident from the Scriptures, but Prophane Writings. So that he must needs be a *Sceptick*, and deny all human Testimony that denies this Fact! But to proceed,

9. The Testimony of Conscience proves the Being of a God. Are not Men sometimes terrified with the Dread of Punishment, because of those Evils which no human Eye has seen them Commit, and which no human Law takes cognizance of? and these uneasinesses they are not able totally to extinguish by all the Arts of Diversion they can invent! Neither can any worldly Grandeur exempt them from, witness *Nero* and *Caligula*. And on the Contrary what a sweet Calm possesses pious Bosoms in the Way of Duty? which make them fearless of evil Tidings! add to this, that the universal Consent of all ages gives Testimony to the divine Existence. *Tully* and divers others assert, " *That there is no Nation so barbarous but what has acknowledged a*
" *Diety.*

“ *Deity. Some indeed were very gross in their Idolatry, worshipping Leeks and Onions, as Juvenal in his Satyrs observes. Now altho’ those unhappy Nations were miserably mistaken as to the Object of Worship, yet their unanimous concurrence in paying divine Adoration to something, shews their acknowledgment of a Deity.*”

If it be Objected, *That History informs us of some speculative Atheists that have been, and of some Countries in Africa and America that have no religious Worship.*

Answ. The Number of such who have been record *speculative Atheists* has been very small, besides by the fear they have sometimes discovered, they have plainly intimated, that they rather wished there was no God, than believed there was none; and supposing they did, it will not weaken the Argument: Because some are born Fools will it follow that Reason is not natural to Man? As to the other Particulars, the Facts are not sufficiently attested, those that have asserted them have not had familiarity enough with the Indians to know their Notions of a Deity: But supposing some should so far degenerate into Brutes, as to lay aside the Use of their Reason in this Point, it cannot conclude against the Majority who act rationally, and argue from the Principles of Reason they are endowed with, the Existence of a Deity!

If it be objected, that God is not because he is not seen.

Answ. This is sordid; Then the Soul is not, because it is not seen, and thus these Men are Brutes in their own Account.

If it be again objected, *That the Wicked are prosperous and the Righteous afflicted.*

Answ. What then, is not God a Sovereign, may not he do what he will with his own? But if it be further considered,

considered, that outward Prosperity does not prevent inward Terror, and that good Men are made better by Afflictions, that divine Joy is consistent with them, and that there will be a future Judgment, the Objection evanishes.

But some do further Object, *That the Notion of a God is a piece of State Policy, invented for the Benefit of Civil Government, propagated by Tradition, and supported by Fear.*

Ans. But who was the Man, or set of Men, that invented this, and when and where did they live? Or when was the World without all Belief of a Deity? Here the Atheist is nonplust! If the great Men of the Earth had invented the Notion of a God, is it reasonable to suppose that they themselves would be subject to the Terrors of it, as others have been? And if the Belief of a God was a human Invention, how comes it to be so universally received, and that without the Methods of Force? And why was the Imposition never discovered in so long a Tract of Time?

It is likewise unreasonable to suppose that the Belief of a Deity has been propagated only by Tradition, for it is bottomed on the highest Reason, has universally obtained, and continued in all the Changes of Time and Revolutions of Nations; whereas Notions received with implicit Faith by Tradition, are not grounded on Reason; are not universally received, but liable to change and mutation!

It's likewise equally absurd to suppose, that the Fear of Punishment should give rise to the Belief of a Deity: For why should Men be afraid of Punishment for secret Crimes, if there was no God to punish? Surely their Fear supposes a God, and is the Effect of this Perswasion. And how then can the Effect produce its Cause? Not to add that the primary Notion we have of God is, that *he is a good and lovely Being.* The fearful Apprehensions of his Vengeance are but secondary and the Fruit of Guilt,

What

What has been observed shews us the folly of *Atheism*, both *Speculative* and *Practical* ! But this appears more particularly in the instances following ; how ridiculous is the *Epicurian* Account of the Original of the World, viz. *That this beautiful Structure should spring from the fortuitous Concurrence of Atoms in an immense Space* ! It is as likely, as Tully observes, “ *That all the Materials of a magnificent Edifice should of their own accord meet and unite together.*” “ *How long* (says a learned Man) ; *wight a Person jumble a set of Letters together, or fling them on the Ground, before they would fall into an exact Poem ; yea or so much as make a good Discourse in Prose ?*” The *speculative Atheist* likewise shews his folly in requiring upon the one side, more evidence for Things than they are capable of ! He asks mathematical Demonstration in moral and religious Matters, which can only be proved by moral Arguments and credible Testimony ; their Nature admitting no other kind of Proof : But on the other side he labours to believe by implicit Faith, against Reason and Argument, that the Belief of a God has been only propogated by Tradition, but cannot Account for his Notion.

Again the Atheist's folly appears in this, “ *That he pretends to know certainly what no Man can be certain of, viz. that there is no God. If he is not certain, how foolish is it to deny and despise such a Being as God is ! But how from the nature of Things can a Man be certain of a meer Negative, unless it implies a Contradiction, which the Being of a God does not. To profess certainty here, is in other Words, to pretend to the Knowledge of all Things that are or can be ; which is foolishly arrogant with a Witness.*

“ *Further, there is this great Contradiction in the denial of a God, viz. He asserts that to be impossible which yet he must grant to be possible. For if there is no God already,*

its

“ it's impossible now there should be One, because Eternity is essential to the Idea of a God. And yet the Atheist must grant it possible that there should be such a Being, who hath all possible Perfection, whom we call GOD.”

Again, as *Atheism* deprives a Man of Happiness in the next World, so it robs him of Comfort in this. For as it is incontestably evident, “ that Man cannot be his own Happiness, he cannot satisfy his own Desires or ward off the Evils he is environ'd with; so his principal Support amidst the numerous Disquietudes of Life, is Hopes of Protection and Happiness from this Supream Being. This Atheism cuts entirely off, and so shuts up the chiefest Spring of Support and Sweetness.

“ Once more, the Atheist shews his folly in contending against the devout Man in this Instance, upon unequal grounds, for he ventures his everlasting Interests; whereas the religious Man ventures only the loss of his Lust and some short liv'd inconveniencies. He is better in all Respects without his Lusts, they are but a disease which mar the true Comfort of Life; and as for other inconveniencies, the Peace of his Mind and Expectation of future Happiness will enable him to comport with them comfortably, so that he is at least upon a par with the Atheist as to the comforts of this Life: And after Death he is as well of as the Atheist if there be no God, but if there be a God he is infinitely better of. If the Arguments for and against the Being of a God were equal, yet the Danger is so unequal that Prudence would incline us to choose the Affirmative; and make that the Measure of Life.

I need not Mention how destructive atheistical Principles are to all the Interests of Society. They open the Flood-gates of Injustice and Prophaneness and incite Men to sin without Controle! As there are many Evils prejudicial

dicial to Society, which no human Laws can sufficiently provide against. If the Restraints of Religion be removed, we lie open to a thousand Wrongs and Insults, especially where the Transgressor has hopes of secrecy; and therefore while the Atheist suggests that the Belief of a God is a Trick of the State, he implicitly acknowledges, to the Honour of Religion, that it is necessary to the Government of Mankind. And without Government, Reason will inform us, that the wildest Barbarities would be committed, and Scenes of Blood and Desolation opened!

But is not the *practical Atheist* still a greater Fool than the *Speculative*, if possible, who pretends to believe a God and yet lives as if there was none! Such Persons bid defiance to Reason and Conscience in Matters of the greatest Consequence. By their Lives they labour to confute their Faith, and rush into Damnation with their Eyes open!

Let us therefore Brethren be intreated to labour to get a more full Persuasion and deep Sense of the Existence of a God upon our Minds, and of the Account which we must quickly render to him of our present Stewardship. To this End let us think on the Arguments that have been offered. Let us oppose the Temptations of Satan to the contrary. Let us behold these three great Leaves of the Volumn of Creation, viz. the *Heavens*, *Earth* and *Sea* with their Contents, and consider, their immensity and admirable Structure!

Let us look into the sacred Oracles, every Page of which proclaims a God, by reading of which *Junius* was convinced of his Atheism. Let us look up to God by Prayer. Let us carefully avoid whatsoever tends to Atheism. Among others, let us avoid these evil Principles, 1st. That a Man may be saved in his Religion be it what it will: This the Apostle speaks against Eph. iv. 14, 15. *That we be not henceforth tossed about with every Wind of Doctrine*, and the Prophet
O *Micah*

Micah iv. 5. And 2dly. That the divine Providence does not watch over every Thing, yea even the most minute, and especially all the Actions of Men, punishing the Evil and rewarding the Good. And 3dly. That the Soul is not immortal.

And as we should avoid corrupt Principles, so likewise evil Practices, which tend to blind the Mind and harden the Heart and provoke the Almighty to give up Persons to be deluded by the Devil: The Law of Sin, which is strengthened by the Practice of it, inclines Persons to hate the Law of God, and by Consequence the Law-giver, and hence they are inclined to question, dispute and deny his Being, from all which may the good Lord deliver us all. *Amen.*

SERMON

SERMON V.

EXODUS, iii. 13, 14.

And Moses said unto God, behold, when I come unto the Children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your Fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, what is his Name? What shall I say unto them?

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: And he said, thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

IN these Words, we have an Account of three Things,
1. *Moses's undertaking an Embassy to Egypt: Behold when I come unto the Children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of Your Fathers hath sent me unto you.*

“*Tho' Moses was sensible, of his unworthiness of the Honour of such an Embassy, and of his inequality to the Task: He was well aware that he was not, Par negotio, yet being call'd of God, he ventures, and well he might, modest Beginnings are good Prefages.*”

2dly. We have an Account of a Difficulty that *Moses* starts, namely this, *and they shall say to me what is his Name?* They will enquire, either from Unbelief to pose me, they will be scrupulous, and apt to cavil, and bid me produce my Commission; or they will enquire out of carnal Curiosity, respecting the Divine Essence, for a Name that may represent it, or they will enquire for Information, doubtless they are grown ig-

norant by their hard Bondage, want of Teachers, and loss of Sabbath, and need to be told the first Principles of Religion. Now *Moses* was anxious to know what he should answer. All that undertake any important Task, should consider the Difficulties before Hand, and endeavour to get suitable Instruction to manage in them. Thus did *Moses*. But

3dly. We have an Account in our Text, of the Removal of this Difficulty; and *God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM*; and he said, *thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you*. This explains his Name *Jehovah*, and signifies 1. That God is *incomprehensible*. Hereby bold and curious Enquiry's after God's Being and essential Name are censur'd. And in effect God sayeth, *ask not after my Name, seeing it is wonderful*, Jud. xiii. Do we ask what is God? Let it suffice us to know, that he is what he is, what he ever was, and ever will be, *That he is faithful and true to all his Promises, and not a Man that he shou'd lye*. But 2. The aforesaid Name signifies, that God is *Self-existing* and *independant*, he has his Being of himself, and has no Dependance upon any other. This the best of Creatures cannot ascribe to itself, for it is by Grace that it is, what it is. 3. God's *Eternity* is also hereby signified, for the Words may be thus translated *I shall be what I AM*, and indeed God's Eternity follows necessarily from his *Self-existence*. He that has borrow'd his Being from no other can never cease to be; for what is able to destroy his *Existence*? And 4. The *Immutability* of God, is also signified by the aforesaid Words, *I AM, THAT I AM*. I shall be what I am; I shall be, what I shall be, or I am what I shall be. *God is the same Yesterday to Day and for ever*. In discoursing upon this Subject, I shall first speak of the Names of God, And,

II. Of the particular *Attributes*, which are signified by that Name assumed by the Almighty in our Text. And,

1. I am to consider the *Names of God*. It is by the *Names* and *Attributes* of God, that we come to an imperfect Knowledge of his *Essence* or *Being*, indeed the Design of *Names*, is to give us some *Idea* of the *Things* they are impos'd upon, they declare their *Natures* and peculiar *Property's*, whereby they differ from others, which may be more justly apply'd to the *Names* of God than to any other, because they have been devis'd not by ignorant *Creatures*, but by an infinitely wise God, who only knows himself perfectly.

It is true, the *Essence* of God being *incomprehensible*, cannot be fully represented by any *Name*, and hence is *Solomon's Query*, *Prov. xxx. 4. What is his Name, and what is his Sons Name if thou canst tell?*

And inasmuch as God is a most singular *Being*, by his *Nature* most distinct from all others; therefore he needs not an *appellative Name*, whereby *Species* in the same *Kind* are distinguished; or a *Proper Name*, by which *individuals* of the same *Species* are distinguished. Nevertheless in *Love* and *Condescension* to our *Weakness*, he is pleas'd to ascribe *Names* to himself, that so we may be the better enabled to distinguish him from *Creatures* and false *Gods*, and attain clearer *Notions* of his *Being* and *Perfections*.

Now the *Name* of God in *Scripture*, Sometimes signifies 1. Himself, (*Pf. v. 11.*) 2. sometimes all that respects God, e. g. his *Attributes*, (*Ex. xv. 3.*) his *Commands*, (*Deut. xviii. 19.*) his *Worship*, (*Act. xxi. 13.*) yea *CHRIST himself*, who does not only carry the *Name* of God in him, but brings us to the *Knowledge* of God the *Father*, (*Ex. xxiii. 19. John v. 24.*) but 3. It more properly denotes those *Words*, by which the *Essence* of God, or something like it is represented.

Farther

Farther the Names of God, are either *Essential* or *Personal*. The *Essential* are such as these, *Jehovah, Theos*: The *Personal* *Elohim, Father, Son, Spirit*. Again the *essential* Names of God are either *proper* or *figurative*; the latter are ascrib'd to God, either *metonymically*, thus he is said to be our *Help, Light, Strength*, or *metaphorically*, when he is call'd our *Sun and Shield*.

The only *proper* and *incommunicable* Name of God is *Jehovah*, by this he will be known to all Generations, and the Glory of this, he will not give to any Creature, the Meaning of which has been before explain'd, in speaking upon the Words I AM.

The Name *Elohim* is plural, from which some argue a *Trinity* of Persons in the Godhead. "Some think it is compound-
"ed of Words, that signify *Strong*, and has *swore* because God
"having made Men by his *Strength*, binds them to his *Worship*
"as it were by an *Oath*."

The most usual Name of God, in the *New Testament* is *Theos*, which is said to refer to *Elohim* "in the *Old*, and to express its *Meaning*." This Word is deriv'd of Verbs, which signify to *behold* and *dispose*, because God *beholds* and *disposes* of all Things according to his own good *Pleasure*.

Here it may be observ'd, that all the Names of God, besides *Jehovah*, tho' in strict propriety, they belong to the *Almighty* only, yet improperly, and by way of *Analogy* or *Resemblance*, they are ascrib'd to *Creatures*.

What has been said upon this Head may excite us to beware of *prophaning* the Names of God either in our *Hearts* by *Ignorance*, or *Forgetfulness*, or by our *Lips* by a *rash* and *irreverent use* of them, or by our *Lives* thro' *impiety*. The great God, has said, that he will not hold them *guiltless* that take his Name in *vain*! Those that name the Name of God, ought to depart from all *Iniquity*.

On

On the contrary, we should declare and profess God's Name call, upon it, fear and reverence it, and confide in it. *Acls ix. 14. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Joel ii. 32. Pro. xviii. 10. The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the Righteous run to it and are safe!*

But I proceed to the 2d. general Head, which was to discourse, upon those particular Attributes of God, which are signify'd by the Name I AM or *Jehovah*. Here more generally it may be observ'd, that the Attributes of God are so call'd, because we ascribe them to him! *They are the essential Property's of God, by which we attain some Knowledge of his Being: or in other Words, they are that one infinite Perfection of God, which thro' the Weakness and Finiteness of our Understandings, we conceive by various Acts, as it were by Parts,* just as when we would see the whole Horizon, which is but one, we use various Acts of seeing, looking to the East, West, North, South, until we see the whole! All the divine Attributes are in God, but *one pure and simple Act*. It is impossible that that Being, who is absolutely the first, should be compos'd of different Things for this would suppose a Composer prior to the First, which is impossible! Neither can an infinite Being consist of different Things: For these Things must be either infinite or finite. Many infinites imply a Contradiction, neither can many finite Causes produce an infinite Effect: Neither can an immutable and incorruptible Being consist of different Things, for where one Thing is compounded with another it may be separated from it, and thus Change and Corruption would ensue!

Some Divines do distinguish the Attributes of God, into those that are *communicable* & *incommunicable*. The *communicable Attributes of God are such as we find some Shadow of in intelligent Beings*; of this Kind, are his *Holiness, Justice, Goodness,*

Goodness, Truth. We find something like these in Creatures, tho' with vast Disproportion! in God they are infinitely, but in Creatures in a limited and finite Manner.

But the *incommunicable Attributes of God*, are such as we find no Shadow of in Creatures. Of this Kind are his *Independency, Eternity, Immutability* and *Incomprehensibility*. These shew how infinitely distant God is from all Creatures in respect of Dignity and Excellency, and how he is oppos'd to every Imperfection in them.

Now to assist our Conception of the divine Attributes, these Things following may be observ'd.

1. That seeing all the Attributes of God constitute but one simple Act, as has been before observ'd, therefore no Degrees of Inequality are to be admitted among them, *inwardly*, and on God's Part, all and singular of them import infinite Perfection, which admits not of more or less, notwithstanding it may be, that *outwardly* one Attribute may extend itself to more Objects than another, in which Sense the Understanding may be said to be greater than the Will. Or it may act with more Intensity upon one Object than another, in which Sense God loves the Elect more than the Reprobate. And,

2. Much less can any Contrariety be admitted among them, if any such Thing seems to appear between Mercy and vindicative Justice, this is altogether in the Object, about which the uniform Perfection of God, because of its own Infinity, is occupied various Ways, or it is to be ascrib'd to our different Ways of conceiving of the divine Perfection. And,

3. When we think upon the Divine Attributes we must remove far from them, all that Imperfection, which cleaves to such like Properties in Creatures, and conceive that the remaining Perfection is attended with the highest Eminence in God.

4. All the divine Attributes do truly belong to God, he is not only in respect of our Thought, but in Regard of the Condition of his own Nature, wise, good, just. And they belong to him not in the *concrete* only as they do to Creatures, but in the *Abstract*. He is not only wise, just, good, but *Wisdom, Justice, Goodness*. In Creatures they are secondarily, by way of *Quality* superadded to their Being, but in him they are primarily without Derivation, and therefore his very Being it self. But here, before I proceed to a more particular Consideration of the divine Attributes, I shall offer a Word of Improvement, from what has been said.

Methinks the general Theory of divine Perfections serves to strengthen our Faith exceedingly, in respect of the Trinity: Seeing that the incommunicable Attributes of God which coincide with the divine Essence, are not only ascrib'd to the Father, but to the Son and Holy Spirit.

And with what Firmness and Freedom may we trust in God, and approach to his Throne of Grace seeing there is such a Concourse of Perfections in him, *viz.* of Wisdom, Power, Goodness, &c. of which every one is infinite, eternal, and immutable!

What powerful Incitements do the divine Attributes Minister to our Praise, Reverence, and Obedience, of and to the Sacred Trinity? And how happy is that People who have such a great and glorious God for their Portion and Inheritance? Well might the *Psalmist* say, *Blessed is that People whose God is the Lord, Psal. xxxiii. 12.* When God is ours then all his Attributes are ours, and engaged to promote our Benefit (*Rom. viii. 31.*) And his immutability assures us, that he will remain ours to all Eternity, (*Mal. iii. 6.*) His Truth is inviolable, and therefore we may with unshaken Confidence, rest on his Promises, which cannot fail!

His Love and Goodness may calm us in all Adversity, because they will cause it to issue in our Benefit. His Wisdom and Power enable him to do for us all that we need, and his Mercy inclines him to forgive our Sins, and to exert the other Attributes of his Nature in our Behalf.

But I proceed to a more particular Consideration, of these Attributes of God which are signified by the Name I AM, the first of which is his *Incomprehensibility*.

The Essence of God as it is in itself, is inaccessible to our Understandings. The Israelites enquire of *Moses*, and *Moses* of God, Concerning a Name which might represent his *Essence*, and while the Almighty answers, I AM THAT I AM, reproving the Folly of the Question, what does it signify, but that his Essence is *incomprehensible*, and therefore *inexpressible*! The same Thing which *Zophar* teaches his Friend, in plainer Terms. *Job. xi. 7, 8, 9. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection? It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea!* And hence he is said to dwell in *Light inaccessible, which no Mortal Eye hath seen nor can see. 1 Tim. vi. 16.* neither with the Eyes of the Body, or of the Mind; and hence he is call'd *the invisible God, 1 Tim. i. 17.* Therefore the Almighty deny'd to *Moses* a Sight of his Face, while in the mean Time he shew'd him his back Parts. By all our Contemplations we rather know what the Essence of God is not than what it is. Now the Reasons of the Point under our present Consideration, are these following, *viz.* 1. The Being of God is infinite and therefore cannot be comprehended by a finite Mind. 2. The Divine Essence is a most pure and simple Act, void of all Composition, and therefore cannot be positively conceiv'd of; and hence the Apostle calls *Jehovah*,
not

not a Substance shining in the Concrete, but Light in the Abstract; and therefore he is not, nor cannot be seen. 3. The Being of God is most simply one, by which it is so different from all Creatures, that it agrees with them in nothing; and therefore no Idea of the divine Essence can be borrow'd from them. And how then can a proper Definition thereof be formed by us.

But it may be objected against what has been said under this Head, that the Scriptures informs us, that God has been seen by many of the Saints, particularly by *Abraham, Isaac,* and *Jacob, Moses, Isaiab,* and others, *Job* was persuaded that with *the same Eyes he should see God,* and the Apostle *Paul* informs us, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. that *here we see darkly, but then, meaning in Heaven, we shall see Face to Face.* The aforesaid Places are to be understood either of a symbolical Vision, not of the Essence, but of the Operations of God, under certain Signs, or of the more perfect Knowledge of God, which will be attain'd in the Paradise of God; which in its Perfection shall imitate Sight or Knowledge by it, yea exceed it; but they do not infer the Vision of his Essence.

But that the Meaning of what has been offer'd, may be the better understood; it is to be observed that our Discourse is not concerning God, but the Essence of God as it is conceiv'd distinct from his Attributes, or as it is conceived, as something substracted or as the first Being, which the Attributes perfect. And 2. our Discourse is not concerning the Essence of God that it is, for that is many Ways evident; but what it is in itself, and not in the Attributes. This our Minds can have no apprehensive or comprehensive Knowledge of, for the Reasons before mentioned. And indeed in this Respect we cannot know the Essence of Angels, or of our own Souls?

Is the Divine Essence incomprehensible, then 1. this should repress carnal Curiosity which appears in Enquiries about Things too high for us, and inaccessible to us, and about Things we need not to know for Ostentations sake, or some other mean End, or in bold Sayings about what we understand not; as for Example, when Persons say that the Divine Essence is but a Thought as the *Cartesians*, *such are wise above what is written*, 1. This vain Curiosity is forbidden by God himself, *Ex. iii. 4, 5. God call'd unto Moses and said, draw not nigh hither. Ex. xix. 21. And the Lord said unto Moses go down charge the People, lest they break thro' unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish.* 2. It is a Piece of foolish Pride to pretend to grasp Infinity. 3. For looking into the Ark, *Fifty Thousand and Threescore and Ten Men of the Bethshemites were slain* 1 Sam. vi. 19.

2. We should be excited to labour to be *modest*, while we think or speak about the Being or Essentials of God, this *Modesty* should be expressed in the following Particulars, 1. Before we meditate on those Things, we should implore the divine Direction and Illumination, according to *David's* Example, *Pf. cxix. 18. Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous Things out of thy Law.* 2. We should be possess'd with pious Fear and Solicitude while we are occupy'd about such Things, in Imitation of *Abram*, who spoke to God with the deepest Reverence, (*Gen. xxxi. 3.*) Neither should we speak, without consulting the divine Oracles, in Imitation of *Moses* in our Text, *they shall say unto me, what is his Name, and what shall I say unto them?* In Imitation of *Agure* (*Prov. xxx. 2, 3.*) We should confess, that we are more brutish than any Men, and have not attain'd the Knowledge of the Holy! After the Example of the Angels we should as it were cover our Faces; this Modesty God himself requires, *Levit. x. 3. I will be sanctified in them,*
that

that come nigh me. And indeed the Nature of the Thing demands it, that a poor Worm while he is occupy'd about God and divine Things, should study Modesty. If *Moses* out of Reverence to the Place whereon he stood, because it *was holy* must *pull off his Shoes!* How much more than should we express Reverence for God himself with whom we have to do. And indeed the Judgments of God that have been inflicted upon those who have treated divine Things with Irreverence, should excite us to Modesty. But who were these? I answer, *Korah, Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up by the Earth alive,* Num. xvi. 31, 32. *Uzzah was struck dead, for touching the Ark* 2 Sam. vi. 7. *many of the Bethshemites were slain for looking into it.* 1 Sam. vi. 19. *And King Uzziah was smitten with Leprosie, for meddling with the Priests Office, in offering Sacrifice.* 2 Chron. xxvi. 16, 20. It may be some help to our exercising the aforetaid divine Vertue, if we compare the Majesty of God with our Vileness, and seriously consider the Infinite distance of God and divine Things, from our weak Understandings! As also how easy and dangerous it is for us to mistake in Matters of so great Moment? *Job* xlii. 7. *And it was so that after the Lord had spoken these Words unto Job, the Lord said unto Eliphaz the Temanite, my Wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two Friends, for ye have not spoken of me the Thing that is right, as my Servant Job hath.*

But I proceed to consider the 2. Attribute of God, which is signified by the Words I AM, viz. his Self-Existence or Independancy. The Almighty by those Words, informs *Moses* that he was absolutely in and of himself, not *positively*, as tho' he had produced himself, but *negatively*, because his Being and Perfections were deriv'd of no other; or in other Words, the Almighty by the aforetaid Expression declares himself, to be absolutely the first Being, and intirely

ly independent of any other prior Cause, either *Efficient* by whom he should be; or *material* of whom he should be, or *formal* by whom he should be, what he is; or *final* to whom as an End he should be directed. All Creatures live and move, and have their Beings in and from God, but it is his peculiar Glory, to derive his Being from none.

From the Firstness, Aseity, Self-Existence, and Independance of the Divine Essence or Being, naturally and necessarily follows, the Independance of all his Attributes *e. g.*

1. His Goodness is independant, he vouchsafes Benefits upon whom, and when he pleases, his meer Sovereignty alone determines not only the Objects and Time of conferring his Kindnesses, but also the *Kind, Measure & Duration* of them. *He bath Mercy upon whom he will have Mercy*, nothing without himself can influence, far less constrain him: For this would argue Imperfection and Dependance.

2. His Holiness is independent, he hates Sin, not for any Reasons without himself, but because of the eternal Contrariety of his Nature thereto.

3. His Power is likewise independent, as he has deriv'd it from none, so he depends upon none in the Exercise thereof. And therefore cannot be control'd by Creatures in his providential Proceedings. *He does what he pleases in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and who can stay his Hand, or say to him what dost thou?*

4. The Wisdom of God is independent, his Wisdom is not in him, as a Quality added to his Being, as it is in Creatures, but it is himself, he receives not his Ideas from Objects without himself, as Creatures do, in which respect they are dependant on them; but the Knowledge of God was infinite, before any Creature had a Being. Hence the Royal Prophet enquires with Beauty and Emphasis? *Who bath directed the Spirit of the Lord, with whom took be Council,*

cil, and who instructed him in the Path of Judgment?
Isa. xl. 13, 14.

The Scriptures give Testimony to the Self-Existence and Independency of God, Rev. i. 8. *I am the Alpha & Omega, the Beginning and the Ending saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.* The same is repeated in the Book of the Revelations frequently. And Reason also confirms the aforesaid Truth. Seeing it is absurd to suppose, that any Thing should be the Cause of itself, for then it must be and not be at the same Time; and seeing that an infinite Succession of Causes is impossible, for then the next Cause which produceth the Effect, would not subsist, because there is no End to Infinity: There must of necessity be some first self-existing Being, which we call God. Now from this Firstness or Self-Existence of God; proceed his Unity, Immutability, Infinity and Simplicity. And 1. his *Unity*. What is absolutely the first Being, must needs be one; for if more such be imagin'd, neither will be absolutely the first, because it does not precede the other. 2. *Immutability*; If he is changed, he is changed by another, and that other must be before him, but what can be before him that is absolutely the First? 3. His *Infinity*. Whatsoever is limited, is limited by another, for nothing can limit itself, and its own Perfection, & that other must be before it, but what can be before him who is absolutely the first? 4. His *Simplicity*. Whatsoever is compos'd, is compos'd by one prior to itself; but what can be before the First? Again the *Independance* of God, appears evidently from his producing all Things by his Power. Such Things as he has made must needs depend upon his Power and Pleasure for their Being and Support, now if they depend on him, how can it be that he should depend on them? To suppose the Cause and Effect to be mutually dependant on each other, is to suppose they are mutually deriv'd from each other, which is impossible!

Once

Once more, if God be infinitely above the noblest Creatures, then he cannot depend on them, for dependance argues inferiority. Now that God is above all created Beings, is most manifest. *The Nations are but as the Drop of a Bucket, as the small Dust of the Balance, yea as nothing and less then nothing and Vanity,* as the Royal Prophet observes, with noble Pomp of Diction. Is God independent, then 1st. Hence we may learn the *Sin and Folly* of ascribing this divine Attribute to dependant Creatures! On the Contrary let us conclude that all our Springs are in God, from him all our Blessings flow; he is the only Source of our Happiness, the Foundation of our Hope, the Author and finisher of our Faith. And

2dly. Our inability to lay the Almighty under any Obligation by our Services, seeing he is *independent*, and so compleatly Happy in himself, *who hath first given to him,* sayeth the Apostle Paul and it shall be recompens'd to him again! for of him and thro' him and to him are all Things. Our Goodness extends not to him, says the *Psalmist*, can a Man be profitable unto God, saith *Eliphaz*, as he that is Wise may be profitable to himself, or is it any gain to him that thou makest thy Ways perfect? *Job xxii. 23.*

3dly. We may hence learn the Sinfulness and Danger of opposing God's Sovereignty, either 1st. Openly by wishing it abolish'd, (*Psal. 14. 1, and 10, 4.*) Or 2dly interpretatively, when Men in the Business of Predestination, believe that the Grace of God is suspended upon foreseen Faith and Good Works. Such Persons do deprive God of his absolute Sovereignty, and ascribe an Independance to the Creatures Will; and thus they jumble Heaven and Earth together. Or 3dly practically in the following Instances, 1st. When Persons limit God, *Psa. lxxviii 41.* Prescribing to him the Time, Manner, and Means, of Deliv-

rance.

rance, or in a greater or lesser Degree distrust his Word and Power: *Numb. xi. 21, 23.* And 2dly, When Persons by Disobedience dispute the divine Dominion, and struggle with him for Independency, after the example of Pharaoh, (*Exo. v. 2.*) and other ungodly Persons. (*Job. xxi. 14.*) And 3dly, when Men will not acquiesce in the Decrees and Providences of God, but murmur against him, (*Rom. ix. 20.*) All those Sorts of Persons, I have now mention'd do endeavour tho' in different Degrees and Modes, to destroy the Essence of God, which consists in absolute Independance, and therefore are Atheists, or at least partake in an awful degree of Atheism. All such shall find God to be such, as they would not have him to be, except they repent he shall be to them a severe Judge, a consuming Fire, as a Bear bereav'd of her Whelps. They shall find him to be such as Pharaoh, the Atheist of old, found him. *Jer. 16, ult. Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine Hand and my might, and they shall know that my Name is the Lord.* But,

4thly, From hence we may learn the comfortable State of those who have a covenant Interest in God. Amidst all the Difficulties of this Present Life, do they want the *Goods of Fortune*, Honour, Wealth, Relations? Are they cover'd with Reproach, and counted the outcasts of the World? Do they want the necessary supports of Life, and are their dear Relations Dead? Do they want the *Goods of the Body*, Health, Peace, Liberty? Are they plagu'd with Enemies, Persecutors, and task Masters? Do they want the *Goods of the Mind*, viz. necessary Wisdom, spiritual Light, and Comfort? And do their Enemies sometimes lead them Captive? What can, in such Cases and in all others of the like Nature, more effectually support and comfort us, than to think, ist, That God is. By which Argument the

Q

Almighty

Almighty comforted the *Israelites* in our Text. And *Asaph* himself, *Psa. lxxiii. 25. 26. Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. My Flesh and my Heart faileth: But God is the Strength of my Heart and my Portion for ever.*

And 2dly, That God is eminently all being; he is omniscient and perfectly knows our wants, he is omnipotent, and can easily supply them, in his Hand is Power and Might. He is infinitely Gracious and Merciful, and so will not finally forsake his poor People, but is inclin'd to relieve them. He is All-sufficient, possessing every Thing that serves to supply his Peoples Necessities, and remove their Miseries! He is *a Sun and Shield, a hiding Place from the Wind, &c.*

And 3dly. That God is not only to himself, but to us All in All, the Author of our Beings and Fountain of every of our Blessings!

4thly. That he is a *Self-Existing*, and by consequence an *Independant* and *Eternal* God! whose Help does not depend on Creatures or Instruments, and whose Love will never change in any vicifitude of Circumstance, or Succession of Duration. I AM THAT I AM, I shall be THAT I AM. From the aforesaid Considerations spring sweet Support and Solace in every immergent, in case we do but close heartily with God in Covenant, by which he may become our God. *Jer. xxxi. 33.*

But in the last Place. By what has been before observ'd, we should be exhorted to perform the following Duties 1st, We should put our Trust in God, and him alone, seeing that he is that one I AM, by his Essence, who by his sovereign and almighty Beck, can command Light to spring out of Darkness, Order out of Confusion, and call the Things that are not as tho' they were! *Cursed is the Man that trusteth in Man or maketh Flesh his Arm, whose Breatb*

Breath is in his Nostrils, who is crush'd before the Moth, who changeth with the Wind, and is lighter than Vanity! The great I AM is only worthy of our entire Confidence, his *Immensety* and *Almightiness* are only equal to our vast *Desires*: His *Independent Excellency* is only worthy of our *supream Love*; and his *Eternity* is only parallel to our *interminable Duration*. He, he, will never fail the believing Expectation of his People! 2dly. Let us deny our Wisdom, Will and Power, and say with our dear Lord, *thy Will be done and not mine*: Being always mindful that God only is *independent* and the *first mover* of all. 3dly. Let us *humble ourselves* before the great I AM, whose Prerogative it is alone to be absolutely; in Comparison of whom we poor dependent Worms are not, are nothing, and less than nothing, *as a drop of the Bucket compared with the vast Ocean, and as a little Dust in the Balance compar'd with the whole Globe of the Earth!* 4. We should receive the Word of God, and Ministers of it, with due Reverence and Respect. For this End *Moses*, in our Text, was furnished with Credentials, *go to the People of Israel and tell them, that I AM hath sent me unto you*. Those that despise the faithful Ministers of CHRIST, despise thro' them their Master, and must expect to meet with their Reward in this or the next Life, except they Repent! No Employment on Earth is attended with more Difficulty, and yet more poorly Rewarded in this Life, than the Ministerial Office! Many think their Tongues are their own, and that they may scourge them with false Invectives as they list; and many, who seem to make Conscience of their other Debts, think they are at Liberty to wrong them and rob them of their promis'd Maintainace, and act accordingly.

But

5thly, and finally. Let us be excited to glorify God on Account of his *Independency*, in Heart, Lip and Life. Let

Q 2

us

SERMON VI.

EXODUS, iii. 14.

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: And he said, thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

IN Discourſing on this Text you may remember, that in the preceding Sermon after an Explication of it and more general Obſervations upon the divine Attributes,

I proceeded to ſpeak upon two particulars, namely, the *Incomprehenſibility* and *Independency of God*, which I apprehended were included in it. And moreover made mention of two others, which I am now to diſcourſe upon, viz. the *Eternity* and *Immutability of God*. In ſpeaking upon the *Eternity of God*, I ſhall endeavour to explain, confirm and Improve this great Truth. And

1ſt. The Word *Eternity* ſometimes ſignifies, a long ſpace of Time that hath both a *Beginning* and *End*. Thus he that ſerv'd to the Year of Jubilee, is ſaid *to ſerve for ever*, Ex. xxi. 6. And ſo the Ceremonial Laws are ſaid *to be forever*, Num. x. 8. 2dly. Sometimes it ſignifies a *Duration*, which has a Beginning but no End. Thus it is with the Angels and our own Souls. And 3dly. Sometimes it ſignifies a *Duration* without Beginning or End, which is applicable to God only, and diſtinguiſhed from the other Significations

nifications by redoubling of the Words thus, *forever and ever*, from *everlasting to everlasting*.

Various Descriptions are given by different Divines of Eternity. "That is properly Eternal (says Petavius) which never had a Beginning nor never can cease to be." "Eternity (say Drexilius, Barlow, and Prideaux) is an ever present Duration, it is one perpetual Day, which passes not into what is past or future." "That is Eternal (says Zanchy) which wanting Beginning and Ending is still the same." Eternity (says Boetius) is a full and perfect Possession of interminable or everlasting Life together and at once."

But the most easy and intelligible Description thereof is this, viz. that it is an incommunicable Perfection or Property of the Deity, whereby his Duration is without Beginning, Succession and End.

And 1st. That the Duration of the Almighty was without Beginning, is evident both from Scripture and Reason, Deut. xxxiii. 27. *The eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting Arms!* Psal. xciii. 2. *Thy Throne is established of Old, thou art from Everlasting.* And hence the People of God are said to be chosen before the Foundation of the World. And Reason also confirms the same Truth, as follows, 1st. If God created all Things in the Beginning of Time, than he himself was before it, and so by consequence from Eternity. Time being in its Nature a successive Duration; taking its rise from a certain Point or Moment, which is termed a Beginning: The Duration which was before it must be Eternal, unless we suppose Time to begin before it did begin, which is a Contradiction. But God did create all Things in the Beginning, as both Scripture and Reason assure us, Ergo.

2^{dly}. The Eternity of God may be infer'd from the Perfection of his Nature. His Duration is Perfect, and therefore

fore Infinite; for to begin to exist is an Imperfection, on which Account Creatures are said to be *but of Yesterday*, which is a diminutive Character. If God was not from Eternity, what he is, he would not be God, because God is a most perfect Being, *i. e.* who has all Perfection which is or can be: Now that which is destitute of Existence, is destitute of all that Perfection which is in Existence; yea he would be destitute of Essence also, for Essence and Existence are in God one and the same.

3dly. If God was not from Eternity then Nothing would exist. For if the First does not exist, a Second or a Third cannot, as appears from the Subordination of Causes.

4thly. If God was not from Eternity, there was a Time when he was not, and than he would not be now. For either he must produce himself before he was, and so be and not be at the same Time; or be produc'd by another, who by Consequence must be before the First; both which are equally absurd: For it is essential to God to be absolutely the first Being and Self-existent.

5thly. Seeing that the Almighty gave Being to all Creatures, which is imply'd in their being such, it will necessarily follow, that he could not receive his Being from them, and so must needs be from Eternity. And

2dly. As the Duration of God is from Eternity, so it is without Succession. Years and Days cannot properly be ascrib'd to him, no Times have pass'd over him, he enjoys himself in an everlasting now! It cannot be properly said, *he was*, but *that he is*, and hence is his Name I AM. *One Day is therefore with him as a Thousand Years, and a Thousand Years as one Day.* There can be no Succession in the Duration of the Almighty, for the following Reasons,

1st. Because it is Infinite. Now what is Infinite cannot be

be measured by successive Parts and Periods, for it has none.

2dly. The Duration of God is unchangeable, and therefore it hath no Succession. This the *Psalmist* confirms *Psal. cii. 27. Thou art the same and thy Years shall have no End.* Now that which hath Succession, is not the same, for every Moment adds something to it which it had not before.

But 3dly, As the Almighty has no *beginning* or *Succession* in Duration, thus he is likewise without *End*. Hence it is said, that *he liveth for ever and ever, and that his Years shall have no End, Rev. iv. 9, 10. Psal. cii. 27.* The following Arguments tend to establish this Truth, *viz.*

1st. God is a most simple Being, void of all Composition, and therefore can never have an End from any necessity of Nature, there being no Tendency therein, to a Dissolution. It is true, compounded Beings because of their various Parts, are liable to a Dissolution, which arises from the contrariety of those Parts of which they are constituted, which tends to destroy each other, and so to dissolve the Compound; but the Almighty hath no Parts.

2dly. The *Self-Existence of God*, which has been before prov'd, shews that as he could not begin to be, so neither can he cease to be. For as *Jehovah* has deriv'd his Being from none, so he depends upon none for its continuance. And seeing all Creatures owe their original to him, he has no equal, much less superior, who can deprive him of his Existence!

3dly. Neither can the Almighty Desire or Will his own Destruction, for that is contrary to the Nature and Reason of Things. No wise Being possessed of compleat Happiness, can Will the loss thereof, because Happiness is the proper Object of desire! Now a Destruction of the Being, would necessarily

essarily destroy the Happiness possess'd by it; and therefore it cannot be desired by God. Well then, if the Almighty cannot cease to be from any necessity of Nature, or by the Will of another, or by any Act of his own, he must needs exist to Eternity. And

4thly. Eternity is peculiar to God: Tho' some Creatures be Everlasting, as Angels and the Souls of Men, yet they had a Beginning, have Succession in their Duration, and depend for its Continuance upon the Power and Will of God! and therefore their Duration is not necessary and independant. Whereas on the Contrary the Duration of God, as has been observ'd had no Beginning, has no Succession, and neither shall have, nor can have an End.

But because Contraries serve to illustrate each other, let me observe somewhat concerning the *Nature of Time*: This is as some observe, the measure of the Creatures Duration. It has no distinct Being of its own, but is an Adjunct or Quality that belongs to Creatures, which has these three ingredients in it, namely, 1st. *A Beginning*; that which once was not, must needs begin to be, if it exists at all: Thus at the Creation of the World, we read of the Beginning of Time, which shews that Creatures are the Offspring of it, and measured by it. Time gives date to their Existence.

2dly. *Time hath Succession*, it is not all at once, but flows by Degrees, it stands not, but is still in Motion, it consists of divers Parts or Moments, which are in a continual Flux, succeeding each other constantly, by these we calculate the Space or Term of a Creatures Existence.

3dly. *Time hath* also an *End* or *Period*, and this is respecting the Creature, when it ceases to be. The aforesaid Particulars give Room for our distinguishing Time into that which is past, present, and to come. *Time past* is all the Space

R.

OR

or Duration, which the Creature has run thro' from its first Existence to the present Point or Minute. *Time present* is the Moment of Existence, which is now in being. *Time to come*, is that which remains of the Creatures appointed Duration, until it expires. Now it's impossible to make those different Periods of Time to subsist at once. Whereas on the contrary *Eternity*, as has been observ'd, is a *perpetual Now*, having no *Beginning*, *Succession* or *End*.

That we may have some Idea of the Eternity of God, it will not be improper to represent to ourselves, certain temporal Spaces, and by those to compass the divine Duration, as we cannot conceive of the divine Immensity or Omnipresence, without the Spaces of Place, so neither can we conceive of his Eternity without the Spaces of Time, but we should be cautious in the mean Time, that we do not conceive these different Spaces to be real Beings, otherwise we shall conceive of many Eternals. And 2dly. That as in the Spaces of Place, we admit not of *Extention*, or of the *Dimensions* of Length and Breadth, so in the Spaces of Time, we admit not of *Succession*, or a Flux of Moments.

The Schoolmen truly describe *Eternity*, "to be an *interminable, indivisible, and independent Duration.*" It is *interminable*, because it wants Beginning and End. *Indivisible*, because it has no *Succession* of Moments. *Independent*, because it has no Imperfection or Change, nor any Possibility thereof.

It is certain that the Almighty exists with all the Periods of Time, *viz.* past, present and future, immoveable and unmov'd, which the Antients did in some sort shadow forth by a Circle, whose Center remain'd unmov'd, notwithstanding of various Agitations in the Circumference. And the following Similitude may be used to the same End, *viz.* Of a Man sitting by the Bank of a River, he sees only the
Water

Water that is present, not that which is past, or that which is to come, but when he is lifted up on high, he sees the whole River in its Spring, and Course, and Outlet, and it is present with him. Hence it appears, that in God there is nothing past, present, or to come, for these are but the Aspects of Time, upon Creatures. Eternity admits of no Divisions, all Things are present before God at once. Things move in respect of themselves, but not in respect of God: He sees them all at once, both past, present and to come. And tho' he is before, and in, and after all Time, for he has made it, yet it causes no Alteration in him, because he is no Subject of Time, and has no Dependance upon it. And for this Reason God cannot wax old, Time has no Relation to him, it cannot be the Measure of his Existence, because it is Eternal. And therefore when in Scripture, he is called *the Antient of Days*, it is only after the Manner of Men, to suit the Weakness of our Conception, which cannot form an Idea of Eternity, but under the Notion of an Infinite Space of Time.

But the noblest Creatures, even the Angels, had a Beginning, *once they were not*. They have likewise a *Succession*, being finite, they cannot possibly possess an Eternal now: And therefore their Duration must be progressive. And tho' they have no Tendency to Mortality in their Natures, yet are they dependant on their Creators Pleasure, who can speak them to nothing by the Word of his Power in a Moment. But an Objection may be offer'd against what has been before asserted, namely this, *is not the Creation of the World past, with God, when he made it in Six Days*. Ans. God's Acts are Two-Fold. 1st. *Immanent* terminated in himself. (*Ephes. i. 9.*) Those have no Succession, the Almighty did not devise one Thing after another. 2^{dly} *Transient*, in and upon the Creature, such as Creation, Providence,

R. 2:

Vocation,

Vocation, &c. And here we must distinguish between the Act it self, and the Work produced by it. Gods Act in creating is the Act of his Will, that such a Creature should exist in Time, but if we consider the Work itself produc'd, so the Creatures have a Being one after another.

Is God *Eternal*? Then this *shews*, 1st. The *Vanity* and *Frailty* of all Creatures, who are different from God, they are the Offspring of Time, but he is the Father of Eternity. They are of Yesterday and may soon cease to be, but He, and He only, is from Everlasting to Everlasting! What if they should subsist a Thousand Years, this Space compar'd with Eternity is but as a Day, nay not so much, for between a Thousand Years and a Day, there is some Proportion, but between a Thousand Years and Eternity there is none! Yea if we consider the Duration of Creatures absolutely, without respect to Eternity, seeing it consists of a continual Succession, they subsist but for a Moment: For the Time past ceases to be, and the Time to come has not begun to be, and what then remains, but the present Moment? How foolish is it therefore, for such as we are to be Proud, or to promise our selves any thing stable, any durable Satisfaction, from any fleeting Creature Enjoyment, whether of of Honour, Profit or Pleasure? And how vain to set our Hearts upon that which is not? And on the Contrary how prudent is it for us to fix our supream Love upon an Eternal God, and him alone, that he may be our Habitation in all Generations? And,

2^{dly}. This *Subject affords great Comfort* to all that are truly Religious, amidst all the Sorrows that spring from the fluctuating and uncertain State of Creature Enjoyments. Do our dear Friends and Relations die, and are our Goods snatch'd from us by Force or Fraud, or otherwise remov'd? Well this is our Comfort, that God lives, that he will remain forever

forever and will never fail. Does Sin terrify us with its Aggravations, *Behold the Mercy of God endures for ever*, Psal. ciii. 17. Are we in spiritual Desertion, behold God is Eternal, and his Love is like himself! *Whom he loves, he loves to the End! For a small Moment have I forsaken thee, but with great Mercy will I gather thee! In a little Wrath I bid my Face from thee; but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer*, Isa. liv. 7, 8. If under the Terrors of Death, how sweet is it to meditate on the Eternity of God, who makes *Death* the Way to his Peoples enjoying eternal *Life!* And whatever other Difficulty we are under, how sweet is it to think, that these light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, do work for us an exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. *In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength*, and from him we shall receive everlasting Love and Salvation! And surely this is an over Ballance for all the Miseries of Life! But

3dly This Subject opens a Scene of *Terror* to unbelieving impenitent Sinners! God's Being is eternal, and so he will ever live to punish you. *He is the living God, the everlasting King, at his Wrath the Earth shall tremble, and the Nations shall not be able to abide his Indignation!* Psal. xc. 11. His Power is eternal, and thus he will be always able to make you inexpressibly miserable, his Justice, Holiness, Truth and Wrath, which incline him to exercise his Power against you, are eternal! *Who knows the Power of thine Anger*, says the *Psalmist*, *According to thy Fear so is thy Wrath*, xc. 11. *It is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living or eternal God!* Heb. x. 31. Besides Sin, without a Pardon thro' a Mediator, is *Eternal!* The Sinner is likewise *Eternal!* The Prison of Hell *Eternal!* The Fire of Hell kindled by the Breath of God like a River of Brimstone *Eternal!* The Punishment of Loss, *viz.* the Privation of an infinite Good

Good *Eternal!* The Punishment of Sense, *viz.* the Worm of Conscience *Eternal!* And all this for the momentary Enjoyment of Sin. Should not all these Things incline us to avoid and detest Sin, and likewise to bewail it, and seek a Remedy in him who has brought in everlasting Righteousness?

In fine, the Eternity of God sweetly invites to glorify God on account of this divine Perfection, by high Thoughts of God, and humble Acknowledgments of this adorable Excellency, as well as by earnest seeking of God, and placing our Happiness in him alone, and not in the fleeting Entertainments of Time. O let us believe, study, and live to *Eternity!* 2 Cor. iv. 18. *While we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen: For the Things which are seen are Temporal, but the Things which are not seen are Eternal!* Let us most firmly believe the *Eternity* of the divine *Being* and *Attributes*, as well as of a future State of Rewards and Punishments, which will much influence our whole Life to Vertue and Goodness! Let us daily spend a little Time in meditating on *Eternity*, that we may apprehend somewhat of its awful Nature, and inexpressible Moment to us, either in our Salvation or Damnation, and finally let us live to *Eternity*, let us think of it, speak of it, intend it, and labour for it, above any Thing else. Let us work, and suffer, and pray for a happy *Eternity*. *This, this* is only worthy of our supream Affections and vigorous Pursuits. *If we are risen with CHRIST, let us set our Affections on the Things above.*

But I proceed to discourse upon the 4th divine *Attribute*, which I observ'd was included, in the Words *I AM*, *viz.* The *Immutability* of God. In treating upon which, I shall

I. prove this Truth, that God is *immutable*,

II. *Explain* it.

III.

III. Answer some Objections

IV. Improve the Whole. And

1st. The Scripture proves this many Ways, 1st. By removing all Shadow of Change from God. *Jam. i. 17. with whom there is no Change or Shadow of turning.* The Original Words (*parallage & tropes aposcrafma*) here us'd, are a Metaphor borrow'd from the Sun, which as Astronomers say, has its Paralaxes or various Aspects. It appears otherways at its rising in the East, from what it does at its setting in the West, it likewise appears differently at Mid Day, it hath also various Changes, sometimes it shines, and sometimes its clouded with an Eclipse. It likewise changes its Place moving from East to West, from one Tropick to another, sometimes it draws nearer to us, and some Times goes farther from us, causing a longer Shadow, but the Apostle assures us, *that the uncreated Father of Light has none of these Alterations.* And

2dly. Sometimes the Scriptures remove from God those Things that imply a Change. e. g. *Repentance Num. xxiii. 19. God is not a Man that he should lie, neither the Son of Man that he should repent. 1 Sam. xv. 29. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent, for he is not a Man that he should repent.*

3dly. Sometimes it asserts his immutability expressly, *Psal. cii. 27. But thou art the same, and thy Years shall have no End.* Some of the antient Fathers have spoken well upon this Head, particularly these following viz. *Proclus* in a Sermon concerning Faith sayeth, " *That the Deity remains Superior to all Mutability. Change is a Passion of a fluent Nature, but Immutability is proper to an Eternal Nature that is always the same.*" *Hillarie* in his Book concerning the Trinity says " *I think not that God is changeable. Neither Vice, Amendment, Progress, or Loss, happens to the Eternal*

“*nal, but what he is he always is.*” *Augustine* in the Preface of his fourth Book concerning the Trinity sayeth, “*that the divine Essence, bath nothing mutable, either in his Eternity, Verity or Will.*”

And right Reason likewise gives its suffrage to the immutability of God, as appears by the following Considerations, *viz.*

1st. God is a most simple Being, and therefore cannot be chang'd: For Change, being an altering Vicissitude, would destroy his Being intirely, when that which is most simple is changed, nothing remains of what it was before, and thus it is destroy'd entirely. Thus you see, it is Atheism to ascribe Change to the Almighty.

2dly. God is a most perfect, yea infinitely perfect Being, and therefore cannot be chang'd, because to that which is perfect, no Good can be added. If God be chang'd, it must be either into a worse or better State, or into a Condition equal to what he was before. But he can't be chang'd into a worse State, for then he would be imperfect after the Change, and so no God. Nor into a better, for then he would be imperfect before the Change & so no God. Nor can he pass into an equal State to what he was before, for this implies an equal Proportion of Loss and Gain, and thus there would be more infinitely perfect Beings than one, and so more Gods, which is impossible, and blasphemous to imagine.

3dly. Seeing the Almighty is absolutely the first Being, he cannot be changed, for whatsoever is chang'd, is chang'd by one prior to itself, but this in respect of God is impossible, for none can be before the First.

4thly. Seeing the Almighty is incorruptible, he cannot be chang'd: For what is a Change of the best Being, else but a Corruption of it?

5thly. God is infinite and therefore cannot be changed by adding any Thing to him or diminishing any Thing from him,

him ; for if he were capable of Addition, he must be finite before the Change ; and if of Diminution, he must be finite after it, and so neither Ways the true God. For as Infinity is an essential Character of God, so this is incapable of more or less : For then there wou'd be an Infinite which was more than Infinite, and so an Infinite which is not Infinite ; which is ridiculous ! But I proceed to the

2d. Propos'd, which was to *explain the Nature of God's Immutability*. And here it may be observ'd, that God's *immutability* may be thus describ'd, viz. *That it is an essential Perfection of the divine Nature, whereby the Almighty is without all possibility of any Kind of Change*. In order to explain this Description, let the following particulars be considered.

1st. That when we call God's immutability a *Perfection*, we suppose his Goodness and Excellency, otherwise it would be no Perfection ; but the Contrary to be immutable in Sin and Misery is the highest pitch of both, which is the doleful Case of damned Angels and damned Souls !

2dly. *Immutability*, in strict propriety, belongs only to God. Hence it is said, *that he only hath Immortality*, 1. Tim. vi. 16. His *immutability* is underiv'd and independent, whereas the *immutability* of all Creatures is dependent because deriv'd. It is borrow'd from the Power and meer Pleasure of God, and therefore its Duration is entirely and perpetually Subject thereto ! The visible Heavens of all inanimate Beings seem to be the most free from Corruption, and even these are lyable to it. Psal cii. 25. 26. *Of Old thou hast laid the Foundations of the Earth and the Heavens are the Work of thy Hands, they shall perish, but thou shalt endure, yea all of them shall wax old as a Garment*. Yea the most noble Creatures in Heaven it self are subject to change ; the Angels are capable of new Additions to their

Happiness, for new Object may be offer'd to incite their Praise, and this tends to increase their Felicity. The Angels doubtless know more now concerning the Mysteries of the Gospel, than before the Incarnation of our Saviour; hence they are said *to know*, by the Church, *the manifold Wisdom of God*, Eph. iii. 10. and *to desire to look into these Things*, 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. The Happiness of all Creatures admits of Degrees, and so of Change, because they are finite: But God is Infinite and so peculiarly *immutable!*

3dly. Creatures may be chang'd two Ways, either 1st. *Outwardly*, in respect of Time and Place: Things that are the Off-spring of Time, are subject to it and changed by it *outwardly*, they grow older: They are likewise chang'd *outwardly* when they move from Place to Place. 2dly. Creatures are likewise liable to change in respect of their *Being* and *Faculties*; but the Almighty is capable of neither of these nor any other Change, as will appear by the following Induction of particulars. And 1st. The Almighty is not chang'd in respect of *Place*, because he is Immense and Infinite, and cannot be measured by Space. Nor 2dly. In respect of *Time*, because he is Eternal, and so no subject of Time, as has been before observ'd. Nor 3dly. Can the Almighty be chang'd in respect of *Accidents*, because they are not applicable to him, on account of the Simplicity of his Being. Hence every Thing that is in God is himself, he is *true, just, wise, &c.* by his *Essence*. Neither

4thly. Can the Almighty be chang'd in respect of his *Essence*. For this suppos'd Change must be either effected by himself or another: not by himself, because there is no tendency in his Nature to a Change, it being void of all Composition! Neither can it be reasonably suppos'd that an infinitely Wise and perfectly Happy Being would Will a Change in his own Happiness, seeing there is no Necessity for

for such a change, were it possible. Neither can another change the divine *Essence*, seeing that all are inferior to God; for he that changes another must be superior to him whom he changes. Nor 5thly. Is the Almighty chang'd in his *Perfections* or *Faculties* which are indeed in him the same with his *Essence*, altho' in our manner of conceiving of them they are distinguish'd, to which God is pleas'd to accommodate himself in his Word, by assuming to himself an *Understanding*, *Will*, *Affections*, all which being himself are by consequence *immutable*. And

1st. God is *Immutable* in his *Understanding*. A Change of Sentiments implies Weakness; to increase in Knowledge supposes Ignorance, and to decline in Knowledge is to return to a state of Ignorance, both which are equally inconsistent with the Perfection of the divine Mind!

The Knowledge of God is not deriv'd from outward Objects, as that of Creatures is, and so is not dependent on them, and by consequence not altered by their Changes.

Again, the Knowledge of Creatures is something distinct, from the Faculty receiving, and so may be increas'd or diminish'd: But in God it is himself or his Being, it is no other than God knowing: And therefore if this were changed, the Being of God must be chang'd also, which is impossible.

The sacred Scriptures assure us, that *God's Understanding is Infinite*, Psal. cxlvii. 5. And if so, it must be unchangeable, for what is Infinite admits of no degrees. More it cannot be, for Nothing can be greater than Infinite; nor lets, for than it would not be Infinite. God knows all Things in Eternity in himself with one glance. Hence he is call'd *the only wise God*, 1 Tim. i. 17. and that *all his Works are known to him from the beginning of the World*, Act. xv. 18.

2dly. God is *unchangeable* in his *Will*, altho' his Will is free, it is nevertheless Constant and Eternal. *He is in one Mind and who can turn him*, sayeth *Job* Chap. 23. 13. and elsewhere, *tho' there be many devises in Man's Heart, yet the Council of the Lord that shall stand.* Now the Truth of this will farther appear, if we consider the following Particulars, viz.

1st. If the *Will* and *Purpose* of God were changeable, than the State of the best Men would be render'd exceeding precarious and miserable; for then the special Gifts of God vouchsafed at one Time, might be remov'd at another, and then the Condition of the most Devout would be as perilous as that of Rope-Dancers, who are every Moment in danger of breaking their Necks. But the sacred Scriptures assure us, *that the Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance*, Rom. xi. 29. And

2dly. If the Will of God were not *unchangeable*, than he would neither be the Object of Trust or Fear; for then, from the mutability of his Nature, both his Promises and Threats might be revers'd, and so the former would not merit our Confidence, nor the latter our Dread! And thus Hope and Fear, the great Springs of Religion, would be destroy'd.

3dly. Inasmuch as the *Will of God* is really himself, and is distinguished from his *Essence* only in our Conception, (modaly) then if his *Will* was changed, it would follow necessarily, that himself was chang'd, which cannot be, for the Reasons before mention'd. And;

4thly. Seeing that the Almighty *Wills* and *Purposes* with infinite Wisdom and Council, upon a sure and unalterable Foundation, whatsoever shall come to pass, it cannot be that his Will should Change. But to make this more Plain and Evident, let me offer the following induction of Particulars

to.

to prove that none of those Things that induce Men to change their Purposes, can be apply'd to God. And,

1st. Sometimes Men are *compell'd* to change their Purposes by the Threats of Superiors, or by some other measure of coercion: But none is God's equal, much less his superior, and therefore no constraint can be laid upon him! Isa. xiv. 27. *For the Lord of Hosts hath purposed and who shall disanul it? And his Hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? Pſal. cxv. 3. But our God is in the Heavens, he hath done whatsoever he pleased.*

2dly, Sometimes Men change their Purposes for want of Power to compass them, this has rendered many well concerted Schemes abortive! But the Designs of God cannot be mar'd thro' Impotency, because he is infinite in Strength.

3dly, Men sometimes alter their Purposes, because something unforeseen and unexpected happens, which gives such a turn to the Scene of Affairs, as makes an Alteration necessary. But to ascribe this to God, is to destroy his Happiness and the infinity of his Knowledge; and so by Consequence to deny him to be God.

4thly, Men change their Purposes sometimes through a natural Fickleness and Instability, which makes them in a little space of Time for and against a Thing, and proceeds partly from Ignorance, and partly from the moveableness of their Affections; none of which can be ascrib'd to God, he being *immutable* in his Nature, must be so also in his Purpose or Will.

5thly, Men change their Purposes in promising, and not fulfilling what they promise, from the Corruption of their Nature: But God is inviolably Holy, and therefore cannot Change in this respect.

6thly, Men sometimes change their Purposes because they were rashly made, without a thorough Knowledge of Things
and

and due Consideration upon them: But neither of these can be ascrib'd to God, *for as he is Infinite in Knowledge, so he Works all Things after the Council of his Will*, as the Apostle observes, Eph. i. 11. But I proceed to the

3. Propos'd, which was to *answer some Objections*. And 1st. The *Pelagians, Semipelagians, Jesuits, Arminians and Remonstrants*, object, *That by the aforesaid Immutability our Free-Will would be destroy'd.*

Ans. No! By no Means, because the freedom of our Will consists in a freedom from Force or Co-action, and faculty of acting by Council or with rational Complacency, and not in any independent indifferency to contraries, which is not hurt by the *Immutability* of God, but rather established. For God has purpos'd that every Agent shall act according to his Kind. Natural Agents necessarily (*ad ultimum sui posse*) to the extent of their Power; thus Fire burns, and Water wets as much as they can. And rational Agents, voluntarily or freely. If Liberty consisted in indifferency to contraries, then God himself, Angels and glorified Saints, would be depriv'd of it, for they have an eternal contrariety to Sin, and an eternal propensity to Holiness! And to suppose Creatures independent in Willing or Acting, is to suppose them to be Gods, because then they would not be under the Government of the Almighty. A Creature may as well exist of itself as act of itself. Second Causes must needs depend on the first in Being and Acting, for *in him we live, move and have our Being*. And as Divines justly observe, (*operari Sequitur esse*) *Action follows the Kind of the Being it proceeds from*. Independent Action follows an independent Being; and dependent Action, a dependent one, otherwise the Effect would exceed the Vertue of the producing Cause, which is absurd! A

2d. Objection

2d. Objection is this, *That by the aforesaid Immutability, God himself would not have a free Will, because according to it, he could not alter a conceiv'd Resolve.*

Ans. God Almighty Wills, what he Wills, of rational Complacency, and therefore Wills it freely. He acts according to his Nature, and therefore freely. To suppose that God can't Act freely without crossing his Nature, is to destroy the Happiness and Simplicity of God, and so by consequence his very Being, and to assert, that Liberty consists in constraint, which is a Contradiction. A

3d. Objection is, *God threatens some Things which come not to pass, as in the Cases of Hezekiah and Nineveh, (2. Kings xx. i. Jonah iii. 4.)*

Ans. God dispenseth his absolute Purposes to his Creatures by conditional Promises and Threatnings; and tho' the Conditions of Faith and Repentance be not always expressed, yet they are imply'd. Jer. xviii. 7, 8. *If I speak concerning a Nation to destroy it, if that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will Repent of the Evil I tho't to do unto them.*

Objection 4. *God is said to repent.*

Ans. It's else where said, *that he is not a Man that he should repent*, i. e. He can't repent as Men do by changing his Purpose, and in being sorry for what he has done. All that looks like Repentance in God, is an Alteration of the Course of his Providence towards his Creatures, and this is a change of the Work, not of the Workman, and its only on this Account that Repentance is ascrib'd to God.

Objection 5. *God Wills and makes mutable Things.*

Ans. He does so, but after an immutable Manner, even as by his Eternity, which is destitute of all Succession, he directs successive and mutual Things. Its true the Revela-
tion

tion of God's Will may be changed, whereby that may be rendered a Duty at one Time which is not at another, as appears from the *Ceremonial Law*: But these Changes being before determined by God, make no Alteration in his Will, as *Aquinas* observes, "It's one Thing to change the Will and another to Will a Change." As *St. Augustine* sayeth, "The Change is in us, not in God, as Houses and Trees seem to move to those that are in a Ship, but the Ship moves and they stand firm."

Objection 6. *The second Person of the Trinity was made Man in Time, which he was not before, and so was chang'd.*

I answer with *Wendeline*, "He assumed the human Nature, but was not changed into it, and this was but according to an Act of his Will from Eternity, and therefore he was not chang'd, for all positive change is by suffering."

Objection 7. *God is said to suffer Death.* Act. xx. 28.

Ans. He did suffer it, but not in himself, but in the assumed human Nature, and so is not chang'd.

Objection 8. *God created the World in Time, which he did not from Eternity.*

Ans. He did so, but by that Power which is Eternal and Immutable. Creation is nothing else but an Act of God's Will from Eternity that the World should exist in Time. Here the Creature is altered, but not the Will of God. Neither does any Thing accrue to God by the Creation but a meer Relation, which infers no change in him!

Object. 9. *What God Wills is not always done.*

Ans. Yes, what he Wills is done, but in the Manner he Wills. If he Wills only by commanding that the Thing Commanded be our Duty, then that is done: If he Wills by decreeing that any Thing should exist, then it does exist.

Object. 10. *God loves some Men whom he before hated, viz. the Elect that are called, and therefore he is changed.*

Ans.

Ans. Rational Affections are but Acts of the Will or its Postures to an Object, and these are ever the same in God. Love or Hatred, as they are Passions, can't be properly ascrib'd to God, for such would destroy his Happiness, Simplicity and Perfection, and therefore they intend no more but his Purpose to confer Benefits upon his Creatures in Time, or to punish them together with the Execution thereof, which is no more than an Act of his Will from Eternity, together with his Providence pursuant thereto in Time: Or they intend that Persons who were before expos'd to the Curse of the Law, are now according to God's eternal Purpose deliver'd therefrom, which makes a Change in the Creatures State but not in God.

Object. 11. *The Scriptures represent the Almighty as having Complacency in his People.*

Ans. Its true; but this shews only the Creatures conformity to God's Nature, and therefore signifies a Change in it, but not in him. The Sun which was troublesome to sore Eyes, is pleasant to them, being heal'd: Here the Sun is not chang'd, but the Eyes.

Object. 12. *If God be immutable, then what signifies Prayer, or the Use of any other Means?*

Ans. The Design of Prayer, is not to move God, but our selves, to express our Allegiance to him, and get Preparation for the Mercies he offers. Moreover it may be observed, that Prayer is a mean in the Use of which God is wont to confer Mercy. Now he immutably Wills the Mean, as well as the End. But I proceed to the Improvement. Now from what has been said, we may learn, 1st. The *Vanity* and *Emptiness* of all Creatures. God alone is immutable, every thing under the Sun besides him, is frail and fleeting, and hath no abiding! The World is a rolling Wheel, and every thing in it, is subject to change and mu-

T

tation

tation; yea even those Things, that seem most Specious and Stable, are in a continual Whirle-pool of Change, viz. Nobles, Princes, Kings common Wealths, Kingdoms and Empires: Both Scripture and History inform us, of the Catastrophes, or Desolations, every of those is Subject to! Riches make to themselves Wings oftentimes and fly away; Honour is but an instable blast, often times conferr'd with as little Judgment as it is remov'd; and Pleasure has no stability: As for the Love of Friends, it often changes with the Wind: How foolish is it therefore to over love or confide in such changeing Shadows of Good? God is the only Object worthy of our Love and Confidence! Let us therefore use these Things as tho' we used them not, with due Weanedness and Moderation, and acquies in the immutable God only. And

2dly. Hence we learn the great ground of the *Saints Perseverance*. Is it any Thing in them, or any Thing resolved or done by them? No, they are but Creatures, their Grace might fail, as appears from the fall of the Angels, and of our first Parents, and their Resolutions might alter; but the immutability of God cannot. And this is the Ground of the *Saints Perseverance*. *Mal. 3. 6. I am the Lord I change not, therefore the Sons of Jacob are not consumed.* God has fix'd his everlasting Love upon them, he has made an everlasting Covenant with them, and given his unchangeable Promise to them, *that he will never leave them*, and will he, can he go back, and suffer his Faithfulness to fail? No, its impossible.

3dly, Hence we may learn, the awful Case of the finally impenitent. That God is unchangable, who hath threatned to curse and destroy them, and this they must everlastingly endure. After the Day of his Mercy expires, he will be inexorable to all the Cries and Importunities of the Wicked; their dreadful Doom shall never be reversed; their intolerable and inexpressible Plagues, shall be immutable

ble and eternal! God is in every respect Immutable, viz. in his *Essence*, in his *Attributes* of *Justice*, *Wrath*, and *Hatred* against Sin and Sinners; in his *Threatnings* as well as in the Execution of them, which shall have no Remission in Degree, and know no End! O, should not these solemn Considerations frighten Impenitents from Sin and Security, to God and Goodness!

4thly, Hence we learn also the great Ground Believers have to trust and rejoyce in God in every Immergent. God is the only Object worthy of our Trust, for he always remains the same, and will never fail them. He is the immoveable Rock, the unshaken Foundation upon which his Church is Built; against which the Gates of Hell shall never prevail. When we are perplex'd with a Sight and Sense of our own Treachery and Weakness, compar'd with the Strength and Policy of our Enemies, or with a view of the many Vicissitudes, Wars, Confusions, Calamities, Diseases, and Deaths, which mankind are involv'd in and expos'd to. What is a sweeter Support than to think God is a Rock, whose Foundation stands sure; *the Lord knows who are his*: That his saving Gifts are without Repentance, and that *Jehovah* in the midst of those Changes, will be unmov'd to his own, and present with them by his Strength, that they may not be mov'd, that he will remain Immutable in his Love and Grace, in his Purpose and Promises, which are so many and so great! And why then may we not with the pious Prophet triumphing say, *Altho' the Fig Tree shall not Blossom, neither shall fruit be in the Vines, the Labour of the Olive shall fail, And the Field shall yield no Meat, the Flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls; yet I will rejoyce in the Lord and joy in the God of my Salvation!* What tho' all beneath the Sun, were in a tumultuous Uproar: Our Rock *Jehovah* is unmov'd, and therefore let us trust and joy in him!

But in the last Place, let us be exhorted to glorify the incorruptible and immutable God by our Thoughts, Speech and Practice. Let us think *highly*, and speak *reverently* of this venerable Attribute of God, least with the Gentile Philosophers, while we profess our selves to be wise, we become Fools, and change the Glory of the incorruptible God! But especially let us glorify God in life by avoiding all inconstancy in our pious Purposes and Promises made in the Covenant entered into at our Baptism, and renew'd at the Lords Supper: And O let us not be unstable in our Profession of CHRIST'S Truth! Or in love to him, or in the Practice of Piety! For by Levity and Inconstancy we contradict the Example of the immutable God, in imitation of whom our Perfection consists. Let us therefore be Stedfast in all the Duties we owe to God and Man: And particularly let us be immoveable in our adhering to the *Truths, of God*, which are the *Ground* of all rational Religion. Without this, nothing remains but Confusion, Enthusiasm and Nonsense! O Let us not *be as Children tossed about with every Wind of Doctrine, thro' the Craft and Jugling of those that lye in wait to deceive!* O let us beware of Wolves in Sheeps clothing! This is a Time of great Danger, the *Moravian Foxes* are trying with all subtilty to *destroy the tender Grapes*: Let us be as impregnable Rocks against those Deceivers: It's Perseverance Crowns all, if we be ashamed of CHRIST'S Truths in this adulterous Generation, of us will he be ashamed at last when he comes in his own and his Fathers Glory to judge the World: How will dastardly Fugitives from the Camp of CHRIST Tremble & be Confounded, when they behold the incarnate God, the Sovereign Lord and supream Judge of Quick and Dead, seated on his Saphire Throne, environ'd with Miriads of Angels aray'd in all the Pomp of God, bearing all the Ensigns of the most sparkling and astonishing Majesty, the most blazing and awful Glory!

SERMON VII.

JOHN, iv. 24.

God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.

TH E S E Words are Part of our Lord's Answer to the Woman of *Samaria*, concerning what she had said respecting worshipping God upon a particular Mountain, by which our Saviour informs her, and us by her, that the Ceremonial and Typical Sanctity or Holiness of Places, which obtain'd under the Jewish Dispensation, is now under the New-Testament remov'd; and that sincere Service or Worship, is accepted of by God every where, without any respect had to the Place where it is perform'd.

Now the Text we are considering contains three Things, 1st. A general Description of God, viz. that he is a Spirit. God is call'd a Spirit, 1st. *negatively*, because he is not a Body, 2dly. *Analogically*, "because there are many Excellency's in spiritual Substances, which do more shadow forth the Divine Nature, than any Bodily Thing can." As Dr. Ames observes in his *Medulla*. 3dly. God is call'd a Spirit *properly* and *eminently*, inasmuch as he is most remote from all manner of Composition. And altho' Angels and the Souls of Men, have a kind of Simplicity, yet the Almighty infinitely exceeds them therein: For whatsoever is affirm'd

affirm'd of God, which is communicable to Creatures, the same must be understood to be in him, in a more excellent and singular Manner, and in an infinitely greater Degree. The third Person of the Trinity is not only call'd a Spirit, *hypostatically*, and by Way of Appropriation, because of his Procession from the Father and the Son by a certain ineffable Breathing, but also every Person of the sacred Trinity, is call'd Spirit, *essentially*, because they all have the same immaterial Essence.

But 2dly. We have in the Text before us, a *Description* of that *Worship* which is only acceptable to God, and this consists of two Parts, *Spirit* and *Truth*. 1st. We must *worship God in Spirit*, i. e. Our *Worship* must proceed from our Spirit, or inward Parts. *Psal. li. 6. Behold thou desirest Truth in the Inward Parts Rom. i. 9. For God is my Witness whom I serve with my Spirit, in the Gospel of his Son.* That *Worship* which consists *only* in Profession and Externals, is far from being spiritual. And 2dly. We must *worship God in Truth*, not feignedly by Hypocrisy, but in the Sincerity of our Heart, *with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth. 1 Cor. v. 8.* Not *typically* by Shadows and Ceremonies, being in Bondage to Places and Times: *For the Law, the ceremonial Law, was given by Moses, but Grace & Truth came by JESUS CHRIST. John i. 17.* And 3dly. we have in our Text the *Necessity of the aforesaid Worship represented, must worship him, &c.* Because God is a Spirit, therefore he is delighted with the Spirit and spiritual Things, these are agreeable to his Nature: As also because God rejects the ceremonial Shadows under the New Testament, and now especially requires that spiritual *Worship*, which was prefigured by them.

In discoursing upon this Text, I shall in the

I. Place offer somewhat to confirm this Truth, *viz.*
 II. *That God is a Spirit.*

II. Shew the Analogy or Resemblance, between the Almighty and created Spirits.

III. The unlikens between them,

IV. Open the Nature of that spiritual Worship, which we ought to perform to God. And

V. Proceed to some Improvement. And

1st. That *God is a Spirit*, appears from both the Old and New Testament, *Judg. iii. 10. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, Ezek. xi. 24. 2 Cor. iii. 17. Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is Liberty.* And Reason assures us likewise, *that God is a Spirit.*

1st. Because a Spirit is the best, highest and purest Nature, it many Ways exceeds a Body, now God being the most perfect and excellent Existence, must needs be a Spirit.

2dly. That *God is a Spirit*, may be justly inferr'd from his Infinity, which cannot consist of finite Parts as Bodies do. Besides,

3dly. Bodies are dependant upon their Members, and corruptible because compounded; but these Things cannot consist with the *independancy, simplicity and incorruptibility* of the Supream Being. But the

2d. General Head of Discourse, was to shew *the Analogy or Resemblance, between the Almighty God and created Spirits* And

1st. Spirits are *impalpable*, they cannot be felt, they are inaccessible to our Senses, which require a Bodily Object. The Reason is this, that which is felt, must be more gross than our Animal Spirits, which feel it. But Angelical Substances are much finer than our sensitive Spirits, which are made of the Coarse Elements, and therefore cannot be felt by them. Here our LORD convinced

vinced his Disciples by this Argument of Sense, that he was no Spirit. *Luke xxiv. 39. Behold my Hands and my Feet, that it is I my Self, handle me and see, for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones as ye see me have.* And God himself is much more *impalpable*. And hence the Apostle Paul observes in his Epistle to *Timothy*, vi. 16. *That the Lord of Lords only hath Immortality, dwelling in the Light, which no Man can approach unto. Tho' we live and move in God, and have our Being from him, yet we are insensible of his essential Presence.*

2dly Spirits are *invisible Substances*, 1st. They are *Substances* not *Accidents*, for *Accidents* are but *Qualities* cleaving to a *Substance*, which are therefore variable and *Dependant*, as for Example, *Whitness* in the *Wall*: Whereas *Spirits* are *Existences* by themselves, and *God* who is the *Father* of *Spirits*, *Exists* of himself absolutely, 2dly. *Spirits* are *invisible*, as well as *intangible*, and the *Reason* is, because what is seen, must be grosser than the *Medium* of *Air*, thro' which we see, and grosser than the *Animal Spirits* by which we see; but *Angelical Substances* are finer than both, and therefore *invisible* to us. Neither does their assuming in *Antient Times* human Bodies, or some gross *Matter* in the *Form* of them, and appearing to *Abram* and others, in the least contradict this: For it was the *Body* assum'd that was seen, and not they. And how much more is *God* himself *invisible*, who infinitely exceeds all created *Spirits*, in sublime *Excellency*. Hence he is call'd the *King, Immortal, Eternal, Invisible*. 1 *Tim. i. 17.* And that he dwells in the *Light, which no Man can approach unto, which no Man hath seen or can see.* 1 *Tim. vi. 16.* And hence it is, that the *Almighty* is said to dwell in *secret*. *Mat. vi. 6.*

3dly. *Spirits* are in their *Nature Immortal*, having nothing in their *Constitution* tending to change or *Corruption*, because

cause they consist not of various Parts, as Bodies do, which may be disunit'd; and thus have their Form alter'd. Neither are Spirits, because of the Subtilty and fineness of their Nature, so lyable to Impressions by inferior Beings, as Bodies are, but still they are subject to the Controle of him, who gave them Being. But God himself is absolutely incorruptible. *Mal. iii. 6. I am the Lord, I change not.*

4thly. Spirits are the most *perfect and excellent Beings*. The Souls of Men and Angels, are much more noble than Bodies, and all Beings purely Material, and how infinitely does the blessed God exceed the sublimest Seraphims, in Excellency and Perfection?

5thly. Spirits are the *strongest of created Beings*, hence they are call'd *Principalities and Powers* and said to excel in Strength. *Psa. ciii. 20. Bless ye the Lord his Angels, that excel in Strength.* And hence the Weakness of Flesh is oppos'd to Spirit. *Isa. xxxi. 3. And is not Jehovah wise in Heart, and mighty in Strength? Who has hardened him self against God and prospered?* The combin'd Strength of all the Angels, together with the whole *Posse* of created Beings, is no more in Comparifon of the Power of God, *than a Drop to the great Ocean, or a little Dust in the Balance with the whole Earth. The Almighty takes up the Isles as a very little Thing, and all Nations before him are as Nothing, and they are counted to him less than Nothing, and Vanity* *Isa. xl. 15, 17.*

6thly. Spirits are the most *nimble* in their *Motions*, and *unwearied* in their *Actings*, of all created Beings. One of them is said fly from the third Heaven to the Earth in a few Hours (*Dan. xxi. 22.*) Now seeing God himself is a pure Act, must he not of Consequence, be the most agile and active of all Beings, hence he is figuratively represented by the *Psalmist*, to ride upon a Cherubim, and fly upon the

U
Wings

Wings of the Wind, Ps. xviii. 10. And hence *Isaiab* observes, that the *Creator of the Ends of the Earth fainteth not, neither is weary.* *Ija. xl. 28.*

7thly. Spirits are endow'd with *Understandings* and *Wills*, & are capable of putting forth *Actions* agreeable thereto, which Beings purely *Material*, have no Capacity for. e. g. The *Sun* tho' it be a *Beautiful Creature*, because *material*, is not capable of *Tho't* or *moral Action*, both which *Angels* and the *Souls of Men* can exert, And hath not *God* himself an *Understanding* that is *Infinite*, and a *Will* which no *created Power* can control?

But tho' there be some likeness between *God* and the *Creatures* in some Things, yet it must be still remembred, that he infinitely transcends their noblest *Excellency's* and in many Things is unlike them *Psal. cxlviii. 13. Let them Praise the Name of the Lord, for his Name alone is excellent, and his Glory is above the Earth and Heaven.* This leads to the

3d. *General Head* which was to shew the *Dissimilitude* or *Unlikeness* been *God* and *created Spirits*, even of the highest order, which appears in the following *Instances*, viz.

1st. The *Excellencies* of *created Spirits* are deriv'd from him to whom they owe their *Beings*, who is therefore stil'd the *Father of Spirits*, and the *God of the Spirits of all Flesh*, *Heb. xiii. 9.* But as the *Almighty* had no *Beginning* of *Existence*, consequently his *Perfections* must be underriv'd and *Eternal*.

2dly. The *Excellencies* of *created Spirits*, are but *comparative*, viz. that they excell the best of *material Beings* in their *Nature* and *Properties*, whereas the *Blessed God* excell both *material* and *immaterial*.

3dly. The *Beings* and *Excellencies* of *created Spirits* are *limited*, their being *Creatures* proves them to be *finite*. He that made them must needs give *Bounds* to their *Beings*,

so that they cannot fill all Places at once. And, Infinite Excellency's cannot be possess'd by any Thing that is in its Nature finite. But as the Being of God is self-existent, and therefore unlimited, so his Perfections are infinite.

4thly. The Excellencies of created Spirits are dependant & alterable; because deriv'd from another, they must depend on him who form'd them. Angels themselves, who are the noblest of created Spirits, inasmuch as they once were not, are capable of returning to their former Nonentity: They are also capable of the Impressions of Happiness and Misery; some of them have fallen from their original State of Holiness & Happiness, but none of these Things are applicable to God, he is far from the Shadow of Change, an independant God. Who tho' he is happy, can neither be made happy or miserable. He only hath immortality.

5thly. Angels are under the Dominion of God, they must needs owe Subjection and Homage to him, who gave them their Existence. And this their very Name *Angel* or *Messenger* imports. But it is the unalienable and incommunicable Prerogative of *Jehovah* alone to be supream and above all Control.

But I proceed to the 4th general Head which was to open the Nature of that spiritual Worship, which we ought to perform to that God, *who is a Spirit*, &c.

1st. It imply's *spiritual Principles*, viz. *Experimental Knowledge of God and our Selves*, such as affects and humbles us, and makes us judge our selves, with holy *Paul*, to be *less than the Least of all Saints*. *Without Knowledge*, says *Solomon*, *the Mind cannot be good*. And Indeed we cannot love rationally without some Knowledge of the Object we love.

2dly. Another *Principle of spiritual Worship*, is *Love*, transcendent Love to God, in *CHRIST*, because of his unparalleled and inexpressible Excellency, whereby we choose

God as the only Portion of our Souls, and his Worship as our most agreeable Entertainment. (*Jos. xxiv. 15.*)

3dly. Another Principle of *Spiritual Worship* is *Faith* in the eternal God, Father, Son and Spirit, even such *Faith* as renews the Heart, and reforms the Practice: For he that comes to God must *believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of those that unfeignedly seek him.* But

2dly. *Spiritual Worship* implies a *spiritual End*, not our own Credit or worldly Interest, with the Pharisees of Old; but God's Glory, and in Subordination thereto, our own and our Neighbours Spiritual Good and Edification. This is to serve God with our Spirits, as the Apostle Paul expresses it (*Rom. i. 9.*) If we should refer all our natural and civil Actions to the Glory of God, how much more our Religious? *Whether in eating or drinking, or whatsoever we do we should do it all to the Glory of God.* See *Col. iii. 22, 23.* *Not with Eye Service, such as Men Pleasers, but in singleness of Heart fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto Men.*

3dly. *Spiritual Worship*, implies a *spiritual Rule*, not the Customs of the Age we live in, or the Inventions or Traditions of Men; but the written Word of God; this is sufficient to *make the Man of God Perfect, and thoroughly furnished to every good Work.* To those that walk according to this Rule, *Peace be on them and on Israel of God. To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.* *Isa. viii. 20.* As God only knows what Worship will be acceptable to him, so he only has a Right to prescribe Acts of Worship, being the Creator and Lord of all, and therefore when Men add to the divine Institutions, as they abridge their fellow Creatures of the Liberty God has graciously given them; so they usurp the divine Prerogative, and injuriously reflect upon the Wisdom

Wisdom and Fidelity of the great Legislator. Our Lord charged the Pharisees, with *vain Worship* because they taught for Doctrines *the Commandments of Men*.

4thly. Spiritual Worship, implies a *spiritual Manner of Performance*, And this is when the Heart joyns with the outward Man in God's Service, when we do it out of Choice. (*Josh. xv. 15.*) *When we long for an absent God, Pf. xlii. 1.* When we heartily lament his Absence, with *Job. O that I knew where I could find him!* When we rejoyce in his Presence! (*Phil. iii. 3.*) When under a Sense of our Inability to perform Duty aright, without the Help of the Spirit thro' CHRIST, and our Unworthiness of that Help, we rely upon the Lord JESUS for Strength. Thus the Spouse is said *to come out of the Wilderness, leaning on her Beloved.* But I proceed to the Improvement of this Subject. And

1st. From the spirituality of God, or from his Being a Spirit, we may infer his *Simplicity*. A Spirit, as all acknowledge, is an immaterial Being, and therefore a simple one. If it be objected, that Angels and the Souls of Men are called Spirits in Scripture, and yet they are not altogether simple. *Ans.* They are so only in a diminutive Sense, by Way of analogy, because they come nearest of all to the Spirituality of God. But God himself is most properly & perfectly a Spirit. The Holy Scriptures teach this *Simplicity* of God, so often as it represents him not in compounded or in concrete Terms, but in simple and abstract ones. *e. g.* When he is therein call'd *Love*. 1 *John* iv. 8. *He that Loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love.* 2dly. God is call'd *Life*. 1 *Job* v. 20. *This is the true God and eternal Life.* 3dly He is said to be *Light in which there is no Darkness at all,* 1 *John* i. 5. *i. e.* His Godhead has nothing of a different kind, which is not pure Godhead.

And

And indeed the Simplicity of God, follows necessarily from many other of God's Perfections. e. g. 1st. From his *Self-Existence*, by which he is absolutely the first Being, if by Composition there were different Things in God, then there would be many first Things, of which none would be absolutely the first; because not before the Parts join'd with it: Moreover if God were compounded, there must be one to compound him, who must exist before the first, which is impossible. And 2dly, The Simplicity of God follows from his Independency: For on the contrary, what is compounded cannot be Independent, for then the whole depends upon the composing Parts, and the Union of those Parts depends upon the Composer. 3dly, God is immutable and therefore a simple Being, for whatsoever is compounded, is liable to be dissolv'd into the Parts of which the Composition is made, and thus it is changeable. 4thly, The *Eternity of God* proves him to be a *simple Being*, for whatsoever has had a Beginning may have an End! To this we may farther add, his *Infinity* and *Perfections*. And 1st, If God be *Infinite*, as the Scriptures asserts, when it informs us, *That he fills the Heaven and Earth, and that the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him*, than he is a simple Being: For whatsoever is compounded is finite, the Parts composing must needs be finite, because they are less than the Whole. And it is impossible for a Number of finite Parts to produce Infinity. 2dly, If God be a most *Perfect Being*, as the Scripture asserts Mat. v. 48. *Be Perfect as your Heavenly Father is Perfect*, then he is a simple one. Because not only all Men acknowledge that it is more Perfect to be Wisdom itself, than to be Wise, to be Goodness itself, than to be Good; But also the Notion of a Part involves a manifold Imperfection, inasmuch as it has not the Perfection of the Whole, and pre-requires a Composer.

Now

Now the *Simplicity* of God is a *divine Property* whereby he is void of all *Composition, Mixture and Division*, being all *Essence*, so that whatsoever is in God, is God. The Almighty by his *Simplicity* is free from all Kinds of *Composition*, by which different Things unite. As particularly,

1st. From a *Composition* of *quantitative* or *bulky Parts* which belongs to Bodies; but God is a Spirit, as has been already made evident.

2dly, Of *essential Parts*, such as *Matter and Form*, these belong only to Bodies, but God is immaterial.

3dly, Of *Substance* and *Accident*. Seeing that all *Accidents* are judg'd more imperfect than the *Substances* to which they belong, and are liable to change, as *Whiteness* in the *Wall*, they are therefore inconsistent with the *divine Perfection*.

4thly. Of *Essence* and *Existence*, seeing that *Existence* is but an *Act* of the *Essence*, and nothing different from it, which might infer a *Composition*.

4thly. Of *Genus* and *Difference*, which every *Species* contains: God is a *Being* above *Being*, in nothing he agrees with others, but in all Things he differs from all. But on the *Contrary*, every *Creature* is subject to *Composition*, and consequently to *Division*. All Things which are created, are made by joining together into one, more Things, than one, and so they consist of divers Things. Some have a more gross *Composition* of *Parts*, both *Essential* and *Integral*. As a *Man*, of *Soul and Body*; and the *Body* of *Flesh, Blood and Bones*. Some have a finer *Composition*, e. g. an *Angel* is compounded of *Substance* and *Accidents* that cleave thereto. His *Substance* or *Essence*, his *Faculties* and *Qualities* are different Things. His *Life* is one Thing; his *Will, Power, Wisdom, Agility, or Nimbleness* other Things. And the same may be said of his *Goodness*, which

the

the Scriptures inform us, some Angels have loft and yet retain their Beings. And thus the Soul of Man and all other Creatures are made up of many Things joined together.

But God is absolutely *Simple*, without Parts or Accidents; his Essence and Attributes are all one Thing in him, tho' differently conceiv'd of by us! But here let it be carefully observed, that *Simplicity*, as it is oppos'd to *Wisdom*, which is sometimes the Sense of the Word in Scripture (*Pro. i. 22.*) cannot without the greatest Blasphemy be ascrib'd to God. It is therefore *Simplicity* only, as it is oppos'd to *Mixture* and *Composition*, that is to be ascrib'd to God. "*That is properly called Simple (says Zanchy) which is not composed of different Things. And by how much the less any Thing is compounded, so much the more Simple it is, and is call'd.*" But

2dly. Is God a *Spirit*? Then we should frame no resemblance of him in our Thoughts as tho' he were a material Being or had a Body! And far less should we form Pictures and Images of God, either for Decency or Devotion. It is Folly with a Witness to pretend to draw the Lineaments or Form of an immaterial and invifible Being. And indeed it is an idolatrous Practice, which the Almighty strictly caution'd the People of *Israel* against, *Deut. vi. 12, 15, 16.* *And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the Fire, ye heard the Voice of the Words but saw no similitude; take therefore good Heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no manner of Similitude in Horeb, lest ye corrupt yourselves and make you a graven Image, the Similitude of any Figure, the likeness of Male or Female.* But

3dly. Is God a *Spirit*? Then he is the most suitable Good to our Souls, which are Spirits. As he is a spiritual Being, he suits their Nature and can communicate himself to them, And as he is All-sufficient, he can fully satisfy their most extensive.

extensive Desires. But on the Contrary, tho' earthly Entertainments may gratify our sensual Appeties, yet, because of their gross and elementary Nature, they cannot satisfy, and do not suit our Souls, neither in respect of their Nature and Dignity, or their Desires and Duration. It was therefore exceeding foolish in the rich Man to say to his Soul, in respect of such Things, *that it had much Goods laid up for many Years*. Such Entertainments can no more satisfy the anxious Soul, than Husks, Gravel-Stones, or the East Wind can satisfy the cravings of our Stomach! And it is with great Justice that the Scriptures ascribe such ignominious Epithets to all *earthly Good*, to signify in the strongest Terms its insufficiency to content the Mind.

4thly. Is God a *Spirit*? This shews us then the necessity of Spiritual Worship. This indeed is plainly express'd in our Text. Such a Worship is suitable to the Nature of God, and will be only accepted by him. The justness of this inference some of the Pagans discovered by the Dint of Nature's Light. *Cato* speaks excellently about it in his Disticks, in the following Manner.

Sideus estanimus nobis ut carmina dicunt.

Hic tibi precipue sit pura mente colendus, i. e.

If God is a Spirit, as the Poets inform us, then our chief Care, should be to worship him with a pure Mind.

And seeing this spiritual Worship is the Touch-Stone of true Christianity, we should be hereby endued to examine ourselves with all Speed and Seriousness, whether we perform it or not, and that by an impartial and deliberate Application of what has been said concerning it, in the doctrinal Part of this Discourse. Now it upon Tryal we find the aforesaid Characters of spiritual Worship in us, we may and ought to rejoyce in Christ Jesus, notwithstanding our many defects, because we are compleat in him. Sincere Intentions are accepted for Performances, especially when an

opportunity for Action does not present it self. Thus it was in *David's Case*, altho' he did not actually build the Temple, yet because he honestly purposed to do it, the Almighty look'd upon it as done.

But such as are destitute of the aforesaid Characters who worship God who is a Spirit, without Spirit; who draw near to God with their Lips, while their Hearts are far from him; who rest in a dead Form of Devotion; who content themselves with bodily Exercise, which profits little, and in the mean Time with their Minds serve themselves, all such are in a doleful Case, their specious Worship being destitute of Spirit and Soul, is dead, and stinks before God as a dead Corps that is putrify'd does in our Nostrils! Such Services *Jehovah casts as Dung upon their Faces, Mal. 23.* Such in the Judgment of God are Hypocrits, and such he pronounces a Woe upon, *Mat. xxiii. 25, 26. Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrits, for ye make clean the out side of the Cup and Platter, but within they are full of Extortion and Excess.*

5thly, Is God a Spirit? Then let us purify our Spirits or Hearts more and more from all spiritual Wickedness, and devote them to God. Now the Desires or lusts of the Mind, which War against it, and ought to be purged away, are these, viz. *Ignorance, spiritual Blindness, Pride, Infidelity, Hypocrisy.* We should be endued to oppose spiritual Evils by the following Considerations, 1st. Because they make us most like the Devils, who are spiritual Wickednesses.

2dly. Because Sin is strongest in the Spirit, as its Fountain.

3dly, Because God who is a Spirit, as he is pleased with spiritual Services, so he is principally offended with spiritual Abominations! Besides, those Evils are especially contrary to the Perfection of the spiritual Law of God. Now we should
endeavour

endeavour to purge our Hearts from the aforesaid Evils, by Watchfulness in opposing the first evil Motions, by meditating on the divine Word, by repeated Acts of Faith upon CHRIST, and by earnest Prayer. And we should be incited to give our Hearts and our Spirits to God by considering 1st. That he requires it, *my Son give me thine Heart.*

2dly, He has the best Right to it, for he has made it, he is the Father of Spirits.

3dly, He best deserves it also in Point of Gratitude, on Account of his preserving, providing, and redeeming Love.

4thly, It ought to be given to him also in point of Interest, for he can only satisfy it with suitable and enduring Good! Let us there commit our Spirits into his Hands, that he may *justify* them by the Blood and Obedience of his Son, and *sanctify* them by his Spirit, and at last receive them into his Kingdom.

Is God a simple Being? Then let us glorify him upon the Account of this Attribute, by which he is so much exalted above all changeable and Compounded Beings! and let us with simplicity entirely depend upon him in all adversity! He is *Light* to direct us, *Power* to support us, *Love* to refresh us, yea he is our *Life and Salvation!* His simplicity makes him an Object worthy of Trust and Confidence, for he will not deceive the Expectations of the Poor. And should not we Endeavour to imitate the Simplicity of God in Heart and Conversation? Let us serve God, not with a double Heart, as Hypocrites, who look two contrary Ways; but with Simplicity, which includes these Things in it, viz. *Purity, Sincerity, and Constancy.* 1st. With *Purity* of Heart, Hence our Saviour pronounces a blessing upon those *who are pure in Heart, i. e.* Who love, long for,

and labour after *Holiness* in Heart, and do not habitually indulge the Contrary!

2dly, *Sincerity*, and that is when a Person by one direct Line, aims at God's glory in the general Course of all their Actions, *Natural, Civil,* and especially *Religious*. Hence our Lord informs us, that *if our Eye be single our whole Body is full of Light*, Mat. vi. 22. And

3dly, That this pure and sincere Heart contends towards its Mark, with a *Constant* and as much as may be uniform Endeavour, the want of which makes Persons *instable in all their Ways*, Jam. i. 8. And we should also be simple in *Conversation*, after the Example of the Apostles, avoiding all *Deceit, Falshood* and *Guile*, 2 Cor. i. 12. *This is our rejoicing even the Testimony of our Consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom we have had our Conversation in the World.* We should be excited hereto by the following Motives, 1st. Because hereby we imitate God in his primary Perfection, which is the greatest Excellency of the reasonable Creature. 2dly. Such are Blessed by our Lord (Mat. v. 8.) 3dly. *Simplicity* is the Foundation of *Constancy*, as a *double Mind* is of *Inconstancy*. 4thly. The double Minded are abhor'd by God, and must, so continuing, expect perpetual ruin. (*Psa. xii.*)

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

PSALMS cxlv. 3.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his Greatness is unsearchable.

THIS Text represents to us the Infinity of God's Essence or Being, and the Necessity of Honouring him on this Account. And 1st. we have a Representation of the Infinity of the divine Being, more generally in these Words, *great is the Lord or Jehovah*. Here God, denominated by his Essence, is said to be great: For the Name *Jehovah* intends his Essence or Being, that thus we might know his Essence is Infinite. The Word *great* must either refer to Quantity or Quality, if to Quantity, then either to Number or Magnitude; in respect of Number God is one, but so one, as eminently to include yea exceed all! In respect of Magnitude, God is great without Quantity, as he is good without Quality, *i. e.* As his Goodness is not any Thing added to his Being, as it is in Creatures; but is the same with it, so his Greatness does not consist in the Bulk or Dimensions of Bodys, such as Heighth, Depth, Breadth, &c.

But if the Word *great*, be apply'd to Quality, then it denotes the Excellency of a Thing or Person, together with an eminent Degree of that Excellency. And thus it is
with

with God, he exceeds all others in Excellency; but we have in the Words of our Text, a more Particular Description of the Infinity of the divine Being, in these Words. *And his Greatness is unsearchable*, or as the Words are interpreted by others, *has no End*; as that which is finite may be searched, so on the contrary that which is unsearchable must needs be Infinite, *Job. 5. 9. Which doth great Things and unsearchable, marvellous Things without Number.* *Rom. xi. 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!* Which is emphatically express'd by comparative Terms, whereby God is said to be greater than all other Gods. *2 Chron. ii. 5. And the House which I build is great, for great is our God above all Gods.* *Psal. cxxxv. 5. For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all Gods.* i. e. Not only above Emperors, Kings, Princes and Magistrates, who are call'd Gods, because they bear some Image of the divine Sovereignty, by their Superiority and Power of Government; *but also above all false Gods*, who are great in the Opinion of their Worshippers. The Number of which in the Time of *Hesiod*, was above Thirty Thousand, to every of which was assign'd some peculiar Perfection; without doubt then, he who is greater than all those must needs be infinite, and ought to be praised as such; which is the 2d. Particular our Text contains, *Great is the Lord and greatly to be prais'd.* God should be greatly honour'd by our Minds, and highly extol'd by our Lips and Lives. He should be prais'd in the superlative Degree, more than any, more than all, because he is greater and more excellent than all, in his Being and Perfections. In discoursing upon this Text, I shall

I. Endeavour to prove that God is infinite in his Essence.

II. Labour to explain the Nature thereof, And

III. Speak of his *Immanity* or *Omnipresence*, which results therefrom, and so proceed to the Improvement. And

1st. The Scriptures assert the *Infinity* of God's *Essence*, not only in those Places already mentioned, but also in these following *viz.* *Job xxxvi. 26. Behold God is great, and we know him not, neither can the Number of his Years be searched out, Job. xi. 7, 8, 9. Canst thou by searching find out God, canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection, it is high as Heaven, what canst thou do, deeper than Hell what canst thou know? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea.* And Reason also confirms the same Truth, as appears by the following Particulars, *viz.*

1st. If God's Being and Perfections are incomprehensible, as has been prov'd in this, and in a preceeding Sermon, then certainly they are infinite. The great Reason why Men and Angels cannot grasp the Knowledge of the divine Being is, because it is too vast an Object for their finite Capacities to compass.

2dly. There is nothing in Creatures that argues an End or Defect, either in their Being, Power, Presence, or Duration; for which they are call'd finite, which is not very alien or remote from God, and therefore he is Infinite.

3dly. He created the World out of nothing, which requir'd infinite Power, because of an infinite Distance which was to be overcome, between nothing and something.

4thly. Seeing the highest Perfection, is necessarily included in the Notion of a God, and this the Scriptures confirm, by calling him *the most High*, *Psal. xviii. 13.* Then his Being and Attributes are Infinite: For something higher and
more

more excellent than finite may be conceiv'd, viz. something that is Infinite. And

5thly. Seeing he is absolutely the first Being he must of Necessity be Infinite, for thus there can be none before him, to limit his Being and Perfections. If his Being had any Bounds, it could not be absolute. The Reason why Creatures are finite is, because they are made by another, who has circumscrib'd their Beings within certain Limits. Now that God is absolutely the first Being, existing of himself, has been already prov'd in a preceeding Sermon.

6thly. Forasmuch as all the various Perfections of Creatures, both Angelical and Human in Heaven and Earth, are borrow'd from God. He who is the unexhausted Fountain, from which they all flow, must be Immense and Infinite: For surely the Giver must be greater than the Receiver. Hence is that notable Scripture. *Rom. xi. 35, 36. Who hath first given to him and it shall be recompens'd unto him again, for of him, and thro' him, and to him are all Things.* I proceed to consider the

2d. Propos'd which was to explain *the Nature of God's Infinity, especially in his Essence*; which may be thus describ'd, viz. *That it is an incommunicable Property of Jehovah, whereby he is without all Bounds and Limitations in his Being and Perfections.* The Infinity of God may be said to respect, either his Attributes or his Being; as it respects his Attributes, thus his Justice, Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Grace, Mercy, and Duration; are said to be Infinite in Scripture, that is without Bounds, Limits, or End. As it respects his Being, it signifies that it neither is, or can be bounded, neither outwardly by an encompassing Body, as material Things are, nor inwardly, by proper Limits, as created Spirits. All Creatures both Human and Angelical, as well as others are bounded.

bounded by their Essences, the Form acting upon the Matter limits it within its own Confines. But God is unlimited, and can't be *searched out to Perfection*. *Job. xi. 7.* And indeed this is applicable to all that can be said of him! Hence says the Psalmist *his understanding is infinite*. And indeed infinity is the peculiar Glory of God, whereby he is distinguish'd from and far advanced above all secondary Beings.

God is infinite not according to the Etymology of the Word, which respects an End only, for he is without Beginning and End. *Zancky* observes, "*That a Thing is call'd*
 "privatively *Infinite, which indeed hath not an End, but*
 "can have it. *This is applicable to the noblest Creatures*
 "even to *Angels and the Souls of Men.*
 "And 2dly. *That that is negatively infinite, which neither*
 "has nor can have any End." In this Sense God only is infinite, yet when we say that God is negatively infinite, a positive Perfection is thereby intended. "*Infinity* (saith "*Gomarus*) is an absolute property of the Essence of God, "which is not limited or circumscrib'd by any Terms, or "Bounds of Cause or Measure." To explain this, let it be observ'd, that every Creature hath a fourfold Limitation, *viz.* Of the *Kind of Being, Degrees of Being, of Time and Place.*

And. 1st. Creatures are limited as to their *Kinds of Being*, some are of one Kind, and some of another some are simple, some compounded, some have Bodies, some not, some have Life, some none, some have Sense some none. The great Creator hath fix'd them in their several Kinds and Orders, that so the whole Frame of Things may be beautify'd with variety. But God himself is not limited to any kind of Being. He hath in himself all Kinds, not subjectively, but eminently.

2dly. Creatures are limited to *Degrees of Being and Goodness*, or Excellency, some have higher and some lower

Y

Degrees,

Degrees, but the Being of God is absolute perfect and infinite and so beyond all Degrees and Measures; and thus are all his Attributes which spring from his Being, and only differ therefrom in our Manner of conceiving.

3dly Creatures are limited as to *Time* or *Duration*, they have a Beginning either with or in Time, and a Succession in Duration, and either have or may have an End. But God is Eternal an Everlasting Now, without Beginning, Succession, or End.

4thly. Creatures are limited as to *Place*, they are included in a Place, and cannot be every where at once, but God is Immense and Omnipresent. And thus I am led to speak upon the

3d, Propos'd, viz. the *Immensity* and *Omnipresence* of God. These Words represent the same Thing after a different Manner. *Infinity*, as it cannot be measured by Place, or any other Dimensions of Length, Breadth, Depth, Height, is call'd *Immensity*. As it exists with every Creature, it is call'd *Omnipresence*; and as it co-exists every where, it is call'd *Ubiquity*. This Attribute of God may be thus describ'd, viz. *That it is the Infinity of the divine Essence, as that exists with all Space*. By *Space*, we are to understand nothing more than where a Creature does or may exist, and therefore it is two Fold, viz. 1st. either a vacuum or void, where a Creature can exist, or a Place where it actually does exist. Therefore Space is properly no Being, much less a Body, for then when a Body is in a Place, one Body would be in another. Neither is it the same with a Body which is contain'd in a Place, for when a Body is remov'd the Place containing remain's. Neither are Breadth and Length, and other such like Dimensions, properly in Space; but in the Bodies which are or may be contain'd therein. Now the Almighty is not extended together with Space, or diffus'd thro' it, for these Things only belong to Bodies. *Jehovah* being

being without Matter or Parts, must be without Extension ; and having no Matter he can have no Form, which belongs to Matter, and gives it the Dimensions of Weadth and Length, &c. The Almighty only exists together with all Space, not by Multiplication of himself, for he is one ; nor by Division by Parts, being partly in Heaven and partly on Earth, for he is most *Simple* and cannot be divided : Neither can the Almighty be circumscrib'd or bounded by Space, because he is a Spirit ; or limited to a certain Place, because he is Infinite. God exists with all Space by filling of it. Jer. xxiii. 24. *Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, sayeth the Lord.* The Almighty indeed does not fill Space as Bodies do, because his Being there does not exclude the Creature : Whereas two Bodies cannot occupy the same Place in the same Instant of Time. But *Jehovah* fills all Places in the following respects.

1st. So as not to be *included* in any Place or encompassed, for then he must be finite : *But the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him.* And

2dly, So as not to be *excluded* out of any Place ; and hence it is said, Act. xvii. 27. *That he is not far from every one of us.* Even the Heathens, by the Light of Nature, could say, "*Jovis omnia plena ; all Things are full of Jupiter.*"

3dly, So as to be *without Motion from Place to Place* : And therefore, when the Scriptures speak of his *descending from Heaven to Earth, his riding on a Cherub, and on the Wings of the Wind,* it is only a form of Speech accommodated to our weak Way of conceiving of God and divine Things, importing some special Manifestation of God in his Works of Providence. And

4thly, So as to be *beyond all Place*; for what is Place but the Limit of created Beings? It must therefore be finite how vast soever it be, and therefore cannot contain the infinite God.

The Holy Scriptures assert in strong Terms, the *Omnipresence* of God, *Psa.* cxxxix. from the 7th to the 10th Verses, *Whether shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there, If I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there. If I take the Wings of the Morning and dwell in the uttermost Parts of the Sea, even there shall thy Hand lead me, and thy right Hand shall hold me.* *Act.* xvii. 28. *For in him we live and move and have our Being.* And indeed the *Omnipresence* of God necessarily follows from his *Infinity*, which we have before considered: For what is Infinite in Essence, cannot be restricted to any Place. It is contradictory to suppose that that which is boundless, should be bounded; it is just in other Words to say, that that which hath no limits, nor possibly can have them, yet that it hath them; which is absurd!

Besides, to be restrained by any to a Place, is as inconsistent with the *Independency* of God, as Motion from Place to Place is with his immutability or unchangableness!

It likewise follows from the Almightyness of God, that he can Work every where, which could not be if he were limited to any Place.

And how can we suppose, that a perfect Being, who is possess'd with all Perfection, can want that of Omnipresence, without a manifest Contradiction? And that the various Perfections of God admit of no Degrees or Measures, follows necessarily from his *Simplicity*. Compounded Beings admit of Degrees and Dimensions, but such as are Simple, have none: Sweet Things have their Degrees, but Sweetness itself is above all Degrees!

But

But before I proceed to the Improvement of this Subject, I would have it observ'd, that altho' the *Immensify* and *Omnipresence* of God, does in the first place, concern his *Essence*, yet that it doth also respect his *Knowledge*, his *Operations*, his *Providence*, by his *Essence*. Hence all Things are said *to be naked and open unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do*, Heb. iv. 13. And hence God is said *to uphold all Things by the Word of his Power*, Heb. i. 3. Now in respect of God's *Operations*, he is said to be variously present with *Creatures*.

1st In *Heaven*, he is present by his *Glory*: There he makes his divine Majesty and *Glory*, peculiarly manifest to the equal *Admiration* and *Delight* of *Saints* and *Angels*! Hence that blessed Place is call'd *the Throne of God*, Isa. lxvi. 1. And *his dwelling Place*, 2 Chron. vi. 21.

2d. On *Earth*, God is present by his *Grace*, enlightning, adopting, sanctifying and comforting his *People*; hence the *Spirit* is promis'd for these Ends, *Job*. xvi. 8. 9.

3d. In *Hell*, God is present by his *Justice*, Psa. cxxxix. 8. *If I make my Bed in Hell, lo thou art there*: There in that awful Vault of Horror and Misery, are dreadful display's of divine Vengeance upon damned Angels and damned Souls, without Intermision and without End! I might also observe that the Almighty is present after an inexpressible Manner, with the *human Nature* of CHRIST, by the *Hypostatical Union*, Col. ii. 9. *For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*. God was also present with the *Prophets* after an extraordinary Manner, by *Wisdom* and *Revelation* 1 Pet. i. 11. And so with the *Apostles*, by whom he wrought divers *Miracles*; and the Almighty may be said to be in a general Way present with all the *Works* of his Hands, supporting all *Creatures* by his *Power*, and *Governing* all their *Motions* by his *Providence* to his own *Glory*, and his *Peoples* Good.

Good. I proceed to the Improvement of this Subject. And,
 1st. The serious Consideration of the Greatness and Infinity of God, compar'd with the Nothingness of Mankind, may justly make us ashamed of our Pride, and humble us before him! With what becoming abasement did *Abram* of old speak to God upon this Account, Gen. xviii. 27. *Behold now I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord, who am but Dust and Ashes!* And do not the Angels, those Nobles of the Court of Heaven, for the very same Reason *vail their Faces before him*, Isa. vi. God is Infinite in his Being and all his Attributes; and what are we but *Shadows, Worms, Locusts, drops in the Bucket, a little Dust in the Balance*, yea as *Nothing* and *less than Nothing*. For what Proportion is there between what is finite and infinity? How justly may we therefore use the *Psalmist's* Exclamation, Psal. viii. 4. *What is Man that thou art mindful of him?*

2dly, The Consideration of the Infinity of God, should incline us to Modesty in our Thoughts of divine Mysteries, such as the sacred Trinity, the hypostatical Union of two Natures in the Person of Christ, and any other Difficulties we meet with in Scripture, to which our weak Understandings are not equal. In this Case it would be of excellent Use, humbly to call to Mind the Words of our Text, *Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, his Greatness is unsearchable*. As well as the saying of *Zophar*, Job xi. *Canst thou by searching find out God, canst thou know the Almighty to Perfection, it's higher than Heaven, what canst thou do?*

In respect of these Things we must use the Apostle's admiring Exclamation, Rom. xi. 33. *O! the Depth of the Riches, of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!*

3dly, Is *Jehovah* infinite in his Being and Attributes. Then how worthy is he of our highest Love, entrest Confidence,

Confidence, and freest Choice? As Excellency is the proper Object of Love, so by Consequence an Infinity of it must needs demerit our dearest and most supream Respects! And how safely may we repose our whole Trust in a Being, who is infinite and immutable in Wisdom, Power and Goodness? Who would not then make choice of so glorious a Being, for his Portion and Inheritance? For surely as the Psalmist observes, *Happy is the People who are in such a Case, yea Happy is that People whose God is the Lord, Psa. cxliv. ult.* The Excellency's of poor Creatures are variable and limited, and while here, stain'd with many Defects and Blemishes, they often deceive our Expectation! Hence the Person is curs'd *who trusteth in Man, or maketh Flesh his Arm!* Sometimes they cannot, and sometimes they will not help us in extremity. Let us therefore disclaim all Dependence on them, all immoderate Love to them, and make the infinite *Jehovab* the only Foundation of our Religious Trust, the only Object of our transcendent Respect and Love! But 4thly. Is *Jehovab* great? *Then he is greatly to be prais'd*, this is the *Psalmist's* inference in our Text. If it be proper to make Panegyricks or commendatory Orations in the Praise of temporal Princes, on the Account of their Greatness, how much more so must it be to praise the *King of Kings and Lord of Lords!* He, and He only, is absolutely great! *Great of himself, independently Great, invariably Great:* As his Greatness depends upon none, so it is Subject to no Alteration: Likewise the Almighty is *comparatively* and *superlatively Great*: Great above all Gods, yea *infinitely* and *inexpressibly Great*; Great without Bounds, and *beyond all Expression and Conception.* Whereas the greatness of the most puissant Monarchs on Earth, is *deriv'd, dependent, variable,* and *finite.* Now we should Praise the great God, 1st. In our *Hearts*, by thinking great Things of him, yea the greatest,

est, seeing *Jehovah* transcends the highest flight of an Angels Thought; by a *great Esteem* of him above all others and of his Presence, Love, Promises, Worship. By a great and insatiable *Desire* after a Sense of his Love, and conformity to his Nature, as well as after the Manifestation of his Glory and the Promotion of his Kingdom, *Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. How amiable are thy Tabernacles O Lord of Hosts! My Soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord, and my Flesh cryeth out for the living God!* And farther we should Praise God in our Hearts, by *Delight* and *Complacency* in him, and in all his Ways of dealing towards us, as well as by expecting to receive great Things from a great God! How condescending and amazing is that Place of Scripture mentioned by the Royal Prophet *Isa. xlv. 11. Thus saith the Lord the Holy one of Israel, ask me of things to come concerning my Sons, and concerning the Work of my Hands, command ye me. Jehovah delights to manifest the dazzling Glory of his Greatness and Infinity, in compassing great Salvation for his People! And therefore as we may freely ask great Mercy's from God, so we may safely expect them! For who can control Omnipotence, or set bounds to Infinity? and therefore when in our thoughts, we Question his Almightyness, we turn back from God and tempt him, and limit the holy one of Israel, (Psal. 78. 41.)*

2dly, We should praise God with our *Lips*, by declaring among others with a loud Voice, his infinite Greatness and Excellency, and exciting others to do the same, (*Psal. ciii. 8, 20, 21.*) And,

3dly, We should praise the great God by our *Lives*; by a profound Reverence of his Majesty, and fear of offending him, even in the smallest Things, by an earnest Endeavour to obey and please him, and by an infinite desire, and steady Care to enjoy him here and forever! But,

5thly,

5thly, Is *Jehovah* Infinite? Then we may hence learn the dangerous Case of those who slight God; but who are they, and what is their Misery?

Answer. 1st. All such as say in the Pride of their Hearts with *Pharaoh*, *who is the Lord that I should obey him?* Ex. ii. Or like those whom *Job* speaks of, *Job* xxi. 14. *They say unto God, depart from us, for we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways; what is the Almighty that we should serve him?*

2dly, All such as abuse the Kindness and Long-suffering of God. Rom. ii. 4, 5. *Or despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness and Forbearance, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth to repentance, &c.*

3dly, Those slight *Jehovah*, who slight his Embassadors, (*Luke* x. 16.) And

4thly, These who prefer any Thing in this World before him, *2 Tim.* iii. 4. *Lovers of Pleasures more than Lovers of God.* How dreadful is the Case of all such, seeing they have an infinite God against them? How can they endure his infinite Wrath, and which Way can they escape it? Not by Craft, for he is infinite in Wisdom and Knowledge; not by Might, for he is infinite in Power. When he *but touches the Mountains they smoke, yea the Hills tremble at his Presence!* Not by Flight, for he is every where Present. *If they take the Wings of the Morning and fly to the utmost Ends of the Earth, if they ascend the Top of Carmel or descend into the Depths of the Ocean, yet they cannot escape the Cognizance of God's Eye, or the reach of his Arm! He is wise in Heart and mighty in Strength, who hath hardened himself against him and prospered?*

6thly. We should be excited by the consideration of God's infinite Greatness, to be bold and *magnanimous* in the Service of God, particularly in undertaking great Labours for God, and in encountering great Difficulties and Dangers in

Z

the

the Way of Duty, seeing that God will be to us at last, as to *Abram* of old, *an exceeding great reward*. And farther we should express *magnanimity* in a generous Contempt of all worldly Gain and Grandeur, when compared with God and his Service. And in a frequent Meditation upon, and vigorous Prosecution of divine and heavenly Objects! We are the Sons of a great Prince, born to a great Inheritance, and we are redeemed by a great Price, no less than the Blood of the Son of God: Seeing that the great God is our Shield and Buckler, let us despise the Threats of Worms, that are crush'd before the Moth! But

7thly. Is God Immense, and every where Present? This opens a Scene of sweet Consolation to God's People in every Danger and Difficulty, because he is present with them, not only with his Essence, but by his Grace. What then tho' they should *walk thro' the Valley and shadow of Death*, yet they need fear no Evil, *for God is with them, and his Rod and Staff shall comfort them!* Particularly if they are in Solitude, Banishment, in Prison, under Persecution, the Power of Deceases, or any other Calamity. How sweet is it to think that *God is at their right Hand, yea as a Wall of Fire about them!* And therefore it may be said to them as *Julius Caesar* spoke to the Ship-Master in the Time of a Storm, "*Trust to fortune, said he, for Julius is in the Ship.*" And as *Alexander* to a Soldier, "*While I am present, said he, fear the Arms of no Adversary, tho' you yourselves be unarm'd.*" And as *Augustine*, "*What Man shouldst thou fear who art plac'd in the Bosom of God,*" This is well express'd in the following Stanza.

Sic ubi Christus adest, nobis vel aranea murus.

Sic ubi Christus abest, vel murus aranea fict.

i. e. When CHRIST is present, Cobwebs as Walls we see.
But when he's absent, Walls as Cobwebs be!

O!

O ! how refreshing is it to think that God is not only with his People, present by his *Essence*, but present by his *Wisdom, Power and Providence!* to conduct, support, protect and revive them in every Difficulty, and to sanctify them to them. How careful should we be therefore, that this great omnipresent God, should be ours in the Covenant of his Grace, by embracing the Mediator of the Covenant by a living Faith, and living to him that died for us. We may be separated from our earthly Friends very far, but God is every where : He was with *Daniel* in the Den of Lyons ; with *Jonah* in the Water ; with the *three Children* in the Fire ; with *Paul and Silas* in Prison, and with *John* in the Retirements of *Patmos!* If we live humbly and watchfully, no human Art or Violence can separate him from our Embraces ! Well might the Psalmist say of him, *that he is a present Help in the Time of Trouble.*

8thly, Is God *Omnipresent?* Then his Eye is continually upon us, in our most retir'd Recesses. This Consideration should excite us to detest and avoid all secret Sins, because a holy God, a just Judge, and righteous Avenger of Sin continually beholds us ! and is present with us in our most obscure Retreats ! The Darkness hides not from him, but the Night shines as the Day. Hence the Lord himself commanded the *Israelites* to remove every filthy Thing out of their Camp, because he walk'd in the midst thereof least he should turn away from them, *Deut. xxiii. 14.* The atheistical Imagination that God is far off, and takes no Cognizance of human Actions, is the fatal Source of Sin and Security ! Hence some are induc'd to commit those Evils in Secret, which they dar'nt not do, in the Presence of the meanest Witness, not considering that Conscience is as a Thousand Witnesses, and that God is infinitely greater *than our Hearts, and knoweth all things, 1 Job. iii. 20.*

A Sense of God's Omnipresence and Omniscience, is a most excellent Defensative against secret Impiety, it was by this, that gallant and virtuous *Joseph*, warded off the formidable Assault of his lascivious Mistress, Gen. xxxix. 9. *How can I do this great Wickedness, and Sin against God? And by this Job* repell'd Temptations to Idolatry, Job xxxi. 26, 27, 28. *If I beheld the Sun when it shin'd, or the Moon walking in Brightness, and my Heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my Hand, this also were an Iniquity to be punished by the Judge; for I should have denyed the God that is above.* The following Council of a Pagan is worthy of Remark, "*Turpe quod acturus te sine teste, i. e. If thou art about to do any Thing Base or Ignoble, be afraid of your self, tho' there be no Witness.*" It was likewise a noble Answer of a Christian to a heathen Philosopher, who being ask'd where his God was, reply'd, "*Let me first understand from you where he is not.*" But,

9thly, Is God Immense and Omnipresent? Then we should be hereby excited to secret Duty, and all manner of Sincerity. The Lord is every where Present with us, "*For God is all Eye, and continually beholds us; he is all Ear and incessantly hears us,*" as *Augustine* observes. He bottles all our Tears, and records all our secret Sighs and Groans, none of our Wrestlings will be lost! For that God who now sees in Secret, will by and by reward openly. Surely Solitariness should neither embolden us to Sin, or hinder us from Duty. Mr. *Leigh* in his Body of Divinity, tells the following Story of two religious Men, who took two contrary Courses with two leud Women in order to reclaim them, "*The one came to one of the Women as desirous of her Company, so it might be with secrecy, and when she had brought him to a close Room that none could pry into, then he told her that all the Bolts and Bars which were,*"

" could

“ could not keep God out. The other desired to accompany
 “ with the other Woman openly in the Street, which when
 “ she rejected as a mad request, he told her it was better
 “ to do it before the Eyes of a multitude than of God.

In fine let us be exhorted to labour to walk sincerely with God evermore, and every where as present with us ; in Imitation of Enoch, *Gen. v. 24. And Enoch walked with God: Of Noah Gen. vi. 9. Noah was a just Man and perfect in his Generations, and Noah walked with God: Of Abram, Gen. 17. 1.* This the Holy Scriptures many Ways require, when it urges us not only to *walk with God*, but to *walk before him, after him in his Name*, and *by his Spirit*. Let us therefore obandon all Hypocrisy, walk with Fear and Reverence as under the Eye of God; on the one Hand abstaining from every Evil, because of a present God ; and on the other Hand embracing every opportunity to do present Good, without delay and without disguise, *not with Eye Service as Men pleasers, but in singleness of Heart fearing God*, that we may have the Testimony of our Consciences here, and be accepted of by the great Omnipresent and Omniscient God hereafter ; which may God grant for CHRIST's sake.

SERMON

SERMON IX.

ROMANS xi. 33, 34.

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.

For who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor.

THIS Text contains an admiring Exclamation, respecting the transcendent Knowledge and Wisdom of God, more especially apparent in the Business of Redemption and Predestination, in which we may observe three Things *viz.* 1st. The Person exclaiming, *Paul* an Apostle, yea one of the most eminent of that Order. A Person of a piercing Genius, and polite Learning, bred at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, a Person of great Advances in Grace and divine Knowledge, a Person peculiarly famous for unwearied and extensive Labours to promote the Good of Mankind, and moreover one whom the Almighty was pleased to inspire after an extraordinary Manner, to communicate the Knowledge of himself in his Son to a lost World! Yet here we may behold this excellent Person maz'd and non-plus'd, and that in a Matter belonging to his own Province, a Matter which he made the subject of his careful Enquiries! This leads to a 2^d. Particular in the Exclamation, *viz.*

viz. The Particle *O!* which is the *Manner* of it. This represents the Strength and vehemence of the Apostles pious Passion, in this and in the two preceeding Chapters, he had spoken of many profound Mysteries, and answered many critical Questions. But here he makes a Pause, and falls into an Admiration of God, in respect of his Wisdom and Knowledge! He seems like a Man who wades in deep Waters, till he looses Ground, and then cries out, *O the Depth!* And so proceeds no farther. Mr. *Pool* in his *Synopsis* justly observes, “*That the Words of our Text are an Epilogue or Conclusion of the whole preceeding Disputation, by which he teaches that he had aduced some Reasons of Election and Reprobation, but that he neither knew them nor had taught them perfectly. As if he had said I have expounded these Things as I could; but I am swallow'd up in the Abyss of the Councils of God, which cannot be searched to Perfection, but must be adored.*” Now the

3d. Particular in the Exclamation, or Outcry is the *Matter* of it *viz.* The Depth and Unsearchableness of the Riches of God's Wisdom and Knowledge, in his Judgments and Ways. By the *Judgments of God*, the Context leads us to understand, his Decrees and Purposes! And by his Ways, the Execution of them in General, and more especially that Instance thereof which appear'd in the Rejection of the Jews, and calling in of the Gentiles to their Priviledges. The Apostle declares concerning both, that they are Unsearchable *i. e.* they cannot be fully understood, and perfectly found out by any Creature, however intelligent he be, especially in this World “*It's a Metaphor* (says *Pool* in his Annotations) *taken from Hounds, who have no Scent of the Game which they pursue. Nor can Men trace the Lord, or find out the Reason of his Providential Actings*” and

“and therefore should forbear censuring them.” Tho’ great Wisdom and Knowledge attend the divine Purposes and Providences, yet it is such a Depth, as cannot be sounded thoroughly by the Line of human Reason. And this the Apostle assures us of in the Text, which is under our present Consideration. *O the Depth! The Wisdom and Knowledge of God exceed all Dimensions*, as *Zophar* elegantly observes, *Job xi. 8, 9. It is higher than Heaven, deeper than Hell, longer than the Earth and broader than the Sea!* The Word *Riches* signifies an excess of Wealth, by which a Person has more than he needs. And therefore here it intimates the exceeding Abundance, and transcendent Eminence and Affluence of the divine Wisdom and Knowledge, which we we can neither speak or think highly enough of! Altho’ God’s Wisdom and Knowledge be one and the same in himself, yet in our Manner of conceiving of them they are distinguish’d: For Knowledge is merely speculative, and beholds Things simply as they are; but Wisdom disposes them in a certain order to some valuable End.

From the Text thus explain’d, two Propositions offer themselves to our Consideration, *viz.* 1st. That the *Knowledge of God is deep, unsearchable and Infinite.* And 2dly. *That the Wisdom of God is so also* I return to the 1st. Proposition which was as before describ’d. Altho’ *Knowledge* be put after *Wisdom* in our Text, (perhaps by the Figure call’d *hysteron proteron*) yet in the Order of Nature it seems to be before it: For we first behold Things, before we dispose them in any Order to a certain End. Now in discoursing upon this Subject, I shall labour to prosecute the following Order.

I. Prove the Infinity of the divine *Knowledge.*

II. Shew the Kinds thereof.

III.

III. Speak of the Properties of God's Knowledge.

IV. Point to its various Objects, and lastly improve the whole. And

1st. The sacred Scriptures fully assert this Truth, *Pf. cxxxix. 9, 10. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the utermost Parts of the Sea, even there shall thy Right Hand lead me.* 1 Sam ii. 3. *The Lord is a God of Knowledge, and by him Actions are weighed.* Pro. v. 21. *The Ways of a Man are before the Lord and he pondereth all his Paths.* Pro. xv. 3. *The Eyes of the Lord are in every Place, beholding the Evil and the Good.* Job xxxiv. 21, 22. *For his Eyes are upon the Ways of Men, and he seeth all their Goings. There is no Darkness nor Shadow of Death, where the Workers of Iniquity may hide themselves.* Heb. iv. 13. *Neither is there any Creature that is not manifest in his Sight, but all Things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him, with whom we have to do.*

And right Reason assures us of the same Truth. For

1st. Seeing to know and understand is an Excellency involving no Imperfection in it, it cannot without a Contradiction, be deny'd to an infinitely perfect being. And

2dly. How can the supream Being be without Knowledge, seeing he is the Fountain and Original of all that Knowledge, which intelligent Beings possess? *It is in his Light, that they see Light. Shall not he that planted the Eye see, and he that form'd the Ear hear?* And without Knowledge what would the Almighty be but an Idol of whom it is said, *Pf. cxv. 6, 7. That they have Eyes and see not, Ears and hear not.* But thus to imagine of God, is the basest Blasphemy! Now the infinite Extent of the divine Knowledge, is evident from the following Considerations, *viz.*

1st. Because it is the same with his Being, which his Simplicity assures us of. Now the Being of God has been

A a

prov'd

prov'd to be infinite in a preceeding Sermon, and therefore his Knowledge must needs be so, which coincides with it. And

2dly. Seeing God has given Being to all Things at First, it cannot, without a Contradiction be suppos'd, that he should be ignorant of the Effects of his own Power. Must not a Workman know his Work? Besides

3dly. As *Jehovah* by his Almightyness has brought the whole Universe out of Nothing into Being, so he continually supports the same, otherwise it would immediatly return to its primitive Non-Entity or Nothingness: *For it is in him we live move and have our Being.* As we could not at first begin to exist without God, so neither can we subsist a Moment, or think, or speak, or act without him, who is the great Source of Being and Spring of Motion! And

4thly. As God upholds every Thing by his Power, so he governs. All by his sovereign wise and unerring Providence in the best Manner, and to the noblest End, *viz. His own Glory.* Surely then the End and Means conducing thereto, must be known by him; and indeed if the Kingdom of God did not rule over all, as the Scriptures assert, all Nature would be in Confusion, the discordant Elements would immediately break their present Harmony; and jumble into the wildest Chaos, and consequently dissolve in a tumultuous and extensive Ruin! The Innocense, the Lives, the Goods of intelligent Creatures would instantly be made an easy Prey to rapacious Lusts and resistless Violence! The whole Globe would groan with a melancholy Train of successive Tragedies, and soon be ting'd with a crimson Flood!

5thly. Seeing the Almighty hath fixed a Deputy in our Bosoms, I mean Conscience, whose Business it is to observe and register

register our whole Behaviour, whose company we cannot shun, whose Cognizance we cannot escape! How much more then must the Almighty be acquainted with all our Ways? *For he is greater than our Hearts, and knoweth all Things*, as the Apostle *John* observes. Again

6thly. Methinks the Consideration of the general Judgment, gives additional Evidence to the aforesaid Truth, for how can *Jehovah* judge all, unless he knows all? The Apostle assures us, *Rom. ii. 16. That God will bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be Good or whether it be Evil.* Yea, History both sacred and prophane inform us, of God's bringing to publick Light crimson Evils, before veil'd with the Curtains of obscurest Secrefy! But I proceed to the 2d. propos'd, which was to speak of the *Kinds* of divine Knowledge. And here I may observe, that as it respects Creatures, it is two fold, *viz.* Either intuitive, or approbative, or as others phrase it, general or special. Now God's general Knowledge, or his Knowledge of Intuition is that Property of the Almighty, whereby he only knows, or beholds all Things. In this Sense it is said *Acts xv. 18. That known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning of the World.* And

2dly. God's approbative or special Knowledge, is that divine Perfection, whereby *Jehovah* knows so, as to approve of, and delight in what he knows! Hence our Lord, *Mat. vii. 22.* commands the *Wicked to depart from him*, and tells them that he never knew them, that is so as to approve of them. But I pass on to the

3d. Propos'd, which was to speak of the *Properties* of God's Knowledge. And

1st. The Knowledge of God is most *Simple*, inasmuch as he beholds at once all Things in himself, without the Use of any of those Methods, whereby human Knowledge is ac-

A a 2

quir'd,

quir'd, viz. The Composition of Things of the same Kind, the Separation of Things of a different Kind, the comparing of one Thing with another, and the inferring of one Thing from another. Hereby the human Mind proceeds gradually in a Way of reasoning, from the Knowledge of Things more known, to the Knowledge of Things less known, but it is the Weakness of our Understandings, that renders those Measures necessary, and therefore they cannot consist with the Perfection of the supream Being. If a Succession in Duration be an Imperfection, as was prov'd in a preceeding Sermon concerning the Eternity of God, a Succession in Knowledge must be so likewise: For as it necessarily infers Increase of Knowledge by Observation and Experience, so it as evidently supposes preceeding Ignorance, which to ascribe to the Almighty is detestable Blasphemy. And

2dly. The Knowledge of God is *Independent*, because it is not in him as an *Accident*, *Quality*, or *Idea*, different and separable from his Essence, as it is, in Creatures: For then he would be compounded of different Things, as Creatures are, and so might in Time cease to be. No, his Simplicity assures us, as I observ'd before, that his Knowledge is the very same with his Essence, it is no other than God knowing, and therefore must needs be independent. That the Essence of God is independent, has been already proved in a preceeding Sermon. But to proceed

3dly. The Knowledge of God is *Eternal*, inasmuch as he neither begins, or ceases to know, as the Things known by him begin or cease to be in themselves. The Reason of which is, because he knows all Things by his own Essence or eternal Purposes, and not by receiving Species, or Images, or Ideas from Objects without himself, as Creatures do. Here observe that two Things are required to constitute

constitute the Knowledge of Creatures, *viz.* 1st. The Images or Ideas of Things. And 2dly. the Speculation of them, which implies the receiving of those Ideas thro' the outward Senses by the Fancy and Contemplation of them being receiv'd, which consists partly in the Comparison of a Composition, Division, Affirmation, or Negation; and partly in Deductions, or Reasonings, whereby we proceed from Things more known to Things less known. The Method of human Knowledge is by comparing, compounding, dividing and subtracting the Images of Things receiv'd; as also by considering their Connection and Dependence, and inferring one Thing from another. But the Ideas of God are not borrow'd from outward Objects? For if so, Creatures must exist, before the divine Knowledge; and then it would be temporary and finite, this cannot be without the Destruction of the divine Essence. Two Things indeed are necessary to the divine Knowledge in our Apprehension distinct. *viz.* The Presence of Ideas and the Perception of them, so that it may be thus describ'd to be a perfect Intuition of himself or his own Ideas, but without any receiving of them from without, and without any Comparison, Composition, Division, or Inferences, as was observ'd before, respecting the Knowledge of Creatures, for all such Things, do manifestly involve Imperfection. *Amesius* in his *Medulla* sayeth, "That
" *the Idea of God, is no other than his very Essence, as*
" *it is understood by him to be imitable, in the Creature, or so*
" *that the Image of that Perfection, may after some sort be*
" *express'd in Creatures.*" The Idea in a Man, is deriv'd from the Things themselves, and therefore the Things must first exist in themselves, then they approach our Senses, and from thence to our Understanding, where they constitute some Idea to direct a following Operation; but the Idea of the Almighty is the Model or Pattern, which first exists,

exists, according to which, Things in Time are exactly form'd, which Idea as it is absolutely considered in Relation to God, is but one, because it is his Essence; but as it is considered respectively, it is manifold, because it denotes many respects to the Creatures, so that the Idea of one Creature, is not the Idea of another. Thus it appears that Things are known by God as they are, and that there is a Connexion and Dependance among the divine Ideas. Whence springs the Order of Prior and Posterior, which we observe in Predestination and Providence? It is doubtless on the Account of the Manifoldness of the divine Idea, in the former Sense, that his Knowledge receives various Names; in respect of the *Truth* of Things, 'tis call'd *Knowledge*, in respect of its *Extent*, 'tis call'd *Omniscience*, in respect of *Past Things* 'tis call'd *Remembrance*. (*Psal.* xxv. 6, 7.) In respect of present Things *Sight*. (*Heb.* iv. 13.) In respect of future Things *Fore-Knowledge*. (*Rom.* viii. 29.) In respect of the *divine* ordering of Things to a good *End*, 'tis called *Wisdom*, in respect of the Knowledge of the most fit and proper Seasons for all Things, it is call'd *Prudence*. But

4thly. The Knowledge of God is *immutable*, he knows not one Thing more than another, neither does he know Things more now than formerly, or more formerly than now; because he beholds all Things in his immutable Essence or Purposes, and in his Eternity, by which he exists without any Succession in Duration, altogether unmov'd in all the different Periods of Time.

5thly. The Knowledge of God is *Infinite* perfect and distinct, he knows all Things without Suspicion of Ignorance or Error. His Knowledge is distinct and particular, not confus'd and general. Hence it is said, that when he had finished the Works of Creation, that he saw every Thing, *and behold it was very good*, that is, suited to answer the
the

the End intended for them, agreeable to the Idea or Plan respecting them, which was from Everlasting in his own Mind. Besides the Knowledge of God is *certain and infallible*, without any Hesitation or Possibility of Mistake : And therefore exceedingly differs from the Knowledge of Creatures, who can but guess and conjecture at Things to come, according to the present Appearances, and probable Tendency of Things. This last Property of *the divine Knowledge* naturally leads to the 4th propos'd, which was to point to the various *Objects* of the Knowledge of God, the Consideration of which will be a farther Confirmation of it's infinite Extent, by an Induction of Particulars. And

1st. God knows *himself* and his *own infinite Mind*. viz. What he has done can do, or will do. *Rom. xi. 34. For who hath known the Mind of the Lord, and who hath been his Counsellor, or who hath first given to him?* Here it is suppos'd, that tho' Creatures know not the Mind of God, yet he does himself, and of himself, without Assistance from others. Seeing it is an Excellency in an intelligent Creature to know himself, tho' but in an imperfect Degree, therefore self Knowledge in the highest degree of Eminence, must be ascrib'd to the Almighty, who is infinitely perfect, and if so, then the Almighty must needs know all Things, because they are included in his Power and Purpose.

2dly. God knows all Things *possible*. As the Power of God is unlimited, he certainly can do infinitely more than he does, or will do. This extent of his Power he must needs know, because he knows himself, the Almighty can do all Things that do not involve a Contradiction. *e. g.* He could create, if he pleas'd, Millions of Worlds, and Millions of more Orders of Creatures in them than there be in this ! We our selves, as free Agents, can do more than we do, and as intelligent Agents we know the Instances where-
in.

in: And how much more must this be ascrib'd to God, who is infinite in Power, and calls the Things that are not as tho' they were? When *David* enquired of God *1 Sam. xxiii. 12. Will Saul come down, and will the Men of Keilah deliver me up? The Almighty answered they will.* Which signifies that the Almighty knew they would, except they had been prevented by his Providence. This Knowledge of Things possible, is call'd by *Zanchy* and others "The Science of simple Intelligence."

3dly. The Almighty knows all Things that have been, are, or shall be. This is call'd *the Science of Vision*, which respects the Existence of Things. And

1st. The Almighty knows *all Things past*, for they were once present, nay they may be said, in propriety of Speech, to be now present to God, because he has no Succession in Duration, one Day is with him as a Thousand Years, and a Thousand Years as one Day. To suppose that the Almighty forgets any Thing, is in other Words to say that his Knowledge is less perfect than it was, which cannot consist with infinite Perfection. And

2dly. God knows all Things *present*, which the Reasons before offered to prove the Infinity of his Knowledge sufficiently confirm. Seeing all Things depend upon his Power and Providence, they must be known by him, for his Knowledge and Power cannot be separated.

3dly. God likewise knows *all things future*, or to come, whether they are produced by a necessary Cause, such as Fire or Water; or a voluntary Cause, such as Men who act by rational Complacency, or a contingent Cause, which by its Nature, or in it Self, is not determin'd to this or that Effect. The many Prophecies of the Prophets concerning Events, many Ages before they came to pass, sufficiently confirm this Truth. It was well observ'd by *Tertullian* against

against *Marcion*, "That the fore Knowledge of God, has as many Witnesses, as he has made Prophets." Was not *Judas's* betraying our Lord an Effect of a voluntary or free Cause? And yet this was prophesied of. (*John* vi. ult. *Acts* iv. 28.) Of the like nature was *Israels* Oppression in *Egypt*, and yet this was foretold Four Hundred Years before it came to pass. (*Gen.* xv. 13.) Was not *Joseph's* Advancement a contingent and very improbable Event, and yet it was made known several Years before it came to pass by his Dream. (*Gen.* xxxvii. 5.) What could be more contingent than *Ahab's* Death by a Random-shot, and yet this was foretold before he entred the Field of Battle. *1 Kings* xxii. 17, 34. Things are said to be contingent and accidental, because they happen or come to pass unexpectedly to us, without our Design or Knowledge, and because the Causes that produce them, are not in themselves necessarily determin'd to produce such an Effect; but nothing can come to pass without *Jehovah's* Cognizance, and Purpose. And hence the Scriptures inform us, that the most minute Events, fall within the Care and Compass of his Providence, which extends it self to the most inconsiderable Creatures, *a Sparrow cannot fall to the Ground*, without our Fathers Permission, *and the very Hairs of our Head are numbered.* *Mat.* x. 29, 30. The Time would fail, if I should relate all the Prophecies mentioned respecting *CHRIST*. I shall therefore rather choose to observe, in Addition to what has been said, that Almighty God knows all that concerns intelligent Beings in particular, as may appear by the following Instances, *viz.*

1st. He knows all their *Actions* *Pf.* cxix. 168. *For all my Ways are before thee. There is no Darknes or Shadow of Death, where the Workers of Iniquity may hide themselves.*

2dly. He knows all our *Words*, Plal. cxxxix. 4. *For there is not a Word in my Tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.*

3dly. He knoweth our *Hearts*, this he claims as his peculiar Prerogative, Rev. ii. 23. *And all the Churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the Reigns and Hearts.* He knows the *Thoughts* of the *Heart*: Hence he is said to *know them afar off*, i. e. From *Eternity*, as Divines generally interpret; and hence he is likewise said to *tell unto Man his Thoughts*, Amos iv. 13. He knows the *Imagination* of the *Thoughts* of the *Heart*. Gen. vi. 5. *And God saw that the Wickedness of Man was great on the Earth, and that every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only Evil continually.* By the *Imagination* of the *Thoughts*, we may understand *Thoughts* in their *Embryo* not fully form'd. He knows the *Intention* of the *Heart*, Heb. iv. 12. *And is a discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart.* He knows the *Bent* of the *Heart*, Hof. ii. 7. *And my People are bent to Back-sliding from me, though they call'd them to the most high, none at all would exalt him.* And the *Knowledge* God hath of what has been mention'd, and of every thing else, is certain and evident. Hence *Zanchy* pertinently observes. "That Knowledge by the Understanding, is either Opinion, Faith or Science. Opinion, saith he, is neither a certain or evident Knowledge, but so assents to the affirmative or negative Part that it Doubts concerning the other. Faith, says he, is a certain, but not evident Knowledge! (Heb. xi. 1.) but Science is both a certain and evident Knowledge, this therefore upon both Accounts is truly and properly ascrib'd to God."

But against what has been offer'd in Confirmation of the Infinite and universal Extent of Gods Knowledge, the *Pelagians* and *Socinians* object, 1st. That God is said to be

be griev'd, Gen. vi. 6, 7. That he expected good *Grapes of his Vine*, Isa. v. 2. That he tryed the *Faith and Obedience of Abraham*, and in respect of it said, *now I know that thou fearest God*. Gen. xxii. 12. To this we answer, with *Athanasius*, "That those and such like Places of Scripture, are spoken after the Manner of Men, but should be understood so as to consist with the divine Perfection." They are design'd to repent the exceeding Contrariety of Evil to the Purity of the divine Nature, and the Agreeableness of what is Good thereto.

Object. 2. It is said concerning the inhuman Barbarities which the People of *Judab* committed in the Valley of *Hinnom*, that it came not into the Heart of God, Jer. vii. 31.

Ans. The whole Verse considered together explains itself: There we have these Words, *which I commanded them not*: So that the meaning of the Scripture appears to be no more than this, that it never came into the Almighty's Heart to command or approve of the Wickedness of *Israel*, in sacrificing their Children to *Molech*.

Object. 3. Future Contingencies have no determin'd Certainty.

Ans. It's true they have not in themselves, but they have in the Decree of God, *who does all Things after the Council of his own Will*, Eph. i. 11. But I proceed to the Improvement. And

1st. The Consideration of God's *Omniscience* should deter us from secret Sins. Impenitent Transgressors are apt to speak in the Language of *Eliphaz*, *How doth God know? Can he judge thro' the thick Cloud? Thick Clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not, and he walketh in the Circuit of Heaven*. But it is vain for Men to encourage themselves thus in sinning by hopes of Secresy; For there

is no *Darkness* or *shadow of Death* where the *Workers of Iniquity* may hide themselves. The *Darkness* is as the *Light* to God, and the *Night* shines as the *Day*. As *Augustine* observes, "*Jehovah is all Eye,*" he not only beholds secret *Impieties* with just *Indignation*, but records them in order to the last *Judgment*. Then will be made manifest the hidden *Councils of Sinners Hearts*: Then shall they be expos'd to all that *Shame and Misery*, which their *disguis'd Impieties* deserve! And

2dly. The Consideration of God's *Omniscience* should powerfully incite us to secret *Duties*, seeing our heavenly Father who *seeth in secret will reward openly*, Mat. vi. 4. *Hypocrites* love much outward *Show and Ostentation*, as the *Pharisees* of old, who made *Broad* their *Phylacteries*.-- But truly pious Souls incline to *conceal* much of their *Devotion* from others *Observance*, by a *Vail of Modesty*. How comfortably does our Lord speak to his Church in her *Retirements*. Cant. ii. 14. *O my Dove, that art in the Clifts of the Rock, in the secret Places of the Stairs, let me see thy Countenance, let me hear thy Voice; for sweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is comely,*

3dly. This Subject also invites us to be *sincere* both in our secret and publick *Duties*, and in all manner of *Conversation* after *David's* Example, 1 Chron. xxv. 17. *I know also my God that thou tryest the Heart, and hast Pleasure in Uprightness.* Seeing that the most retir'd *Recesses* of our Souls are open to the *All-penetrating Eye* of God, let us watch our *Hearts* diligently and chiefly labour to *improve* our selves to him, who principally requires the *Heart*, without which all outward *Service* is but a *specious Kind* of *Mockry*. And

4thly. The Consideration of the *divine Omniscience* should make us *asham'd* of our *Ignorance*; surely we are but
of

of Yesterday, and know nothing comparatively. What Reason have we to lament with *Agur*, that *we are as brute Beasts before God, and have not attain'd to the Knowledge of the Holy*? If we have a little Knowledge, let us beware that we be not puff'd up with it; for the highest acquired Attainments in Knowledge here, are as nothing compar'd with what we are Ignorant of; and less than nothing when compared with the infinite *Abyss of divine Knowledge*. If we have received any Thing from God, why should we boast as tho' we had not received it, especially considering that by those Talents we are more deeply indebted to God as Stewards under him, who must give an Account. And,

5thly. Is God *Omniscient*? Then if we are sincere, we may hope and rejoice in him in every Difficulty, whether Personal or Publick! Are we reproached by our fellow Creatures? What then? Let us speak in the Apostle's Language, 2 Cor. i. 12. *For our rejoicing is this, 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, and more abundantly to you-wards. Are we in Poverty and Want? our heavenly Father knoweth that we need Support. (Mat. vi. 31.) Are we persecuted? our Father beholds the Mischief and the Spite, and will requite it with his Hand, as the Psalmist expresses it. Are we in Desertion, and ready to say that God hath forgotten us? How supporting is it in such a Case to think upon that sweet Passage, Isa. xlix. 15. Can a Woman forget her sucking Child? And that of the Apostle, 2 Tim. ii. 19. The Lord knoweth who are his.* What tho' we be environ'd with Trouble, so that we can't see the smallest Passage open for an Escape; yet God knows how to deliver his People: He can with the Temptation, send a Door of Deliverance! And what tho' the poor Church be covered

vered with Clouds and Darknes, and every way encompass'd with Enemies and Distresses, so that a human Understanding is quite nonplus'd and cannot see how Relief should come? Then it's comfortable to think that all Things are open to the Eye of God, and that he who sits in Heaven, derides the Councils of his Enemies, (*Psal.* ii.) and will bring them to Nought in his own Time, and that no Weapon form'd against *Zion* shall prosper.

In fine let us glorify God on the Account of his Knowledge, and cry out with the *Apostle* in our Text, *O the Depth of the Knowledge of God!* And let us labour to imitate this divine Perfection, lest we be as Brutes, in whom there is no Understanding, (*Psal.* xxxii. 9) without divine Knowledge the Mind cannot be Good, as *Solomon* observes. It was a pertinent Observation of *Bishop Beveridge*, in his Thoughts on Religion, "That as God would not accept of blind Sacrifices under the Law, so neither will he of blind Services under the Gospel." Religion is a Reasonable Service and therefore it must be attended with Knowledge (*Rom.* xii. 1.) The Almighty complains by the Prophet, that his People were destroy'd for lack of Knowledge. *Hos.* iv. 6. Hence the Almighty promises to send Pastors after his own Heart, which should feed the People with Knowledge and Understanding *Jer.* iii. 15. Hence the Priests Lips are said to preserve Knowledge. But on the contrary its said of the Pharisees, that they took away the Key of Knowledge, *Luk.* xi. 52. And that the Ignorant and Instable wrest the Scriptures to their own Destruction. Therefore let us earnestly seek the Knowledge of God in the use of all proper Means, for this is the Foundation of all reasonable Religion.

SERMON.

SERMON X.

ROMANS xi. 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.

YOU may remember that in the preceeding Discourse, after an Explication of the Text, I observ'd these two Propositions from it, *viz.* That *the Knowledge of God was Deep, Unsearchable, and Infinite.* And 2dly, That *the Wisdom of God was so also.* The first of which has been already discours'd upon; the 2d, therefore comes now to be considered. In Relation to which it will be necessary to speak upon these four Particulars following, *viz.*

I. *The Nature of the divine Wisdom.*

II. *It's Kinds.*

III. *It's Properties or Qualities.*

IV. *Its Displays.* And lastly improve the whole. And

1st. *The divine Wisdom may be thus describ'd, viz. That it is that peculiar Virtue or Perfection of the divine Mind, whereby the Almighty knows by what Methods he can best compass and illustrate his own Glory in all his Works, whether of Creation, Redemption, or Providence.* There is a twofold Act of Wisdom, and both eminent in God. The first is *Knowledge in the Nature of Things*, which is call'd
Science.

Science. The 2d. is *Knowledge* how to order and dispose of Things in the best Manner, and to the best End, which is call'd *Prudence*. Tho' *Wisdom* necessarily supposes *Knowledge*, yet it contains more than *Knowledge*; for there may be but little *Wisdom* where there is much *Knowledge*, tho' there can be no *Wisdom* without *Knowledge*! " *Knowledge*, as Dr. *Ridgely* well observes, is as it were the Eye of the Soul, whereby it apprehends or sees Things in a true Light, and so it is oppos'd to Ignorance, or not knowing Things; but *Wisdom* is that whereby the Soul is directed in the skilful Management of Things, or in ordering them for the best. And this is oppos'd not so much to Ignorance or Error of Judgment, as to Foily, or Error in Conduct, which is a defect of *Wisdom*." In *Wisdom* therefore there are these four Ingredients, viz. 1st. A fixing upon the noblest End.

2dly, A Choice of the best Means, viz. Such as directly conduce to attain the End design'd.

3dly, An allotting of the fittest Season for the Use of the aforesaid Means, together with the Observation thereof.

4thly, A Foresight of, and Provision against all such Occurrences, as may mar our Attainment of the End propos'd, or offer Occasion for uneasy Sensations, on the Account of Mismanagement! Now every of the aforesaid Ingredients are truly applicable to *Jehovah*: For 1st. he hath fix'd upon the best End in all his Works, viz. His own Glory. Hence it is said that he made all Things for himself, Pro. xvi. 4. But here it may be enquired, what is the *Glory* of God? And how does it appear to be the best End?

Ans. The *Glory* of God may be thus describ'd, viz. That is the Brightness of his infinite Eminence known and manifested. But how does this appear to be the best End?

Ans.

Anfw. As God himself is the best Being, the Manifestation of himself, must by Consequence be the most excellent and noble End! And what is this but his declarative Glory? Seeing that Creatures are deriv'd from him as their producing Cause, it is but reasonable that they should be referr'd to him, or his Glory as their End. Hence saith the *Apostle*, *for of him, and thro' him, and to him are all Things!* But seeing that God is of himself, he can have no other final Cause but himself. If he had any other Supream End but his own Glory, he would aim ultimately at something below himself, which is absur'd, and depend on something besides himself, which is impossible. From what has been said it is evident, that the first Character or Ingredient of Wisdom, *viz.* a fixing upon the noblest End, is justly applicable to Almighty God. I proceed to the

2d. Which was the *Choice* of the *best Means* directly conducing to attain the End design'd. Now that this is applicable to God, will appear by the following Particulars. 1st. *Jehovah* hath made his Glory manifest or visible, by engraving large and legible Characters thereof in his Word and Works, in both which we may easily discern many Foot-steps or Signatures of his adorable Attributes! Now without this Manifestation, however Infinite and Transcendent, the essential Emminence or Perfection of God might be, yet it would not be perceived or celebrated by Creatures. And,

2dly, God hath made intelligent Creatures capable thro' his Assistance and Influence to perceive, acknowledge, and honour his Excellency and Glory, manifested as aforesaid. Tho' irrational and inanimate Creatures may objectively glorify God. In this respect it is said that *the Heavens and Earth do shew forth God's Glory, i. e.* They offer Occasion to intelligent Beings to magnify God's Name, by shewing the

C c

Power

Power and other Perfections of God apparent in their Production. *Rom. 1. 20. For 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; so that they are without Excuse.* Yet none but intelligent Creatures can actively and with Design, Glorify God. And

3dly, Because some are either so Stupid or Negligent, that they cannot or will not, in a way of reasoning, infer his Perfections from his Works; therefore the Almighty has implanted a *Monitor* in Mens Bosoms to inform them of their Duty, and represent the Danger of Neglect in the most convincing Manner. Hence it is said that the *Heathens* not having the Law, *i. e.* The *moral Law* written, were a *Law* unto themselves: Their Consciences in the mean Time accusing or excusing one another. And

4thly, To add *Light* and *Force* to the Instructions and Admonitions of Conscience, and to enlarge our views of his Attributes, more obscurely represented by his Works! *Jehovah* has added his Word, *which he hath magnified above all his Name.* But to proceed, the

3d, Ingredient of Wisdom is likewise applicable to the Almighty, for he hath appointed to every thing its Time and Season, and made them beautiful therein: All his Ways are Judgment, calculated in every of their Circumstances with the deepest Penetration! (*Deut. xxxii. 4.*) And

4thly, He hath guarded against all adverse Occurrences, by his eternal and unalterable Purposes; his Almighty power and sovereign Providence, which preside over all Events: So that the Wrath of Man shall be constrain'd to praise him. He will in the Issue get himself Glory from all his Creatures, either in an *objective*, *Active*, or *passive Way*. His Mercy or Justice will have a Tribute of Honour from

from all the intelligent Creation, either in their Salvation or Damnation ! But I proceed to the

2d. Propos'd, which was to speak of the *Kinds of divine Wisdom* : Now the *Wisdom* of God is twofold, *viz. Essential* and *Personal*, the *personal Wisdom* of God is our Lord JESUS CHRIST, he is call'd *the Wisdom of God*, by way of Appropriation, on Account of his mediatorial Office : Because herein the *divine Wisdom* has been most marvelously manifested, *In him*, as Mediator for his Peoples Benefit, *are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. The *essential Wisdom* of God is what is Common to all the Persons of the sacred Trinity, and is the Subject of our present Discourse. I pass on therefore to the

3d. Propos'd, which was to mention the Properties or Qualities of divine Wisdom. And

1st. It is *Infinite* as our Text asserts, *O the Depth of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out !* It must of necessity be Infinite, because it is himself.

2dly. *Original Wisdom*, of this the Royal Prophet speaks in bold and noble Strains, Isa. xl. 12, 13. *Who hath measured the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand, and meted out the Heavens with a Span, and comprehended the Dust of the Earth in a Measure, and weighed the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance ? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his Counsellor hath taught him ? He is the great Fountain from which all created Beings derive their Streams ; yea he is wisdom it self in the Abstract, which his Simplicity proves !* And

3dly. He is *universal Wisdom*, John xxi. 17. *Lord thou knowest all Things, thou knowest that I Love thee.* And

4thly. He is *unerring and infallible Wisdom*; this then is the Message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you that *God is Light, and in him is no Darknes at all.*

5thly. He is *immutable Wisdom*, and hence he is call'd the *Father of Lights, with whom there is no Variableness nor Shadow of turning.*

6thly. He is *incommunicable or unparallel'd Wisdom*, and hence he is call'd *the only Wise God*, Rom. xvi. 27. He is likewise said to be *wonderfull in Council; and excellent in Working*, Isa. xxviii. 29. There is indeed some faint Shadow of the *divine Wisdom* in Creatures, but the *essential Wisdom* of God cannot be communicated. The *Wisdom* of all Creatures put together, is but as a single Drop compar'd with the immense Ocean, of *Wisdom in God*. But the

4th. Propos'd comes now to be considered, which was to speak of the *Displays* of God's *Wisdom* in his *Works*. And

1st. The *Wisdom of God appears with much Beauty*, in the *Works of Creation*: How noble is the Harmony that subsists among the numerous Parts of this vast *Machine*, notwithstanding of the discordant Elements of which they are form'd? How amiable and amazing is the Order of Subserviency among its Parts, together with their general Tendency to promote the Good of the whole Frame? Hof. ii. 21, 22. *I will bear, saith the Lord, I will bear the Heavens, and they shall bear the Earth. And the Earth shall bear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oil, and they shall bear.* Jezreel. The regular and steady Motion of the heavenly Bodies, together with their Situation and Influence upon the Earth; as well as the Support, Conveyance, and dissolving of the Clouds in Rain and Dews so necessarily to refresh and render Fruitfull the parch'd Surface of this lower World; manifest the Depth of *divine Wisdom*, and justly challenge our

our Admiration. Job. xxxviii. 31, 32, 33, 44. *Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the Bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his Season, or canst thou guide Arcturus with his Sons? Knowest thou the Ordinances of Heaven? Canst thou set the Dominion thereof in the Earth? Canst thou lift up thy Voice to the Clouds, that abundance of Waters may cover thee? How curious is the Structure of that little World the Body of Man, in respect of the Form, Number, and Situation of its Parts, both for Beauty and Service? Of this the Psalmist admiring says, I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvelous are thy Works, and that my Soul knoweth right well. "The Heathen Anatomist (says Mr. Willard) read a God in it, and was, transported to sing his Praise."* Is it not admirable that among that vast Variety of Parts, which compose the World, that not one is Defective, not one Superfluous, or Redundant, even the smallest Insect loudly proclaims the Wisdom of it's Former? For what less than infinite Wisdom cou'd comprize all the Springs and Organs of Life, Sense, and Motion in so small a Compass? How justly may we Use the Prophet *Jeremiab's*, and the *Psalmist's* Language? *He hath made the Earth by his Power, he hath establish'd the World by his Wisdom, and stretch'd out the Heavens by his Discretion. Lord how manifold are thy Works, in Wisdom hast thou made them all.* And

2dly. Is not the *Wisdom of God* display'd in the *Work of Redemption* most gloriously, even to the just Astonishment of Men and Angels? Hence the Apostle calls it the *manifold Wisdom of God*, Eph. iii. 10. (*polupocilos Sophia*) This the Angels desire to look into! *Divine Wisdom* has found out a *Way* to satisfy *divine Justice*, which was wrong'd by the *Creatures* revolt; from God, thro' the *Sufferings of a Mediator* in their Room; a *Way* to magnify the *Law*, and make

make it honourable by the perfect Obedience of the Son of God in the Transgressors Place : Hereby both the Precept and Penalty of the Law are fully answered, and a Door opened for the Manifestation of *rich, pure and glorious* Grace, in the Remission and Salvation of fallen Mankind, without infringing upon the Rights of Justice, Truth and Holiness : Surely such a Devise as this, would have nonplus'd all the Creation. What less than *infinite Wisdom* could bring the greatest Glory to God, and the greatest Good to Mankind out of the greatest Evil, *viz.* Sin ? Both which are directly contrary to the Nature of it ! And this indeed is the true State of the Case ; for as it is certain that Believers are now upon a more sure Foundation, respecting their Happiness, than our first Parents were before the Fall ; because their Stock is now in the Hands of the Mediator, which was before in their own, so we cannot see how the Grace and Mercy of God could have had such marvelous and bright Displays, had not Sin been in the World ! Thus out of the Eater *divine Wisdom* hath brought forth Meat, and out of the Strong, Sweetness. It might be here likewise observed, that the deferring of the Messias coming in the Flesh for a long Space of Time, is no inconsiderable Discovery of divine Wisdom : For hereby Room was given for the Tryal and Exercise of the Faith and Patience of God's People, in depending on his Word, and waiting for the Accomplishment thereof ; for thus was *Jebovab* glorify'd, Heb. xi. 13. *These all died in Faith, not having received the Promises, but having seen them afar off, and were perswaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth.* And indeed the Time of our Lords coming was most seasonable ; for then the Darknes of Impiety most dreadfully prevail'd, and real Religion languish'd, and had almost

most totally expir'd. It was proper therefore that then *the Day spring from on High should visit a benighted World, and the Sun of Righteousness arise upon them to turn away Ungodliness from Jacob!*

3dly. The *Wisdom of God* is also wonderfully *display'd* in his *Works of Providence!* in Relation to the World in general, and to his Church and People in particular.

The insensible Parts of the Creation are conducted by divine Providence to an End which they know not. The Sun observes his stated Periods of rising and setting, and runs his wonted Round to enlighten and animate this lower Globe, and the Stars with exact Order atten'd their several Motions, many irrational Animals act with a Discretion, like that of intelligent Beings, Jer. viii. 7. *The Stork in the Heaven knoweth her appointed Times, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the Time of their coming. The Ant by prudent industry, lays up her Winter Store before it's Approach!*

What else than a wise and watchful Providence keeps the whole System of Things in its proper Situation, so that the Elements do not break Loose and destroy each other? And what but this bounds the Wrath of savage Men, and makes it turn to the divine Praise? But more particularly in Relation to the Church of God, how marvelously has the Wisdom of God appear'd in his Providence?

In the Time of the *Patriarchs*, while Men liv'd a long Space, God was pleas'd to instruct his People by immediate Revelation and Tradition; but when the Lives of Men were much contracted, and there was Danger, on that Account of the Corruption of Tradition, it pleas'd God to communicate his Mind and Will to his People by Writing; which is a Method less liable to the aforesaid Inconvenience!

Inconvenience. Moreover in the written Word, the Almighty instructed his Church *gradually* in the Knowledge of the Gospel, first more obscurely by Types and Shadows; and afterwards more plainly by a clearer Revelation: Thus the Almighty treated them like Children, as they were able to bear it!

And doubtless the *harder* and *more costly Services* required, under the *Jewish Oeconomy*, tended to make Men long for, and more eagerly embrace an easier Dispensation!

But the Wisdom of God in his Providence towards his Church, has appear'd in nothing more eminently than in baffling the Contrivances and Attempts of her Enemies, and in turning them to her Advantage! A noble Instance of this we read of in the Book of *Ester*, when *Haman* had cruelly devis'd the utter Ruin of the *Jewish Church and Nation*, and had brought his malicious Plot almost to the fatal Period of Execution! How admirably was it frustrated, and the Tables turn'd in his own overthrow? While poor *Mordecai*, the Mark of his ambitious Rage, was honour'd and protected, and the Church establish'd! The Incident that led to this surprizing Revolution of Affairs, was truly astonishing, *viz.* The King's Recklessness one Night, and reading in the Book of the *Chronicles* of *Mordecai's* Services to the Kingdom!

And indeed in all Ages it has pleas'd the all-wise God to make Persecution of Service to his Church, so that there is good Ground for that antient and common Proverb, that *The Blood of the Martyrs, is the seed of the Church*: But in Particular the Persecution at *Jerusalem* is a memorable Instance of this Kind, for the Christians being thereby dispers'd, were Means of spreading the Gospel far and wide! And did not *Israel's* Oppression in *Egypt*, prepare the Way for their happy Deliverance, by making them

more

more desirous after it, and more ready to embrace the Call of God, in abandoning their Captivity?

And that I may say many Things in one, was not Satan and his Instruments overshot, in their own Bow, in respect of the Crucifixion of Christ? What they design'd for Evil, has not God's Wisdom turn'd to the greatest Good? By *Death*, *Life* is brought to Believers, by the bitterest *Pain*, the sweetest *Pleasure*, and by the *basest Ignominy*, the *highest Honour*!

An immemorial Instance of the Wisdom of God, in his Providence in compassing a noble End, by contrary Means, we have respecting *Joseph* his being sold to the *Ishmalites*, and imprison'd in *Egypt*, were Occasions introductory to his exalted Dominion over that Nation; and this the Occasion of his Father's Family coming and residing there, and so of the fulfilment of the Prophecies, respecting *Israels* abode in *Egypt*, and Deliverance out of it, in after Time. The Wheels of Providence are full of Eyes. It may be truly said of them, that (*Non ceco impetu volvuntur rote.*) the Wheels of Providence are not govern'd by blind Chance. But the Time will not serve to relate any more Instances. I therefore proceed to the *Improvement* of this Subject. And

1st. The Consideration of the divine Wisdom should excite us to Modesty in our Meditations upon the Difficulties which we sometimes meet with in God's Word and Works! Tho' the Mysteries of Faith do not contradict human Reason, yet they in some Instances transcend its Reach! And there be sometimes obscure Texts in the Providence of God too difficult for us to solve. The *Almighty walks sometimes in the great Deep, and his Footsteps are not known, he makes Darkness his Pavilion, and hides the Face of his Throne!* In this Case let us consider, *that the Foolishness of God is wiser than Men*, and cry out with the

D d

Apostle

Apostle in our Text, *O the Depth of the Riches of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out?* Let us beware of calling the divine Wisdom to the Bar of our Reason, with the *Socinians*, 1 Cor. iii. 18. *If any Man among you seemeth to be wise in this World, let him become a Fool that he may be wise.* Not a Fool really, with *Enthusiasts*, who reject all use of Reason in Religion, but a Fool in his own Eyes, i. e. Let him be *bumble* under a *Sense* of his Folly and Weakness, and reject all Dependance upon his own Understanding. And

2dly. This Subject learns us the Reasonableness of Contentment in every change of Circumstance, seeing the Infinitely wise God knows best what is best for us. If we were left to our own Choice, we should certainly ruin ourselves, with what calm Confidence should we then commit our Way to God, that he may bring it to pass. And

3dly. The Wisdom of God offers *Food for our Faith*, and *Comfort* to our Souls under the darkest Appearances of divine Providence respecting the Church. We are sure that he is the Ruler, and that he rules in Wisdom, nothing happens besides his Purpose, or without his Providence. He can make the most contrary Things promote his Kingdoms Good, as was observ'd before, and he has promis'd that he will do so. (*Rom. viii. 28.*) And elsewhere he has said, that *no Weapon form'd against Zion, shall prosper.* Then let us resign our Wisdom and Wills to God, let us believingly commit the Affairs of God's Kingdom into the Mediators Hands, and expect the fulfilment of his Word.

4thly. Is God's Wisdom display'd in his *Word* and *Works*? Then let us *meditate* on them, with more frequency and Care, and ascribe to God the Glory of that
Wisdom

Wisdom which appears in them, in the Sentiments of our Minds, by the Speeches of our Lips, and the Actions of our Lives. It is a just Observation of the *Psalmist*, *That the Works of the Lord are great, sought out of all those that have Pleasure therein.*

5thly. Is God Infinite in Wisdom? Then 1st. *Let us ask Wisdom of him who giveth to all Men liberally and unbraideth not, and it shall be given us.* Jam. i. 5. And 2dly. Let us according to our Measure *imitate the divine Wisdom.*

1st. By *fixing* upon an *End*, in the Enjoyment of which we may be compleatly happy, *viz.* God's Glory and the Enjoyment of him. And

2dly. By the *Choice* of *proper Means* tending to that End, such as Faith, Repentance and Holiness, *as God is Holy*, so those that expect to enjoy him, must be like him.

3dly. By *improving* the *present Seasons*, in the use of the aforesaid Means. This is the Command of God, *2 Cor. vi. 1, 2. We then as Workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a Time accepted, and in the Day of Salvation have I succoured thee: Behold, now is the accepted Time; behold now is the Day of Salvation.)*

To *this* we should be excited likewise, by considering the Shortness and Uncertainty of our Time and its Opportunities, together with the vast Moment that depends upon the Improvement thereof. And

4thly. We should guard against every Appearance of Evil, that tends to obstruct us in the *Pursuit* of our chief End. The very contrary to the aforesaid Particulars, constitutes the Folly of the ungodly World. They either fix upon some Enjoyment here as their chief End, or if

they pretend a higher End, take contrary Measures to attain it. They neglect the present Seasons of Mercy, *with the Fool they have a Price in their Hand, but no Heart to it. They likewise rush into Places of Temptation, and so are easily ensnared, and sell their Salvation for a Thing of Nought.*

SERMON.

 SERMON XI.

GENESIS, xvii. 1.

And when Abram was Ninety Years old and Nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

IN the Words of our Text, we have a Summary of the Gracious Covenant, God was pleas'd to make with Abram of old, containing these two Things following, which deserve our Notice, viz.

1st. What God's Covenant People may expect him to be to them, in these Words, *I am the Almighty God. (Elshadai)* "This is the Name of God, (says Mr. Henry in his Annotations) that is mostly us'd throughout the Book of Job, at least thirty Times in the Discourses of that Book, in which Jehovah is us'd but once." This Name (as Mr. Poole in his Synopsis, and other learned Men observe) signifies the Strength & Sufficiency of God, "It speaks (says Henry) the Almighty Power of God, either as an Avenger, or as a Benefactor, but it should be especially taken in the Latter Sense." as Drusus and others observe. In which it signifies God's Self-Sufficiency, and All-Sufficiency. He is able to perform all that he hath said, respecting his People, he hath enough in himself, and of himself, for himself and for them; he hath all Things, and needeth nothing to compleat his own Perfection and Blessedness, and is able to confer on us a Happiness,

piness, as large as our Desires, and as lasting as our Souls. And therefore this Word, seems to be better rendred in the old English *Version*, than in the present: For there it is thus express'd. *I am God all sufficient.* But

2dly. The Words of our Text inform us, what God *expects* or *requires* his *People to be to him.* And this is express'd in two Particulars, *viz. Walking before him, and in being perfect. Walk before me.* This Word by a Metaphor intends Men's Lives and Actions, (*Pf. i. 1.*) Because there is some Analogy or Resemblance between them, and a natural Way. *Before me, i. e.* Under a continual Sense of my Presence and Cognizance, as a Servant before his Lord. *And be thou perfect.* *Simmachus* renders the Word *perfect*, blameless, but according to the most of Interpreters, it signifies, Sincerity or Freedom from Deceit and Guile; and in this Sense it is ascrib'd to *Abram, Noah, David* and *Job.* (*Gen. vi. 9. Pf. xviii. 23. Job i. 1.*) That is perfect in the Apostle *Paul's* Judgment, which hath all its Parts, tho' it be not perfect in Degrees. *2 Tim. iii. 17. That the Man of God, may be perfect thoroughly furnished to all good Works.* And such as are more advanc'd in Knowledge and Holiness than others, are call'd perfect *comparatively.* *Phil. iii. 15. Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded.* God Almighty therefore does not covenant with *Abram*, for an entire Perfection of Degrees, as the *Papists* dream; who are herein follow'd by the whole Tribe of *Enthusiasts*; but he requires a Perfection of Parts, or Sincerity. *viz.* That he should endeavour to conform his Practice, to all Parts of the divine Law, without Guile or reserve. "*I know no Religion on (said excellent Mr. Mathew Henry) but Sincerity.*"

In discoursing upon this Text I shall speak upon the three following Heads, *viz.*

I.

I. The Sufficiency of God.

II. Walking before him.

III. Sincerity.

And then apply the whole. The

1st. General Head of Discourse is God's *Sufficiency*, or *All Sufficiency*, which may be thus describ'd, *viz.* That it is a *Perfection of the divine Nature whereby Jehovah bath enough in himself, for himself, and for his People in every respect.* This results from his Infinity in particular, as well as from his other Attributes in general, because he existed not by the Will of another, therefore he is independent and infinite in his Essence and in all his Attributes and Being, so he must be consequently perfect and allsufficient. As his Simplicity assures us, that he can admit nothing of another Kind, to perfect his Being, so his Eternity informs us, that he was happy in himself, when there was none besides him. And seeing all the Excellencies of Creatures are deriv'd from him, he must possess the same eminently in himself, otherwise he could not confer them upon others. Hence is that Beautiful Passage of the Psalmist, *Pf. xxxvi. 10. With thee is the Fountain of Life, and in thy Light shall we see Light.* Theophilact glosseth pertinently upon this Place of Scripture in the following Manner. "*As the Sun (says he) is always beheld full, and never lessened as the Moon, so God always exists perfect, full of Wisdom, Power, Immortality and all other good Things.*" And the Scriptures assert elsewhere, *that God is perfect, Mat. v. 48. Perfect in Wisdom, Power, Beneficence, and that he needs Council or Help of none. Job. xxii. 2, 3 Rom. xi. 34, 35.*

But that the aforesaid Description of God's Sufficiency may be the better understood, let the following Particulars be consider'd.

1st.

1st. That the general Nature of this Attribute is *Fullness*, or enough of Excellency and Good. This is a Perfection oppos'd to Emptiness and Defect, and is attended with the following Properties. *viz.*

1st. It is an *undriv'd Fullness* Rom. xi. 35, 36. *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again, for of him, and through him, and to him are all Things.*

2dly. It is an *independent Fullness*: He hath no Dependence upon Creatures, neither can he receive any Good or Excellency from them, because they have deriv'd their All from him. Now a Circulation of Causes and Effects is in the nature of Things impossible. *Our Goodness extends not to him, neither is it any Gain to the Almighty that we are righteous, sayeth Job. Who hath made thee to differ from another, sayeth the Apostle Paul? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?* It was a noble saying of the Pagan *Lucretius*, respecting the divine Nature.

Ipsa suis valens opibus non indiga Nostris. Which may be thus Englished.

Jehovah's Wealth, does fully him suffice;

Nor needs he, of his Creatures, a supply.

3dly. It is a *complete and perfect Fullness*, and that in three respects, *viz.* In regard of the Kinds, Degrees and Duration of all possible Excellency and Good. And 1st. the *Fullness* of God is Perfect in respect of the *Kinds* of Excellency, for the Almighty hath in him, not only all those Excellencies, the Shadow of which is in created Beings, such as *Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness, Truth.* But he hath also such Excellency's in his Nature as there are no Footsteps or resemblance of in Creatures, *e. g. Simplicity, Immutability, Infinity, Incomprehensibility, and Self-existence.* Which are therefore term'd by some Divines incommunicable Attributes! And

2dly.

2dly. The *Fullness* of God is compleat and perfect in *Degree*, because Infinite. The Excellencies of the noblest Creatures are limited and finite ; but those of *Jehovah* are without Bounds. The Almighty Possesses all the Excellencies of created Beings in a more sublime and exalted *Degree*, than can possibly be attain'd by them, because of their finite Natures. But

3dly. The *Fullness* of God is compleat and perfect in respect of *Duration*, the Excellencies of Creatures are *Qualities* distinct from, and added to their Beings, and may be therefore seperated and extinguished, while their Beings are preserved, as appears by the doleful Apostacy of the Angels and our first Parents. If their Beings themselves, because deriv'd and dependant, may be destroy'd, how much more the good Properties that cleave thereto ? But the Fullness of God is the very same with his Being, and therefore inseparable and eternal ! He and he only is, *Wisdom, Justice, Goodness, and Truth.* But to proceed

4thly. The *Fullness* of God is *Invariable*, equally incapable of Addition or Diminution, he can receive nothing from without, because he is already Infinite, and to that nothing can be added. And from whom should he receive any Addition, it must be from Creatures if at all ; but they can give him nothing but what is his own, nothing but what they received from him, Acts xvii. 25. *Neither is he worshiped with Men's Hands, as tho' he needed any Thing, seeing he giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all Things !* And as the Fullness of God cannot be increased, so neither can it be impair'd by the sordid Violence of Creatures ! For as our Goodness does not extend to God to benefit him, so neither can our Impieties do him any real Injury, Job xxxv. 6, 7, 8, *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him ? Or if thy Transgressions be multiply'd,*

E c

what

what dost thou unto him? If thou be Righteous what grievest thou him? Or what receiveth he of thine Hand? Thy Wickedness may hurt a Man, as thou art, and thy Righteousness may profit the Son of Man!

5thly. The *Fullness* of God is *Overflowing* and *Immense*: He has more than enough for all created Beings, the Riches and Affluence thereof, not only exceeds all their Necessities, but even their Thoughts and Desires! Eph. iii. 20. *Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. Psal. xxxvi. 8. They shall be abundantly satisfy'd with the Fatness of thy House, and thou shalt make them drink of the River of thy Pleasures.*

6thly. The *Fullness* of God is *Everflowing* and *Inexhaustable*: The Cisterns of created Good may be drawn dry; but God is a Fountain that cannot be exhausted: He is the *Alpha*, and *Omega*, the Beginning and the Ending from Everlasting to Everlasting, God. When Millions have drank of this Fountain the Streams are never the Less.

But the *special Nature* of Gods *Sufficiency* appears in these two Particulars following, *viz.* 1st. In that *Jehovah* hath enough in himself for himself, or his own Happiness; In this respect he is call'd *Self-Sufficient*. That God is Happy, appears from the Character of *Blessed* frequently ascrib'd to him in Scripture. What is Happiness but the Enjoyment of a sufficient Degree of Good, suited to the Nature of the Being that enjoys it? Now it is certain the Almighty hath this, for he neither needeth, desireth, or can receive more than he has. Dependant Creatures need a foreign Support to sustain their borrow'd Beings; but he is independent and hath Life of himself, (*Job. v. 26*) And therefore needs them not, neither doth he desire more Happiness than he hath; for than he would be imperfect and so no God. Before the Worlds Foundations were laid
he

he had Complaisance in his own Glory and Perfection; neither did he make Creatures to increase his own Happiness, but of meer good Pleasure: And as for Creatures acknowledging of his Excellency with Honour, it adds no more thereto than commending the Sun adds to its Lustre, or praising a Fountain would increase its Streams, neither can the Almighty possibly receive any more Happiness than he hath because of his Infinity. To confirm and illustrate what has been now observ'd let the following Places of Scripture be considered, Ps. 1. 9, 13. *I will take no Bullock out of thy House, nor He-Goats out of thy Fold: For every Beast of the Forest is mine, and the Cattle upon a thousand Hills. If I were Hungry I would not tell thee, for the World is mine and the Fullness thereof.* And

2dly. The Almighty hath enough for all his Creatures to make them compleatly Happy: *I am the Almighty God.* Mr. Pool in his *Synopsis* observes "The Original Word is deriv'd of a Root that signifies a Breast, because he nourishes all, for the same Reason the Heathens represented their *Diana, Isis and Ceres* after the same Manner." The Ability of God to make all his Creatures Happy, is justly term'd by Divines, his All-Sufficiency, and this in Relation to good People is set forth by several significant Emblems or Similitudes. Hence he is call'd a *Sun* (Psa. lxxxiv. 12.) As the Sun dissipates the Gloom of Night by his enlightning and warming Rays, and thereby sheds a Gladness over the Face of Things; thus the Almighty refresheth his Peoples Hearts. The Lord is likewise call'd his Peoples Shield, Psa. lxxxiv. They are expos'd in this tumultuous Scene to a thick Succession of Dangers and Conflicts; but the Almighty protects them as by a Shield; *He covers their Head in the Day of Battle. He that dwelleth in the secret Place of the most High, shall abide*

abide under the Shadow of the Almighty. The Almighty is call'd his Peoples *Rock, Strength and Deliverer.* He bestows all Manner of spiritual and temporal Good upon them, (*Ephes. i. 3.*) He abundantly recompences all their Services and Sufferings for him; and hence he is call'd *an exceeding great Reward,* Gen. xv. i. Phil. iv. 19. *My God shall supply all your Need, according to his Riches in Glory by JESUS CHRIST.* Particularly

1st. There is enough in God to supply his Peoples Wants here: Enough 1st for *Protection,* Zech. ii. 5. *For I, saith the Lord, will be a Wall of Fire unto her, round about, and will be the Glory in the midst of her.* Zech. ix. 12. *Turn ye to the strong Hold, ye Prisoners of Hope.* Psa. lxxiii. 7. *Because thou hast been my Help therefore in the Shadow of thy Wings will I rejoyce:* Hence the Lord bids his People, *not to fear for I am with thee, be not dismay'd for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right Hand of my Righteousness,---Fear not thou Worm Jacob, and ye Men of Israel, I will help thee sayeth the Lord,* Isa. xli. 10---14. And does not *Jehovah* promise, that *no Evil shall come nigh their dwelling,* Psa. xci. And was it not in Confidence of this Almighty Protection that the triumphant *Psalmist* says, Psa. xlv. and elsewhere, *That tho' Mountains were toss'd into the midst of the Sea, and ten Thousand rose up against him, he would not be afraid.* But

2dly. There is enough in God for *Provision,* Psa. xxiii. *The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want.* Hence the Almighty graciously promises to make his Peoples Bread and Water sure.

3dly. *Enough* for *Honour,* Psa. iii. 3. *But thou O Lord art a shield for me, my Glory and the lifter up of mine Head.* God is the Fountain and Original of all true Honour.

4thly,

4thly. Enough for *Pleasures*, for his loving Kindness, is as Marrow and Fatness, that yields a rational and substantial Delight, *yea he is far better than Life itself*, Job xxii. 26. *For then shalt thou have thy Delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy Face unto God.*

5thly. Enough for *Guidance*, Psa. xxxii. 8. *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the Way which thou shalt go, I will guide thee with mine Eye.* Is not *Jehovah Wisdom itself*, and wonderful in Council, as well as excellent in Working? (Isa. xxviii. 29.)

6thly. Enough for *Sanctification*, for with him is the Residue of the Spirit. Enough for *Society*, 1 John i. 3. *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have Fellowship with us: And truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST.* Enough for *Example*, Ephe. v. 1, *Be ye therefore Followers of God as dear Children.* Enough for *Reward*, Gen. xv. 1. *Fear not Abram, I am thy Shield, and exceeding great Reward.* But

2dly. There is enough in God to satisfy the *Desires* of his People here and hereafter, Jer. 31. 14. *And I will Sate the Soul of the Priests with Fatness, and my People shall be satisfied with my Goodness, sayeth the Lord.* Psa. xvii. ult. *As for me I will behold thy Face in Righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy Likeness.* *Jehovah makes over himself in Covenant to his People as All-sufficient*, thus he did to *Abram* in our Text. Hence it is said, Psa. xxxiv. *That tho' the young Lyons may suffer Hunger, yet those that fear the Lord shall not lack any Good.* Hof. xiv. 5, 6, 7. *I will be as the Dew unto Israel, he shall grow as the Lilly, and cast forth his Root as Lebanon. His Branches shall spread, and his Beauty shall be as the Olive Tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell*
under

under his Shadow, shall revive as the Corn, and grow as the Vine. The Scent thereof shall be as the Wine of Lebanon. The People of Israel in the Wilderness had neither Bread nor Water, Provision nor Protection, yet having an all sufficient God they wanted none of those Things, Deut. xxxiii. 26,—28. *There is none like the God of Jeshurun who rideth upon the Heaven in thy Help, and in his Excellency on the Sky: The eternal God is thy Refuge and Underneath are the Everlasting Arms.*—Israel then shall dwell in safety alone, the Fountain of Jacob shall be upon a Land of Corn and Wine; also his Heavens shall drop down Dew. *Happy art thou O Israel, who is like unto thee O People saved by the Lord, the Shield of thy Help, and who is the Sword of thy Excellency.* But I proceed to the

2d. General Head, which was to discourse upon the Nature of walking before God, which may be thus describ'd, viz. *That it is a friendly Conversation with God*: Now this is expressed by different Phrases in Scripture, sometimes it is call'd a *walking before God*, as in the Text, to signify the Sense that we should always have of God's Presence upon our Minds. Sometimes a *walking after God* to import our Need of imitating his Example, and of accommodating ourselves to his various Dealings with us, whether Comfortable or Afflictive, (Deut. xiii. 4.) Sometimes it is call'd a *walking with God*, thus it is said of Enoch, *that he walked with God*; this Phrase especially intends that sweet Familiarity which passes between God and holy Souls. Sometimes it is called a *Walking in the Name of God*, (Mica. iv. 5.) to signify that in all our religious Practice, we should have the divine Prescription for our Rule, and the divine Glory for our Mark. Sometimes a *Walking in the Spirit*, (Gal. v. 16.) importing the Sense we should always have of our Need of the Guidance and Assistance of the Holy Ghost to the

the

the Performance of acceptable Service, as well as our intire Dependance thereupon. But more particularly

Walking before or with God, supposes, and implies these Things following, viz,

1st. *Reconciliation to God by accepting the Mediator through Faith: For how shall two walk together except they be agreed?*

2dly. It supposes *spiritual Life*, insas'd by Regeneration, for a dead Man cannot walk.

3dly. It supposes the *Exercise of Life or Grace*, by the quickning Operations of the Holy Spirit. A Man cannot walk that is asleep. *I will run the Ways of thy Commandments said the Psalmist, when thou hast enlarged my Heart.*

4thly. It supposes a *Way* in which, and this is twofold viz. either of God's *Commands*, or of his *Providence*, we must obey the Former and accommodate our selves to the Latter, i. e. When the Almighty frowns by Afflictions, we must mourn, and when he smiles by Comforts communicated we must rejoyce. And

5thly. It supposes an *End* to which, and this ought to be ever the same with what *Jehovah* intends, viz. The Manifestation of his *Glory*; and in Subordination thereto our own and our Neighbours Happiness. *Whether in eating or drinking or whatsoever we do, we should do it all to the Glory of God.* But

2dly. Walking before or with God implies these following Particulars, viz.

1st. *Faith*, he that walks with God, as well as comes to him, must believe that he is. In walking with God, *Faith* is necessary in three Respects. 1st. As an *Eye* to behold the great Prophet of the Church, the Guide of our Way, without whose Command we must not move a Foot, in imitation of the *Israelites* in the Desert who stopp'd when the

Pillar

Pillar of a Cloud and of Fire did not go before them. 2dly. As a *Conduit* to convey Provision and Refreshment in our Journey, without which we must needs travel slowly and heavily. 3dly. As a *Hand* to help us to lay hold of, and lean upon the dear Redeemer in our Walking. Hence it is with Admiration observ'd concerning the Church, *Cant.* viii. 5. *Who is this that cometh out of the Wilderness leaning upon the Beloved.* Except we rely upon the Strength of God, we cannot walk with him. But

2dly. Walking before God, implies *Fear*, our Minds should be continually possessed with an awful Reverence of God's Majesty, as remembering the infinite Distance between him and us, in point of Dignity. Likewise we should be ever afraid of offending God, and humbly jealous of our own Hearts. Hence we are bid to *serve God acceptably with Reverence & Godly Fear.* Heb. xii. 28, 29. And hence is that divine Expostulation. *Mal.* i. 6. *If I be a Master where is my Fear?* And

3dly. It implies *Love* to God, and Familiarity with him thereby. Such as behold by Faith the Amiability of the divine Majesty, and taste his Love, love him again with a supream and transcendent respect! As Fear ballances Love so Love sweetens Fear. "*Fear without Love would be a painful Passion* (as Dr. Bates justly observes) *and Love without Fear would degenerate into an effeminate Fondness.*" Now that Familiarity which subsists between God and Believers by Love, contains in it these Things following, 1st. *mutual Visits*, as God visits his People by his Grace, so they visit him with Repentance, Prayers and Tears. (*Jam.* iv. 2.) *Mutual Embraces*, (*Cant.* i. 2, 3.) *A mutual Communication* of Secrets. God opens secret Things to them. Hence the Secret of the Lord is said to be with those that fear him, (*Pf.* xxv. 14.) And the People of God on the other Hand,

come

come to him, as a Father, and sob after him *Abba Father*, and open to him all their Hearts. (*Pf. xlii. 4.*) A *mutual Desire of Union and Cobabitation*. Hence CHRIST accosts his Bride in the following Strains. *Come with me from Lebanon my Sister my Spouse, look from the Top of Amara, from the Top of Shenir and Hermon from the Lyons Dens and from the Mountains of Leopards.* And the Spouse on the other Hand says, *Come LORD JESUS come quickly; I desire to be dissolv'd and to be with CHRIST which is far better.*

5thly. A *friendly Consultation* for Advice and Direction. Hence the dear Redeemer is call'd *his Peoples Counsellor*, because he leads them by his Council, (*Isa. ix. 6.*) But

4thly. *Walking before or with God implies Pains and Labour*, natural Walking, to which this alludes, is not without them, especially if it be for a considerable Space. And hence we are bid to *strive to enter in at the strait Gate, and work out our Salvation with fear and trembling.*

5thly. It implies *Progress*, those that walk in a natural Road make Progress, and thus those that walk with God grow more humble, more weaned from this World, and more resign'd to God's Will, and it is doubtless in general their chief Desire, and endeavour to grow in Grace, and when they find not thus, it is their principal Grief.

6thly It implies *Perseverance*, for walking is not a single Act, but a Course and Series of them, a continuance in our religious Diligence, until we come to the End of our Race, it is those only who *persevere to the End, that shall be saved.* We should run so as to obtain. But I proceed to the

3d. General Head of Discourse, *viz. Sincerity*, which may be thus describ'd, *viz. That it is a divine Vertue*, whereby we really are, *what we seem to be.* Here an appearance

F f of

of Goodness is suppos'd, and these Things following are intended, which constitute *Sincerity*, viz.

1st. That a Person labours to avoid all mixture of Corruption and evil Intention; this is by our Lord call'd *a single Eye*, and when Persons have this, then their *whole Bodies are full of Light*, i. e. they are in a gracious and comfortable State.

2dly. When Persons habitually labour not only outwardly, but chiefly inwardly, to be Holy contrary to the Practice of the Pharisees, who *cleansed the outside of the Cup and Platter while the Inside was neglected*. And

3dly. When Men endeavour to be Holy, not only before Men, but chiefly before God, *Colos. iii. 22. Not with Eye Service as Men Pleasers, but with singleness of Heart fearing God*.

4thly. When Men do not habitually neglect known Duty, and expect not their Reward from Men, but from God, thus it is said of *Zachariab* and *Elizabeth*, *That they walk'd in all the Commandments of God blameless*. It is likewise recorded of *Moses*, (*Heb. xi. 27.*) That by Faith he forsook *Egypt*, not fearing the Wrath of the King, for he endur'd, as seeing him who is invisible.

Now *Sincerity* is twofold, viz. *Moral* or *Spiritual*. *Moral* is that which springs from Nature, polished by a religious Education, together with restraining Grace; and principally aims at our own Interest. Such an Integrity had the Pagan *Abimelech*, and altho' this be not saving, yet it is the Way to obtain Mercy, and is of great Use in civil Society. It were to be wish'd that more meant as they spoke than do: But *spiritual Sincerity* follows after Conversion, & aims chiefly at the Glory of God, above all. And it is either Imperfect, or Perfect. The Former is when, for the most Part Uprightness hath the Ascendant, tho' attended with Struggle and Combat.

Combat. The Latter is when we are entirely free from all corrupt Intention, which is the Priviledge of the *Country*, and not of the *Way*, when that which is Perfect is come, then that which is in Part shall be done away.

But it will not be improper to add to what hath been said, the following Marks of *Sincerity*, viz. 1st. If we do not cover and hide our Sins, but confess them and forsake them. 2dly. If we avoid all appearance of Evil, both as to Principle and Practice. 3dly. If in Prosperity, as well as in Adversity, we cleave inviolably to the Truths and Duties of Religion. 4thly. If in the Absence as well as Presence of Spectators, we endeavour to be Holy. 5thly. If we have the Light of God's Word, and are willing to have our States and Actions tried thereby. 6thly. If we are sensible of, and bewail the Remains of Hypocrisy that are in us, as the poor Man that cried *Lord, I believe, help my Unbelief*. But I proceed to the Application of this Discourse. And

1st. What has been said concerning God's Sufficiency, serves to inform us, how great the Portion of every Believer is. It exceeds in Worth and Dignity, Millions of Worlds. The Lord himself is the *Portion of their Inheritance and of their Cup! Their Lines have fallen to them in pleasant Places, they have a goodly Heritage!* In having God they have more than all besides him, yea infinitely more. "If the *greatest Princes should bring all their Treasures,* (says "Bishop Hopkins) *the poorest Christian can produce a Portion, that will beggar them all.*" Justly then may the Church glory in him, *Lam. iii. 24. The Lord is my Portion sayeth my Soul, therefore will I hope in him! This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend! O Daughters of Jerusalem.*

2dly. The *All-Sufficiency* of God, may convince us of the *In-sufficiency* and *Vanity* of all Creatures, *Ecles. i. 1.*

Vanity of Vanities saith the Preacher, Vanity of Vanities all is Vanity! If God only be absolutely Perfect and All-Sufficient, then every Creature is of it self imperfect, and vain, because of itself it has no Perfection, by which it can suffice itself or others; *Jer. ii. 13. They are all broken Cisterns that can hold no Water!* And if the Creature had any Sufficiency, it could be of no Service, unless apply'd and excited by the first mover: If the Case be so, why should we doat upon them, or confide in them? Or why should we fear them, or immoderately bewail the loss of them! And

3dly. We may hence learn the Folly of such, who forsake God for the Creature. *Jer. ii. 13. My People have committed two Evils, they have forsaken the Fountain of living Waters, and hewn out to themselves Cisterns, broken Cisterns, that can hold no Water!* Surely such as pursue lying Vanities, forsake their own Mercies! And this they must expect, as their Reward, to be disappointed in their Expectations, to be snar'd in the Work of their own Hands, and at last to lye down in Sorrow! But

4thly. The All-Sufficiency of God ministers strong Consolation, to all that are sincere, and walk with God. Now whether we be indeed such, we may know by comparing our selves diligently and impartially with what has been before observ'd, on these Heads. What tho' we cannot suffice ourselves, and what tho' all the World can't suffice us, this is no great Wonder: For the Soul of Man is endowed with an insatiable Desire: Well, but there is an All-Sufficient God, who can suffice both himself and us! And this is, or should be, all our Salvation, and all our Desire. The Consideration of God's All-Sufficiency may be a sweet Support to us in all Manner of Distresses, whether of *Mind, Body* or *Estate*. Whether of Spiritual or Temporal Enemies, God is our Sun, our Shield and Buckler, who suffices himself,

himself, and therefore can much more satisfy us, who need not so great Perfection. This Almighty God hath made many and gracious Promises, that he will be every where and evermore present with his People, and especially in the Mount of Difficulty! Of whom then, or of what should we be afraid? What is the Want that *All-Sufficiency* cannot supply, what is the Strait, that *All-Sufficiency* cannot surmount? *David* took encouragement from this Attribute, when he was in sore Distress at *Ziglag*, when the Town was sack'd, his Wives taken Captive, and himself like to be stoned to Death (1 *Sam.* xxx. 6.) And it was this that encouraged *Abram* against all human Probability, to expect the Fulfilment of the divine Promise, concerning a numerous Posterity. (*Heb.* xi. 19.) And

5thly. The aforesaid Subject, serves to reprove all those, who practically deny the *All-Sufficiency* of God; which is done 1st. By the Prophane, who having abandoned the Almighty, serve divers Lusts and Pleasures (*Mal.* 3. 14.) 2dly. Secret Hypocrites, who tho' they abound in outward Acts of Obedience, yet will not give to God their whole Hearts, and that for this Reason, because there be some Things which they look upon as necessary and profitable which they don't expect from God, and them they are resolv'd to have from Creatures either Right or Wrong. (*Hos.* ii. 4, 5.) And 3dly. Even the Regenerate themselves are liable to this Evil, of denying practically, the *All-Sufficiency* of God. Now this is done in the following Instances.

1st. When we use unlawful or deceitful Measures to attain what we think we can't get from God by lawful ones. An Example of this Kind we have in *Jacob*, respecting the Birth-Right. And

2dly. When we use unlawful Methods to escape imminent Dangers. Thus *David* feign'd himself mad before King Achish

Abish, and *Abram* and *Isaac* denied their Wives for fear they should be slain on their Account. And

3dly. When we inordinately love Creatures, and imagine something to be in them which is not in God, on this Account Covetousness is call'd Idolatry. (*Eph.* v. 5.)

4thly. When we vainly confide in Creatures, and promise ourselves something from them, which we suppose the Almighty either cannot or will not confer. (*Pf.* lxii. 9, 10.)

5thly. When we murmur at our present Condition, and desire it to be otherwise than God has allotted it! This Discontent was the Occasion both of the fall of the Angels and our first Parents.

6thly. When we distrust God's Power, Promises, or Providence, with *Moses*, *Num.* xi. 13, 14. *Whence should I have Flesh to give unto all this People?* With *David* *1 Sam.* xxvii. 1. Who said in his Heart, *that he should one Day perish by the Hand of Saul.* With *Sarah*, *Gen.* xviii. 12. Who when she was told that she should have a Child in old Age, laughed through distrust, which was displeasing to God, because it reflected upon his All-Sufficiency v. 13, 14. *And the Lord said unto Abram, wherefore did Sarah laugh, is any Thing too hard for the Lord?* With *Gideon*, who tho' he had the express Command of God to war with the *Midianites*, and a promise of Victory over them, yet hesitating says, *Judg.* vi. 15. *O Lord wherewith shall I save them, for my Family is poor in Manasseh;* and therefore he asked a Sign And

7thly. When we decline great Services, being thereto call'd by God, on account of pretended Unfitness,---With *Moses*; *Ex.* iii. 11. *And Moses said unto God, who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh?---And bring forth the Children of Israel out of Egypt.* And with *Jeremiah*, who being call'd to publick Service, for God, excus'd himself thus, *behold I cannot speak.*

Speak for I am a Child. Now the aforesaid practical Denial of Gods All-Sufficiency involves in it Idolatry, and some degree of Apostacy; for thereby we turn from him to them, and expect from them, what we suppose is not in him; as this Evil obstructs the Course of God's Favour to us, so it exposes us to the dreadful Judgments of God. Hence it is said, that JESUS could do no mighty Works among a certain People, because of their Unbelief. And hence we read (2 Kings vii. 17.) of a Lord who would not believe *Elisha's* Prophecies of Plenty in *Samaria*, and was troden to Death in the Press! And was not *Moses* and *Aaron* upon this Account depriv'd of the Possession of *Canaan*? (*Num. xx. 12.*)

Now from the Consideration of God's *All-Sufficiency*, we should be exhorted to the following Duties, *viz.*

1st. To glorify God on this Account, with all our Souls, seeing that this is the Foundation of all his Glory and Majesty. If we should glorify God, because of every of his Attributes, how much more on the Account of this, which comprises them all. And

2dly. To enter into Covenant with him, by accepting of CHRIST, the Angel of the Covenant by a living Faith, *Who is the Way to his Father*, in whom we have Boldness of access with Confidence by the Faith of him. In him all the Promises are *Yea* and *Amen*. And thus the *All-Sufficiency* of God will be ours, and without this, it will profit us nothing; but on the contrary be engag'd against us. This Duty of Covenanting with God, our Text and Context points to. *I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect; and I will make my Covenant between me and thee.* And

3dly. We should be exhorted to Contentedness with our Lot, and to Beneficence towards others, in Imitation of the *All-Sufficiency* of God, in which our chief Excellency consists.

4thly.

4thly. We should love the *All-Sufficient* God above all, pursue after him with the strongest Desire, and rest in him with the sweetest Complacency! seeing he is enough for us, and infinitely more than so in all respects! *Pf. xviii. 1, 2, 3. I will love thee O Lord my Strength, my Rock, my Fortrefs and my Deliverer, my Buckler and the Horn of my Salvation.*

5thly. We should put our entire Confidence in him, because he alone is All in All, Light to the Mind, Goodness to the Will, Order to the Affections, Gladness to the Heart, and Joy to the whole Soul, and Beauty and Immortality to the Body.

6thly. We should hope in this *All-Sufficient* God in all Adversity, whether personal or publick, what tho' Clouds and Darkness hang over the Horizon of the visible Church, and the Hand of Pride scatters her Assemblies, and stains her Glory, yet we must not faint or fear, seeing she has an *All-Sufficient* Protector. Surely she is built upon a stable *Rock*, *against which the Gates of Hell shall not prevail.* God in his own Time will make *Edom* desolate, and *Jerusalem* a praise in the Earth. And

7thly, While we compare our Emptiness with the Almighty's Fullness we should be humbled in the Dust, and say with *Eliphaz*, *Job iv. 17, 19. Shall Mortal Man be more just than God, shall a Man be more pure than his Maker, behold he put no Trust in his Servants, and his Angels be charged with Folly, how much less on them, who dwell in Houses of Clay, whose Foundation is in the Dust, who are crushed before the Moth!* It is a noble saying of *Gregory* "That our Righteousness brought to the Tryal of Justice, is Unrighteousness. and that. (says he) which shine in the Opinion of the Worker, is leathsome in the Sight of the Judge." And should we not obey diligently and worship reverently that *All-Sufficient* God,

God, who will be to us an exceeding great Reward Gen. xv. 1. and especially Let us be entreated to walk with God, or before him, as our Text directs; to which we should be mov'd by considering 1st. The *Dignity* of this Practice, what can be more Honourable than to be the Friend of the King of Kings, and daily to converse with him. If the Face of *Moses* so shin'd with Beauty and Majesty after he had been some Time on the Mount with God, that the *Israelites* could not behold him, how much more the Soul that walks continually with God? 2^{dly}. As this is the most Honourable, so it is the most Pleasant Way of Walking: Hereby the Soul is satisfied with a suitable and All-sufficient Good, and pleas'd with the noble prospect of enduring felicity! Here the Good is agreeable to the Nature of the Soul, and equal to its vast Desires and most distant Hopes! 3^{dly}. This is the most profitable Way of Walking, for hereby an easy access is obtain'd to the King's Ear, which is the most important Privilege, for surely he will not deny his Friends requests! 4^{thly}. This is likewise the most safe Way. For he that dwells in the Secret of the most High, shall abide under the Shaddow of the Almighty! From God, who is the best of Friends, we may expect not only Pity and Help in Adversity, but a sure Defence! For as he is Love itself, so his All-sufficiency has all Creatures at it's Beck and Controle. And 5^{thly}. It is a plain Way, Isa. xxxv. 8. *And an high Way shall be there,—it shall be call'd the Way of Holiness, the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those, the Way foring Men, tho' Fools shall not err therein;* but the Ways of Sin are Crooked and Intricate.

Finally, dear Brethren, let us be exhorted to be sincere in Heart, Speech and Practice, *Walk before me and be thou perfect.* Sincerity is the Quintessence the Life, the Soul of

all Vertue and Goodness! Without this neither our *Persons* or *Services* can find acceptance! From this, under God, springs our *Peace, Joy* and *Security*, and every other Blessing. Now may the All-sufficient God enable us to walk before him, and to be Sincere, that so we may be approv'd of by him here, and admitted into his Kingdom hereafter, thro' the exceeding Riches of divine Grace in JESUS CHRIST our Lord, to whom with the Father and Blessed Spirit, be eternal Glory ascrib'd by Men and Angels. *Amen, Amen.*

SERMON

SERMON XII.

JEREMIAH xxxii. 17.

Ab Lord God, behold, thou hast made the Heavens and the Earth by thy great Power, and stretched out Arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.

WE have in these Words, the beginning of the Prophet *Jeremiah's* Prayer, the Occasion of which was the Discoveries which *Jehovah* had made to him of his Purpose, to pull down the Nation, by putting it under the Jurisdiction of the *Babylonish* King. The pious Prophet was imprisoned for declaring this Truth, agreeable to the divine Direction, the City was in the mean Time besieged by *Nebucadnezzar's* Army: A dismal Cloud cover'd the whole Face of Affairs! The poor Prophet being a faithful Intercessor for that People, was exceedingly distressed to behold the impending Stroke, the approaching Ruin of his beloved Nation, he therefore knowing God to be infinite in Power and Mercy, takes his Flight to him in the aforefaid gloomy and perplex'd State of Things, and puts up an intercessory Supplication for them; which begins with a Recognition of God's infinite Power, made manifest in his Formation of the Heaven and Earth: These vast Bodies being produced by a Word, and in a Moment, are incontestible Demonstrations of an Almighty Cause or Efficient. God himself us'd this Instance, *Chap. xxvii. 5.*

to confirm his Peoples Faith in his Ability, to do what he pleas'd. It is probable that the Prophet makes Mention of God's Omnipotence in the Instances before related, and farther expounds upon it by saying, *That nothing was too hard for him*, (in the beginning of his Prayer) with a Three-fold Design, 1st. To affect his own Heart with an awful Sense of the divine Majesty. And 2dly. To support his Faith in expecting the Mercies he prayed for. And 3dly. As an Argument to excite, as it were, Omnipotence to exert it self in the Deliverance of *Israel* from the threatn'd Destruction. *God is a present Help in Trouble*, yea and a powerful one, nothing is too hard for him, that does not imply some Weakness or Contradiction. It is therefore our wisest Course, in Imitation of the Prophet *Jeremiah's* Example, to make speedy and affectionate Supplication to him in all distressing Emergents, either respecting our selves or the Church of God! The Particle *Ab!* in the beginning of our Text, denotes the Depth and Vehemence of the Prophets mournful Passion! And indeed our very Bowels should bleed for poor *Zions* Tragedies, and our Lips move in the Prophets Strains; for *Jerusalems sake I will not hold my Peace, and for Zion's sake I will not be Silent, until the Righteousness thereof go forth as Brightness, and the Salvation thereof as a Lamp that burneth.* But to return: The Text I have read, considered abstractly, presents to our Meditations the Power of God: in discoursing upon which I shall consider its Nature, Kinds, Properties and Effects, and then apply it. And

1st. God's Power may be thus describ'd; viz. "That it is his essential Property whereby he can do all Things." Thus excellent Mr. Vincent explains it. Or in other Words thus, *That it is that divine Vertue, whereby Jehovah does what he Wills, and has ability to do what he Wills not.* And hence it

it appears, that the Power of God is twofold, viz. *Absolute and Ordinate*. The *absolute Power* of God, is that whereby he can do all Things that are possible, even such Things as never came to pass, of this mention is made, Matt. iii. 9. *God is able of these Stones to raise up Children unto Abram*. This, according to our Conception, preceeds the Will of God, and coinceds with the All-sufficiency of his Essence. Ephes. iii. 20. Rom. xi. 23. *And they also if they bide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in, for God is able to graff them in again.*

2dly. The *ordinate Power of God*, is that whereby *Jehovah* effects what he Pleases; and therefore follows his Will, Psa. cxxxv. 6. *Whatsoever the Lord pleased that did he in Heaven and Earth, in the Seas and all deep Places.* God's *ordinate Power* relates to his Efficiency, or to the Effects which he has, does or shall produce. It is not really different from the former, but the former consider'd as limited by the divine Decree, which certainly fixes the *Boundaries* between what is merely *possible*, and what is *Future*. Hence it is said that our Lord could not do many Miracles, in his native Country, because of their Unbelief, and that the Almighty could not destroy *Sodom* till *Lot* was out of it. The Power of God was bounded or limited by his Purpose, which he could not counteract. Neither is it any Imperfection in the Almighty, that he cannot contradict his own Nature; but on the Contrary, it is the highest Perfection!

Nor are we to suppose, that Power belongs to God as distinguished from Act; for then he would be at one Time idle, and at another employ'd in Labour, and so suffer a Change. No! the Almighty is a most pure Act. The *aforsaid Distinction* is only ascrib'd to God on the Account of Creatures, because they undergo an Operation of God in Time

Time, which before they did not undergo, *e. g.* when Men are warm'd by the Sun now, who were before cold, the Change is not in the Sun, but in them.

It should likewise be considered, that the aforesaid Distinction of God's Power into *absolute* and *ordinate*, is only in respect of our Conception; for in God himself it is most Simple, and therefore but one, because it is his Essence.

But I proceed to consider the *Properties of God's Power*, which was the third general Head. And

1st. The Power of God is *Infinite*, and that in three respects, *viz.* The *Agent*, *Objects*, *Effects*. The *Agent* God is *Infinite* in his Being, and with this his Power coincides, or is the same. The *Objects* are likewise *innumerable*; which can be produc'd by him, and therefore *Infinite*, in some Sense. And as *Wendeline* well observes, "God never produces an Effect so Excellent, but he can produce a more Excellent." The sacred Scriptures confirm the Infinity of God's Power, various Ways, 1st. *Symbolically* and *Figuratively*, when it ascribes to him a *strong Hand*, a *stretched out Arm*, 1 *Chiro.* xxix. 12. *In thine Hand is Power and Might*. Our Text ascribes to God, a stretched out Arm, and intimates, *that thereby the Heaven and Earth were made*. 2dly. *Negatively*, when it denies any Thing to be *Difficult* to him. *Gen.* xviii. 14. *Is any Thing too hard for the Lord*. *At the Time appointed will I return unto thee, according to the Time of Life, and Sarah shall have a Son*. Agreeable hereto are the Words of our Text, *and there is Nothing too hard for thee*. 3dly. *Effectively*, when it ascribes the greatest Effects to God's Power, such as the Productions of the Heavens and Earth, as the Text we are considering doth, *Ab Lord God! behold thou hast made the Heavens and the Earth by thy great Power!* And likewise when

it.

it witnesses that God can do all Things. Luk. xviii. 27. *And he said the Things that are impossible with Men, are possible with God.* 4thly. *Affirmatively*, when it ascribes great Power to him, as in the Words of our Text, and expressly calls him the *Almighty*. (Rev. i. 8.) It is observ'd by some, that God's Almightyness, or infinite Power, is asserted no less than Seventy Times in Scripture. Yea, no less than Thirty one Times in one Book, viz. *Job*.

And does not Reason likewise establish the same Truth? For seeing Power is a Perfection, how can it be deny'd to him, who is infinitely Perfect. And toasmuch as Creatures derive all the Power they possess from God, as the first Cause, then surely he himself must possess eminently and infinitely what he communicates to others! Neither was there any before him, to limit this, or any other of his Attributes, and therefore it is Infinite. If God were not Infinite in Power, his Determinations would be precarious and trifling, like those of his Creatures: And his Promises and Threatnings in rewarding or punishing, would neither deserve our Trust or Fear: For then he could not say as he does, Isa. xlvi. 11. *I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass, I have purposed it, I will also do it.* And

2dly. The Power of God is *independant*, he can Work by Means, without Means, and contrary to Means. 1 Sam. xiv. 6. *There is no restraint to the Lord, to Work by many or by few.* Dan. iv. 34, 35. *And all the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his Will in the Armies of Heaven and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can stay his Hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?* "The Pleasure of God, (as Mr. Flavel observes) is the only Rule according to which divine Power exerts itself in the World."

But

But the Power of God is 3^{dly}, *Unparallel'd*: Jehovah not only equals, but infinitely exceeds all created Beings in Strength, Job xl. 9. *Hast thou an Arm like God, or canst thou Thunder with a Voice like him.* Men are wont to shew their Strength by their Arms; and hence Arms are metaphorically ascribed to God. And even those Things that are weak in us, when ascrib'd to him exceed the combin'd Force of the whole Creation. How weak is one of our Fingers, yet God is said by his Finger to cast out Devils! Luk. xi. 20. *Yea by his Finger, to make the Heavens.* Our Words, our Breath, our Frowns, are trifling! But by a Word God made a World! Psal. xxxiii. 9. *He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast! The Almighty smites the Earth with the Rod of his Mouth, and with the Breath of his Lips he slays the Wicked, and they perish at the Rebuke of his Countenance.* Psal. lxxx. 16. So that, as the Apostle observes, *the Weakness of God is stronger than Man.* 1 Cor i.

4^{thly} The Power of God is *irresistible* and *supream*, the whole Possè of Men and Angels, were there Millions more than there be, if their Strength was united cannot withstand Omnipotence! Job xxiii. 13. *But he is in one Mind and who can turn him, and what his Soul desireth even that he doeth.* The Almighty challenges the whole Creation to obstruct his Providence, or defeat his Councils! Isa. xliii. 13. *I will work and who shall let it. Isa. xiv. 27. For the Lord of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it, and his Hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?* All Human Power is deriv'd from the Power of God, and is therefore dependant on it, and limited by it. It was God that gave *Nebuchadnezzar* that proud and potent Prince his Kingdom and his Power (*Dan. ii. 37.*) It is the Power of God that restrains the Wrath of Men and Rage of.

of Devils, and keeps them within proper Limits, otherwise they would destroy all before them. *Pf. lxxvi. 10. And the remainder of Wrath shalt thou restrain. Rev. iii. 10. Satan shall cast some of you into Prison and ye shall have Tribulation Ten Days.* The Devil if he had his full Scope, would have cast them some where else, *viz.* into the Grave or Hell; and if they must go to Prison, he would have it Ten Years, yea their whole Lives. The Angels whether Good or Bad, are powerful Beings, and hence call'd *Principalities* and *Powers*; one of them is able to vanquish all the Strength of Flesh and Blood; yet are they subject to the Controle of Omnipotence. And

5thly. The Power of God is *incomprehensible*, it not only exceeds human Power, and human Probability, but surpasses the Words and Thoughts of Men. The Power of God reaches the very Heart, which he turns as Streams in the South to answer his own eternal Purposes, *i. e.* suddenly. The Lord *stills the Noise of the Sea, the Noise of the Waves, and their Tumult of the People* *Pf. lxxv. 7.* How soon did Jehovah turn the Heart of Angry *Esau*, into kind Respect? When all human Help fails, and there is none shut up or left, then does the Lord exert his Omnipotence, *In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen!* *Gen. xxii. 14. i. e.* In extreme Distress when all human Probability of Relief expires, then the Power of God appears! And who is able to paint in human Language, the Infiniteness of the Strength of God, or form Ideas in his Mind equal to it; not one? (*Ephes. iii. 20.*) God is able to do exceeding abundantly above what we are able to ask or think. The feeble Flight of our most exalted Thought falls infinitely short of the vast extent of the divine Power. Hence is that famous Passage in *Isaiab's* Prophecy (*lv. 8, 9.*) *As far as the Heavens are above the Earth, so are my Thoughts above your Thoughts, and my Ways higher than your Ways.* The

H h.

Lord:

Lord often exceeds his Creatures Hopes, both in Temporals and Spirituall. *I had not Thought to see thy Face* said *Jacob* to *Joseph*, and lo *God* bath shew'd me thy Seed. Gen. xlviii.

11. The Debtor only desir'd Patience, and the Creditor forgave the Debt. (*Mat.* xviii. 26, 27.) The Prodigal desir'd but the State of a Servant, but lo he is treated as a Son, with the greatest Respect! His ungrateful Carriage is not so much as once mentioned, the fatted Calf is kill'd for his Entertainment, his Ears are delighted with musical Symphonies, while Shoes are brought for his Feet, a Ring for his Finger, and the best Robe for his Back. But

6thly. The Power of God, is a *just* and *rightful* Power. *Power* and *Right* in Creatures, are often separated, they do that which they have no Right or Authority to do; but in God they are one and the same, what he can do, he has a Right to do, and what he has a Right to do, he can do. This Right is founded upon the Transcendant Eminence, and infinitely superior excellency of his Godhead; as well as upon his creating, preserving, providing and Redeeming Goodness. On these Accounts he hath a right to Rule over the Work of his Hands according to his sovereign Pleasure; and to dispense his Gifts upon whom, when, and in what manner he pleaseth: For he is our Potter, and we but Clay in his Hands, which he may make to Honour or Dishonour, as seemeth good in his Eyes. And

7thly. The Power of God is *Eternal*, *Rom.* i. 20. *For 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.* Albeit God from Eternity, did not produce Effects without himself, nevertheless he possess'd Power from Eternity, by which, when he pleased he created the World; and by this he could have created the World from Eternity, if the World could
have

have existed from Eternity ! And as God's Power was from Eternity, so it will continue to it. Hence it is said *Isa. xl. 28. That the Creator of the Ends of the Earth fainteth not, neither is weary, and that his Arm is not shortened. Isa. lix. 1.* This the Church uses as an Argument, in petitioning for Deliverance. *Jf. li. 9, 10. Awake, awake, put on Strength O Arm of the Lord, awake as in the Ancient Days, in the Generations of old, art thou not he that cut Rahab in Pieces, and wounded the Dragon?* But I hasten to the

4th General Head, which was to discourse upon the *Effects* of divine Power. And 1st. The Power of God is conspicuous in the *Creation of the World*, what Almightyness was necessary to produce the vast Expanse over our Heads, and this Massy ponderous and prodigious Globe we tread upon, and that by a Word and in a Moment, out of no pre-existing Matter? And afterwards out of the rude and indigested Chaos, to form the various Ranks of Beings, which both the Heavens and Earth contain, and to Beautify them with such Endowments as proclaim their Creators Glory ! The very noblest Creature within the wide compass of the Universe, cannot produce the smallest Particle, of Matter out of Nothing ; much less endow the various Species of Being, with those Capacities in which they excel each other ; No ! To the Production of these Things, infinite Strength must concur. Thus the Things that are made are a plain and sensible Demonstration of the eternal Power, and Godhead of their Former.

2dly. The Almightyness of God is no less visible in the *Works of Providence*, viz. in supporting the stately Fabrick of the Universe, and in directing all the Beings it contains, in their various Motions, so as to answer his own eternal Purpotes. Many surprizing and improbable Events and Revolutions are brought to pass, which nothing but divine

Power could Effect. By the Course of Providence we often see that Scripture verify'd, *that the Battle is not to the Strong nor the Race to the Swift.*

The Almighty Power of God is *marvellously apparent* in the *Preservation* of the *Christian Church*, who comparatively are small in Number, and for the most Part weak, in respect of Power and Policy, amidst numerous, politick, potent and malicious Opposers: And that for so long a Tract of Time, against all the malignant Efforts of Hell and Earth! How does the Glory of divine Power appear in preserving a few Sheep, amidst vast herds of cruel Wolves, in preserving the burning Bush from being consumed with the devouring Flames, with which it is encompass'd. And

3dly. The infinite Power of God is likewise *discover'd* in *Works of divine Grace.*

1st. The exceeding Greatness of God's Power and mighty working of it must be exerted to *form Faith* in any Heart, (Ephes. i. 19.) Nothing but Almighty Strength can overcome the strong Man arm'd, and pluck Sinners out of his Snare. And

2dly. The same Power is necessary to *preserve Grace*, after it is *form'd*, from Being quite destroy'd by the unwearied Assaults of Enemies, both inward and outward. Hence God's People are said to *be preserv'd by the Power of God, thro' Faith unto Salvation*, 1 Pet. i. 5. The Preservation of divine Grace, as Bishop Hopkins observes, " *Is like the Preservation of a spark of Fire upon the Ocean, amidst turbulent Waves, and boisterous Blasts.*"

The Almighty Power of God was made manifest, and his Arm reveal'd, in the early Propagation of the Gospel, thro' a great Part of the World, and that in a little Time, by illiterate Men! That a System of Doctrines, contrary to Men's corrupt Inclinations, and not recommended by the Arts of Persuasion,

Persuasion, or Influence of civil Power, or any View of Honour or Advantage in this World, should be cordially embrac'd by Multitudes in the politest Nations, and adher'd to, in defiance of all Kinds of Ignominy and Suffering even to Death, cannot be reasonably accounted for, otherwise than by ascribing it to *Almighty Power* !

Neither does it in the least derogate from the Greatness of God's Power, that he cannot do such Things as are imperfect and contradictory. Here observe,

1st. God cannot Lye or Sin in any respect, (*Heb. vi. 18.*) or change his Mind ; these Things are not the Object of Power, but the Effects of Weakness ; and therefore it's God's Glory to be incapable of them ! Nor 2dly. Can the Almighty do those Things that imply a Contradiction, or are impossible in the Nature of Things. God cannot make a Contradiction true, for this would overthrow the very Nature of Things, and so destroy his own Wisdom therein Aparent ! He cannot make a Creature equal to himself, for then it would not be a Creature : God indeed can do what is impossible to *Nature*. i. e. he can exceed its stated Bounds and Limits, as appears by the miraculous Works he has wrought : But he cannot do *what is impossible in Nature*. Now that is *impossible in Nature* which involves a Contradiction, either on the Part of God, when the Work implies an Imperfection, in a most perfect Worker, or on the Part of Things, when they overthrow themselves. Now both this Kind of Contradiction is impossible to God, because it would infer that God should deny himself (*2 Tim. ii. 13*) or that he should say, that he is not God. A Contradiction seeing it cannot be, a Being cannot be a Work of Power, or the Object of Power. But I proceed to the Improvement of this Subject. And

1st.

1st. The Power of God speaks *Terror* to all impenitent Transgressors! What do these by their Presumptuous Iniquities, but as it were enter the List with *Jehovah*, and bid Defiance to Omnipotence! This *Eliphaz*, the *Temanite*, expresses in beautiful Language, *Job. xv. 25, 26. For he stretcheth out his Hand against God, and strengthneth himself against the Almighty. He runneth upon him, even on his Neck, upon the thick Bosses of his Bucklers.* But shall Briars and Thorns contend with the devouring Flames? How unequal is the Combat? Do we provoke the Lord to Jealousy? Are we Stronger then he? Hast thou an Arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a Voice like him? Who when he touches the Mountains they Smoke, yea the Hills tremble at his Presence! At his Reproof the Pillars of Heaven shake, the Perpetual Hills do bow, and the everlasting Mountains are scattered! Who is able to Screne your guilty Souls from the wrathful Strokes of the Arm of Omnipotence? Truly in vain is Salvation hoped for from the Hills, and from the multitude of Mountains. *God is Wise in Heart, and Mighty in Strength: Who has barded himself against him, and hath prospered? Job. ix. 4. When they shall say, Peace and Safety, suddain Destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a Woman with Child, and they shall not Escape, 1. Thef. v. 3.*

How will ye be able to bear the Weight of *Jehovah's* angry Arm, the Reach of which ye cannot avoid. Is it not a fearful Thing to fall into the Hand of the living God? Can thine Heart Endure, or thy Hands be Strong in the Day that God deals with you? Surely he will magnify his Power in your Destruction, *Rom. ix. 22. What if God, willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endur'd with much Long-suffering, the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction? Now consider this, ye that forget God, least*
be

he tear you in Pieces, and there be none to deliver. Psa. 1. 22. God will meat you as a Lyon, or a Bear bereav'd of her Whelps, and will rend the Caul from your Heart! He will break you with Breach upon Breach, and run upon you like a Giant, he will cry, yea roar, he shall prevail against his Enemies!

But

2dly. The Power of God speaks *Comfort* to all penitent Believers in all their Troubles, of whatsoever Nature they be. Are you encompass'd with many Enemies and Dangers, well God's Power is your Sanctuary, which is able to Protect you against the most formidable Foes, *if God is for you, who shall be against you? The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the Righteous run to it, and are safe!* What tho' your Enemies be many and Mighty, one God is an overmatch for them all, Men and Devils can go no farther then the Length of their Chain: They can have no Power against us, except it be given them from above, as our Lord observed to proud *Pilate*, when he boasted that he had Power to crucify or release him, (*John xix. 10.*) The Power of God can soon put a Hook in their Jaws, and lead them by a Way they came not. When our Heart and our Strength fails, God is the Strength of our Heart and our Portion forever. How reviving is that Word of God by the Prophet, *Isa. xli. 10. Fear thou not for I am with thee, be not dismay'd for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee, by the right Hand of my Righteousness.* Tho' we be reduced exceeding Low and have none on Earth to help us, God alone can deliver us, *Isa. lix. 16. He wondered that there was no Intercessor, therefore his Hand brought Salvation unto him, and his Righteousness sustained him. The King of Zion can command Deliverance for Jacob, and turn his Captivity suddenly as Streams in the South!* Tho' God's

God's People, as to outward Appearance, be in a hopeless Case, as it were buried in their Graves: Divine Power can soon cause a Resurrection! Ezek. xxxvii. 12. *For the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro thro' the Earth to shew himself Strong in behalf of them, whose Heart is Perfect towards him,* 2 Chron. xvi. 9. God keeps his Vineyard, Night and Day, lest any hurt it. (Isa. xxvii. 3.) Those Things may revive us, both in respect of our own, and the Churches Troubles! Are we almost discourag'd because of the Power of our inward Enemies? Let us remember that God's Grace is sufficient for us, and that his Strength is made perfect in Weakness, (2 Cor. xii. 9.) Turn ye therefore to your Strong Hold ye Prisoners of Hope; for as *Calvin* observes, "*There is Defence enough in one God!*" But

3dly.. The Consideration of God's Power should invite us to trust in God, in every Difficulty, even when human Succours fail, we should glorify God with *Abram*, by *hoping against Hope*, i. e. against the present Appearances of Things, when we have the Word of a God to hope upon. *Trust in the Lord forever, for in Jehovah is everlasting Strength.* Isa. xxvi. 4. At what Time soever we are afraid, let us determine with the *Psalmist*, to trust in God, it grieves the Almighty when his People question his Omnipotence, as appears from the Instance of *Moses*. (Num. xi. 21, 22, 23) And as we should beware of questioning God's Power, in a Way of Duty which is a practical Denial of it. So we should with equal Care avoid presuming upon it in a neglect thereof: For this is also a Denial of it, because for all these Things God will be enquir'd of the House of *Israel*.

4th. Has God a rightful Power over us, then let us submit ourselves to his Government, and devote ourselves to his Glory and Service, and that freely, unreservedly, steadfastly

fastly and faithfully. We are his, on all Accounts, his Workmanship, the Clay his Fingers have form'd, the Price of his Son's Blood; the Monuments of his providential Care, Kindness, and Forbearance; we are his People by Profession, and outward Dedication, and shall we break thro' all these Ties, to rebel against him, and ruin our own Souls, God forbid! Besides if we will not submit to his equitable Government, we must expect to feel his Almighty Vengeance: For as *Augustine* observes, "God is of immense Power, and therefore, there is no Place in which one can hide himself, nor Time when one can fly, nor Power by which he can resist." Therefore let us resign ourselves and our All to our rightful Lord, intending his Glory in all our Actions, of every kind, that whether *living or dying, we may be the Lords*, Rom. xiv. 7. Let us beware of the vilest Sacrilege, and render to God the Things that are Gods.

5thly. Let us acknowledge readily the absolute Power and Sovereignty of God over us. Particularly that God cannot be our Debtor, on any other Account, except by his own gracious Promise, for our Goodness extends not to him, we are his Possession and Property; and therefore whatsoever he purposes concerning us, or does to us, he does us no Wrong, for he is our Potter, and we the Clay he has form'd. This Consideration should make us more patient in Adversity and more thankful for Prosperity. And

6thly. Let us glorify God on Account of his Power and Kingdom, which ruleth over all. Let us inwardly admire the vast extent of his Right, and Strength, the largeness of his Kingdom, and the Power of its Administration! And let us extol it openly! *Rev. xv. 3. And they sung the Song of Moses the Servant of God, the Song of the Lamb, saying, great and marvelous are thy Works, O Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints!* And

finally let us imitate the independant Power of God, by submitting to God only in Matters of Conscience. *Let us stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ by his Blood, has made us free.* Gal. v. 1. Only being careful that we don't abuse it, or use it with offence. *Let us be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might, that we may be able to do all Things, thro' Christ strengthning us.* O let us dwell in the Secret of the most High, that we may be constantly kept under the Shadow of the Almighty; and be preserved by his Power, thro' Faith unto Salvation, which may God grant for CHRIST sake, *Amen, Amen.*

SERMON.

SERMON XIII.

LEVITICUS xix. 2.

Speak unto all the Congregation of the Children of Israel and say unto them, ye shall be Holy: For I the Lord your God am Holy.

MOSESES is enjoy'd by *Jehovah* in the first Verse of this Chapter, and also in that out of which our Text is taken, to deliver the fummary of divine Laws to all the Congregation of the Children of *Israel*. *Moses* must make known God's Statutes, and proclaim them thro' the Camp, that so every one might hear and know his Duty, in order to practice the same. And hence we may learn, that the Devotion which springs from Ignorance, that that Religion which commends it, cannot be of God; because it is directly contrary to the Method which God has taken with his reasonable Creatures, respecting the Affairs of Religion, in all the Ages of the Church, both under the *Jewish* and Gospel Dispensations! Now the Words of our Text contain two Things observable, viz. A *Command*, and a *Reason enforcing* it. And

1st. There is a *Command*, *ye shall be Holy*, "*The Word*" *Holy*, says *Pool* in his Synopsis upon the Place, and other "learned Men, properly signifies to separate, i. e. from a *Common to a Religious Use*" And hence the Temple and Tabernacle and many Things in both, were call'd *Holy* :

I i 2

and

And likewise the whole People of *Israel*, and many other Things, which it is needless to mention : The Word here signifies, “ not only a Separation from all the Defilements “ before mentioned ; ” as Mr. *Pool* observes, both in his *Synopsis*, and *Annotations* ; but also an inward Aversion to all Impurity and Sin, together with a habitual Devotedness to all moral Purity. *Israel's* being distinguished from all other People, by peculiar Laws, was to teach them the necessity of a real Separation from the World and the Flesh, and of an entire Devotedness to God ; and this is likewise the Law of Christ, *1 Pet. i. 15. 16.* *But as he who hath called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all manner of Conversation; because it is written, be ye Holy, for I am Holy.* We are the Followers of the Holy JESUS, and therefore must, according to our Capacity, be consecrated to God's Honour, and conform'd to his Nature and Will, *ye shall be Holy*; the Words are not a Prophecy or Promise, but a Precept, importing as much as this, *be ye Holy. 1 Pet. i. 15.* Or *ye must be Holy.* It is as if God had said, ye must take Care and Pains, to have the Habits or Principles of Holiness, implanted in your Hearts, and to exercise and express the same, in all your Speech and Practice ! But

2dly. We have the *Reason enforcing* this Command, and that is twofold, viz. The Nature of God and his Relation to them, *for I the Lord your God am Holy.* And 1st. God in his Nature is Holy, yea Holiness itself, the Fountain, Idea, and Patern of all Holiness. (*Isa. lxiii. 15. Ezek. xx. 12.*) It is therefore every Way reasonable, that we should seek Holiness of him, and conform ourselves to his Example, seeing it is in itself Reasonable and Noble, and without it we can have no Complacence in him here, or Enjoyment of him hereafter. (*Heb. xii. 14.*) But

2dly.

2dly. The Almighty in this Text, incites the People of *Israel* to Holiness on Account of the *covenant Relation* which subsisted between them: *For I the Lord your God am Holy*, as if God had said, I have chosen you before others, and given myself to you to be your God by Way of special Interest, and covenant Property; and ye have chosen me, and devoted yourselves to me as your Guide, your God, your Governor, your Portion, and your All! And therefore you are bound by the Ties of Gratitude, and by covenant Engagements, to obey my Precepts, and conform yourselves to my Nature in Holiness!

The Subject that offers it self to our present Meditations, from the Text, which I have been labouring to explain, is that *venerable Attribute* of the *divine Nature*, viz. *Holiness*: This is very frequently ascribed to God in the sacred Scriptures, thus he is call'd *the Holy one*, *Isa.* xl. 25. Likewise *the Holy one of Israel*, above 30 Times, *Isa.* xli. 20. He is call'd *the Holy one of Jacob*, *Isa.* xxix. 23. *The most Holy, or Holy of Holies*, *Dan.* ix. 24. He is call'd *thrice Holy*, *Isa.* vi. 3.—*Rev.* iv. 8. Or the Character of *Holiness* is three Times repeated. Holiness is ascrib'd to all the Persons of the Trinity, the Father is call'd *the Holy one of Israel*: The Son is call'd *the most Holy*, *Dan.* ix. 24. The Spirit is call'd *the Spirit of Holiness, and the Holy Spirit*, *Rom.* i. 4. And indeed right Reason assures us, that *God is Holy*: For 1st. If we were not Holy, how could he be the Author of that Holiness, which is in his People? (*Jobn* i. 19.)

2dly. Without *Holiness* he could not carry himself decently, or as it is fit and proper to himself; and so by Consequence, he could not behave himself suitable to his Creatures, nor govern them Holily and Well. If a King do not duly

regard

regard himself in his Royal Authority, he can never duly govern his Subjects. And

3dly. Without *Holiness* he could not be perfect in any Attribute : For as Mr. Scudder observes, “ *Holiness is the Beauty of all God's Attributes, without which his Wisdom would be Subtlety ; his Justice, Cruelty ; his Sovereignty, Tyrany, his Mercy foolish Pity.* ”

In considering this divine Perfection, I would

I. Enquire concerning its *Nature*.

II. Shew its *Properties*.

III. Represent it's *Manifestations* or *Discoveries*.

And lastly proceed to some practical Uses.

1st. Then seeing the Holiness of God, as it is in him, is so Sublime and Transcendent, that it is inaccessible to our weak and finite Minds ; it will be necessary, first to behold it in its Emblem, or Effects, and from that to proceed to the producing Cause, or Prototype. Now the Image or Effect of the Holiness of God, is that Holiness, which Jehovah is pleas'd to form in intelligent Beings or Creatures. Holiness therefore in its general Nature, may be thus describ'd, *viz. That it is the moral Goodness of a reasonable Being*. To understand which, let it be observ'd, that *Goodness* is two-fold, *viz. Physical* and *Moral*, *Physical Goodness* is likewise two-fold, *viz. either of Being* or *Use* ; a Thing may be call'd Good *physically* or *naturally* either when its being is desirable, or when it serves to answer the End design'd for it. In both these Respects, all the inanimate and irrational Parts of the Creation are call'd Good by God himself, the best Judge of Things. *Gen. i. ult. And God saw every Thing that he had made and behold it was very Good!* But *moral Goodness*, is that which is adorn'd, with such Manners, as become a God ! and this is peculiar to reasonable Creatures. Now the Holiness of Creatures is three-

three-fold, *viz.* *Relative, Fedral,* and *Real*, 1st. *Relative*, is that whereby Times and Places, and other Things are call'd holy, because they relate to a Holy God, and are appropriated by him, being separated from a Common, and dedicated to a Religious Use by his Authority, which they have a Tendency to promote. In this Sense the Sabbath, the Temple, and many Things in it, were call'd Holy. 2^{dly} *Federal Holiness*, is that whereby Persons are separated from the World, to be God's peculiar People, in order to the Study of Holiness, when they profess this, and by their Profession are in the Judgment of a reasonable Charity, look'd upon as Saints or Holy Persons. *Deut. vii. 6. For thou art a Holy People unto the Lord thy God, the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special People unto himself, above all People that are on the Face of the Earth.* *Num. xv. 40. That ye may remember, and do all my Commandments and be Holy unto your God.* In this respect the Whole Nation of Israel, were of old Holy to God (*Ex. xix. 6.*) They are therefore call'd *a Holy Nation.* (*1 Pet. ii. 9. Num. xvi. 3.*) And Scores of Times the whole Nation of Israel are call'd *God's People* in Scripture. *Ex. iii. 10. That thou mayst bring forth my People the Children of Israel out of Egypt.* In this Respect the Children of believing Parents are Holy. (*1 Cor. vii. 14.*) But 3^{dly}. *Real Holiness*, consists in the Exercise and Growth of good Habits or pious Dispositions infus'd, and is therefore twofold, *viz.* *Habitual* and *actual*. *Habitual*, consists in the inward *Purity* of the Will and Affections, whereby we are inclin'd to live to God; or it consists, in the Infusion of a Constellation, or Train of Graces, into the Soul, which turns its inward and general Bent into a spiritual and Heavenly Channel! By this the Soul of Man, is in some Sort conform'd to the Nature of God; *Actual Holiness* consists in the Exercise of the aforesaid divine Habits

bits, especially in our Speech and Practice, whereby, thro' God's gracious Concurrence, they are increas'd. Hereby the Life is conform'd to God's Will and Law: From what has been observ'd, it appears, therefore that Holiness contains the four following Ingredients, or Particulars. *viz.*

1st. A *Separation* from a *common* or *profane Use*, in which Sense, *Paul* the Apostle, is said to be *separated to the Gospel of God*. Rom. i. 1. And the Lord *JESUS* as Mediator, is said to be *sanctified*. *John* x. 36. And 2dly, A *Dedication* to a *divine* or *religious Use*, whereby we deliberately, unreservedly, and resolutely *devote* ourselves and our all to the Divine Glory and Service. (*Rom.* xii. 1. *2 Cor.* viii. 5.) First they gave their own selves to the Lord.—And 3dly. It contains a *Representation*, of the *Divine Holiness*, the *Heart* resembling the *Purity* of the divine *Nature*, and the *Life* the *Purity* of the *Divine Law*. And 4thly. Holiness includes a *Detestation* of, and *Flight* from all *Impurity*. *Pf.* xcvi. 10. *Ye that love the Lord hate Evil.*

From the aforesaid Image, or *Emblem* of Holiness in Creatures, we may gather this Description, of the Holiness of God! *viz.* That it is his *Moral Excellency*, whereby *he is separated from every thing common or profane, hereby he is inclin'd to seek himself, and his Glory above all.* (*Pro.* xvi. 4. *Ephes.* i. 11.) and is conform'd exactly to that *Holiness* which is express'd in the *Moral Law* in his *Thoughts, Words and Deeds*. And hence he often in his Word invites Men to an Imitation of his Holiness. (*1 Pet.* i. 15, 16.) As God's *Power* is oppos'd to all *natural Weakness*, and his *Wisdom* to *Folly*, so his *Holiness* is oppos'd to all *moral Blemishes*, or *Imperfections*, which we call *Sin*. *Hab.* i. 13.

Holiness is a *Disposition*, to seek the most excellent *End*, in the highest Degree, and to refer all to it. The best Good, certainly deserves to be the last End! Now *Jehovah* being

being himself, the best Good, infinitely superior in Excellency, to all Creatures, he must therefore consequently be his own last End! Hence is that of the Prophet. *Isa. xlii.* 8. *I am the Lord, that is my Name, and my Glory will I not give to another, nor my Praise to Graven Images.* And it appears farther to be reasonable, that God should seek himself as his own last End, because he is Self-existent, & from no other! This *Devotedness* therefore of the Almighty to seek his own *Glory, as his chief End,* appears to be a very considerable *Branch* of the Holiness of God. But for Creatures, who are but an inferior Good, and borrow their Beings from another to make themselves, or any thing that concerns them as such, their last End, is a great Instance of Impiety: The very nature of Sin seems to consist in this, *viz.* A *Deviation* or wandering in our *Views, Designs* or *Affections* from God's Glory, to some other End, *as Chief* and *Supream.* Seeing that all Things are from God, as a creating or producing Cause, and thro' him also as a supporting Cause, therefore all ought to be directed to him, as a final Cause. (*Rom. xi. 36.*) The Holiness of God seems to be the Harmony of his Attributes, as they are oppos'd to Sin! and therefore it's call'd the *Beauty* of the Lord! *Pf. xxvii. 4.* *One Thing have I desir'd of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord, to behold the Beauty of the Lord.*—Holiness seems to put a Lustre upon the other Perfections of the divine Nature, without which, they would be inglorious because, impure!

Now the Holiness of God, is either *essential* or *declarative.* The *essential Holiness* of God is *nothing else but the transcendent and incomprehensible Eminence of the divine Nature or Being, or his Purity and Glory.* And hence he is said to be *glorious in Holiness.* (*Ex. xv. 11.*) The *declarative Holiness* of God consists in the *Displays* of the *Former* in God's

Word and *Works*, they are distinguish'd only in our manner of Conception, and not in God. And thus I am led to discourse upon the

2d. Propos'd, which was to shew the *Properties of God's Holiness*. Now the essential Holiness of God, has the following Properties, viz.

1st. It is *original Holiness*, it is the Source of all those Stremes of Holiness which appear in Creatures : It is the Substance and Prototype, their's but the Shadow and Copy borrow'd from it ! *Jehovah* has receiv'd it from none, but created Beings derive all theirs from this, Rom. xi. 35
 ---*Who hath first given to him ?*

2dly. It is *simple Holiness*, i. e. It is the very Being of God, and not any Thing added to it : Hence God is said to *swear by his Holiness*, Psal. lxxxix 35. Whereas Holiness in Creatures is not their Nature, or Being, but some Disposition or Quality added to it, and therefore separable from it ; and hence they are only call'd Holy, but not Holiness : This last Term speaks an Abstract, simple and uncompoundd Being ! And

3dly. It is *eternal Holiness*, and this it must needs be, seeing it is the same with his Essence ; which has been before prov'd to be eternal, in a preceeding Sermon. As it is impossible in the Nature of Things, that ever God should begin to be, so it is equally impossible that ever he should be without Holiness, which is his Beauty and Glory, for then he would be no God ; but a Being of a contrary Character. Now as the Holiness of God had no Beginning, so by Consequence it can have no End ! Whereas on the Contrary the Beings of all Creatures, beginning with Time, or commencing in it, are Temporary ; and their Holiness, which could not exist before their Beings, must be of the like Kind : As it had a Beginning so it may have an End.

4thly.

4thly. *Immutable Holiness*: It is liable to no Change or Alteration, for the Reason aforesaid, *viz.* Because it is himself: And hence it is said, *Rev. xv. 4.* That *God only is Holy, i. e.* He is holy so as none else besides him is; the Moral Excellencies of Creatures are liable to manifold Change, yea they may be entirely Lost; witness the Apostacy of the Angels, and the fatal Fall of our first Parents. Hereby the Crown has fallen from our Heads, and we have come Short of the Glory of God!

5thly. *Transcendent Holiness, above all Degrees*: It being absolutely Perfect, can receive *no increase*: The Holiness of all created Beings amassed together, would be but as a Drop compar'd with the Infinite Ocean of Purity in God: But the *Holiness of all Creatures* is certainly *Gradual* on Earth, and possibly so in Heaven; for if the Saints and Angels increase in Knowledge, why may they not in Love, and other good Dispositions! Hence God is said to Charge his Angels with Folly, and that the Heavens are not clean in his Sight; by which, (by a Metonymy,) we may understand the Inhabitants of Heaven, whose *Holiness* when compar'd with God, may be call'd *Impurity!*

6thly, It is *Infinite Holiness*, it is without all Bounds, and is therefore term'd *Light* and *Love* it self. (I *Job. i. 5.* and *iv. 8.*)

Whereas the Angels, who seem to be the Purest of created Spirits, veil their Faces in the immediate Presence of God, as being ashamed of their comparative Deformity; while they behold that radiant Beauty and burnish'd Glory which appears with surprizing Blaze and venerable Majesty in the *Holiness* of God! But

2dly. The *declarative Holiness of God* has the following *Properties, viz.* It is 1st. Perfect, without the least Defect; Hence we are bid to be *the Sons of God without Rebuke,*

Phil. ii. 15. It is *sincere* without Deceit ; for God is not a Man, that he should *Lie*, or the Son of Man that he should *Repent*.

2dly. It is *Exemplary* : And hence we are bid to *imitate him, to be Holy as he is Holy ; to be Merciful as he is Merciful* : This demonstrates its superior Eminence ; for the common Maxim is just, that that which is the First and Best in every Kind, is the Rule and Measure of the Rest ! (*Primum et Optimum in unoquoque genere, est regula, & mensura ceterorum.*)

3dly. *Universal* : As God's *Holiness* is *diffus'd thro' all his Attributes within himself*, so it appears in his *Word*, and all his *Works without*, and that free from the least Intermision or Variation ; the Truth of which will appear under the next general Head of Discourse, *viz.* The

3d. *Propos'd*, which was to represent the *Manifestations* or *Discoveries of God's Holiness* : And here we may justly observe, with the *Psalmist* in General, That *God is Holy in all his Works*, (*Psal.* cxlv. 17.) But it is peculiarly Apparent in those following, *viz.*

1st. In his *eternal Decrees* respecting his People : God has therein from everlasting, purpos'd and secured upon a strong and impregnable Foundation, the *Holiness* of the Elect, and hence it is said, *Ephes.* i. 4. That *he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be Holy and without Blame before him !* 2 *The.* ii. 13, *Because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to Salvation, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit !* And

2dly. The *Holiness of God*, appears in the *Creation of Man*, in making him after his own Image in *Righteousness and Holiness*, (*Ephes.* iv. 25.) Tho' Man has since found out many Inventions to his Shame and Loïs ; yet, as *Solomon* observes, *he was made at first upright !* A perfect and universal

versal Rectitude crown'd the human Nature in its primitive State, together with a freedom of Will and Power to persevere therein ! God's Fore-knowledge and Purpose did not bereave Man of his Liberty of acting, or lay him under a natural Necessity of sinning ; for if so, then God would be the Author of Sin ; which is blasphemous to Imagine ! And was it not the Design of God in making the irrational and inanimate Parts of the Creation, that thereby intelligent Beings might be excited to admire and adore the Perfections of their Former, and conform to him ?

3dly. The *Holiness* of God appears in his Works of Providence, especially in his prescribing to intelligent Creatures a Law to direct them in his Service, and in enforcing that Law by proper Sanctions of the most *desirable Rewards* and *formidable Punishments* ! Hereby representing before them the unspeakable Advantages of his sincere Service, as well as on the Contrary, the dreadful Consequences of a Neglect thereof ! And has not Almighty God by his Providence, in some signal Instances, manifested his holy Displeasure against Sin, by executing upon Transgressors, the Threatnings annex'd to the Violation of his Law ? As the *Psalmist* observes, Psal. ix. 16. *The Lord is known by the Judgments which he executeth : The Wicked is snared in the Work of his own Hands* ! It is true, Judgment is not always speedily executed, and therefore the Hearts of the Sons of Men are fully set in them to do Evil ! And the Reason is, because the present State of Things, is a Time of Probation, and not of Recompence ; which shews the Necessity of a future Judgment, when a righteous God shall render Vengeance and Recompence ! However both Scripture and History inform us, of some dreadful Displays of divine Severity, against obstinate Transgressors, that the
World

World may know there is a God who detests their Impieties ! And

4thly. Has not the *Holiness of God had a most surprising Display in the Work of Redemption?* Rather than Sin should pass unpunish'd, did not the Almighty Father punish it in his own Son? His only begotten and eternally beloved Son! Did not his Sword awake against the Man that was his Companion? The darling of his Soul! And did he not afflict him with all the Waves of his intollerable Vengeance, which was due for the Sins of the elect World? Our dearest Lord trod the Wine Press of his Fathers Wrath alone!---- The Chastisement of our Peace was laid upon him, that thro' his Stripes we might be healed. Our Redeemer under the Agonies of Disertion for our Sins, refers to the Holiness of God therein made manifest, *Psal. xxii. 3. But thou art Holy O thou that Inhabitest the Praises of Israel!* And

5thly. God's *Holiness appears* in his *Works of divine Grace*, whereby he prepares his People here, for the Enjoyment of Himself hereafter. Hence effectual Calling, is term'd a *Holy Calling.* *2 Tim. i. 9.* And we are said to be called, *not unto Uncleaness, but unto Holiness.* *1 Thes. iv. 7.* And what is Regeneration, and Sanctification, but the renewing of the Image of God's Holiness in Man? And what is Glorification, ? Does it not in a degree consist in the perfecting of the aforesaid Image in the Redeem'd? Then that which is in part shall be done away, *Then shall our Lord present to himself, a Church holy and glorious, without Spot and Blemish.* *Eph. v. 27.* Again

2dly. *God discovers his Holiness in his Word*, every Page of which proclaims his Purity, and hence it is call'd *Holy*; by his Truth contain'd therein, *we are sanctified or made Holy.* (*John xvii. 17.*) *The Words of the Lord are pure Words, as Silver tried in a Furnace of Earth, purified seven Times.*

Pf. xii. 6. The Law of God is holy, and the Commandment just and Good. Rom. vii. 12. And no Wonder, for it is the Image of the divine Purity, a Transcript of the divine Nature, as far as it is imitable; hence it is likned to a Glass. Jam. i. In this we behold God and ourselves, For by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin. The Law of God, says the Psalmist, is perfect, converting the Soul. Pf. xix. 7. The Gospel is Holy, and hence it is call'd, a holy Covenant. (Luke i. 72.) The great Design of it, is to promote Holiness, by laying Men under more endearing and ingenuous Engagements there-to. And

3dly. God does not only *discover his Holiness in his Works and Word*; but also in his *Worship*; hence the *Ordinances of Worship, viz. The Sacraments are call'd Holy*, because they tend to promote Holiness, and likewise *the Time and Place of Worship, are call'd Holy*. God is said *to hallow the Sabbath (Ex. xx. 11.) The Temple of old was call'd Holy, and Holiness is said to become God's House forever. (Pf. xciii. v.) On this Account it is said to be the Place, where God's Honour dwells. (Pf. xxvi. 8.) The Ministers, and Attendants of Worship, are call'd Holy. Aaron was to wear on the Front of his Mitre, a Plate of Gold, with this Motto engraven on it, viz. Holiness to the Lord. Ex. xxviii. 36. The Angels, those Attendants of Worship, are call'd holy. Luke ix. 26. And is not Holiness the great Design, and Tendency of Religious Worship? And Hence is that Word of God to Moses and Aaron, Ex. x. 3. I will be sanctified in them, that come nigh me. But it is Time to proceed to some practical Uses. And*

1st. If God be Holy, as has been prov'd, then we may hence learn, that he cannot be the Author of Sin, which is so contrary to his Nature, or of any Doctrines that tend to promote it. Now the following Doctrines of the *Papists, Antinomians,*

Antinomians, and *Enthusiasts* are of this Sort, and therefore should be rejected with Abhorrence, *viz.*

1st. The Doctrine of Indulgencies, or Pardons for Sin. This was oppos'd by *Swinglius* in *Helvetia*, and by *Luther* in *Germany*, in the Year 1516. and being defended by Pope *Leo*, became the Occasion of the Reformation.

2dly. The Popish Distinction of Sins into Venial and Mortal. The Former they say do not deserve eternal Punishment, contrary to Scripture, (*Rom. vi. 23.*)

To those I might add their gainful Doctrine of Purgatory. And likewise their holding with the Pharisees of old, that the Law respects only outward Acts: Whereas the inward Principle from which those flow, is more corrupt than any Act that proceeds from it. As the aforesaid Doctrines are most absurd in themselves: For how can it be suppos'd with any Appearance of Reason, that any can forgive Sins, but that God against whom they are committed? I say as they are absurd in themselves, so they have a manifest Tendency to promote impiety, and therefore are not of God.

To the Former Catalogue, may be added some *Antinomian* Doctrines, which are not less unreasonable and perilous, *viz.* Justification from Eternity, or from the Time of Christ's Death. That the Law is no Rule of Life to Believers, that there is no need of Repentance under the Gospel; that Faith consists in such an Assurance, as is succeeded by no Doubts. That there is no preparative (of order) that goes before Faith. Those Doctrines open a Door to all Impiety. They directly tend to make Christ a Minister of Sin, and his Gospel an Instrument of Iniquity; and therefore cannot be from God. It is an Instance of the vilest Ingratitude, to draw from the Doctrine of free Forgiveness, an Argument against Repentance!

And indeed the *Arminian* Doctrine of Universal Redemption,

tion, has an awful Tendency to make Men secure in Sin. Of the like Nature is the Doctrine of all *Enthusiasts*, in opposing the stated Performance of Religious Duty. This, whatever false Guises is put upon it, tends to wear off the Sense of God and divine Things, and to prepare Men for Delusions in Principle and Iniquity in Practice. And

2dly. From what has been said, in the Explicatory Part of this Discourse, we should be induc'd to examine ourselves, in order to know whether we be truly Holy or not? Which we may know by an impartial comparing of ourselves, with what has been already deliver'd on this Subject, to which I shall add the following *Characters*, of true Holiness, which duly consider'd may assist the Examination of ourselves. And

1st. *True Holiness* is *Sincere*, it Eyes God more than Man, and aims at his Glory above all, in the general Course of Action. And herein it is like the Holiness of God himself, inasmuch as it aims at the same End with him. (*Mat. vi. 1,—6. 1 Cor. x. 31.*)

2dly. It is *internal chiefly*, as it begins in the Mind and Heart, so it takes more Care of that, than the Outside. (*Pf. li. 6.*) directly contrary to this were the Pharisees of old in their Practice. (*Mat. xxiii. 23.*)

3dly. It is *Evangelical*, proceeding chiefly from that Faith in CHRIST, which is of the Operation of God, and worketh by Love. As God's People receive Strength from CHRIST to perform Acts of Holiness, by a believing Dependence on him, so they are constrained or influenced by Love to him, to labour to be Holy. And their Attainments and Labours in Religion, are attended with a humble Sense of their own Imperfection. *Not as tho' I had already attain'd*, said holy Paul, *or were already perfect, but I press forward.* And

L I

4thly.

4th. True Holiness is *Universal*, and that both in regard of the *Subject* in which it is plac'd, and the *Object* about which it is *exercis'd*. The whole Soul in all its Powers, is in some Measure renew'd, the *Mind* is *enlightned*, the *Will bow'd*, the *Affections* in their general Bent, and in the highest degree are turn'd towards God. And both Soul and Body separated from the habitually governing Love of the World, and willingly devoted to God, together with all we possess, not reserving to ourselves any Thing with *Ananias*, and *Saphira*, and the young Pharisee. (*Rom. xii. 12. 1 Thes. v. 23.*) Some derive the Word *Holy* (*hagios*) from a Letter and a Word which signify to be void of Earth. Now as the *Subject* is universally alter'd, in respect of the whole Number of its Parts, so is the *Object* universal also. True Holiness includes in it, an Aversion not only to this or that impurity, with the Pharisees, but to all with every Appearance thereof. (*Tit. xi. 12. Jud. 23.*) And likewise an *Inclination to*, and *endeavour* after every good Work. *Job. xiii. 18.*

5thly *True Holiness* is *continual*, it endures to the End, such as have it, aim at, and labour for Growth in Goodness, and when they find not satisfactory Signs thereof, are griev'd!

Now all such *who* upon Examination find in themselves, the preceding Characters of Holiness, may take Comfort to their Souls, whatever Circumstances of Discouragement they may be in, from within or from without. And that for the following Reasons. 1st. Because it is not the Measure, but Truth of Grace that evidences our Sanctification. 2dly. Because our imperfect Holiness, is accepted thro' Christ, in whom we are compleat. *He is made of God to us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.* 3dly. He that has begun a good Work in us, has promised to carry it on, *to the Day of the Lord JESUS.* God is Holy and
the

the Fountain of all Holiness. God has promis'd to take away the *Stony Heart*, and give us a *Heart of Flesh*, to give us a *new Heart* and a *new Spirit*, and that he will cause us to walk in his Statutes; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 27. 4thly. What tho' we at Times are afflicted with our Corruptions, it is no more than the Saints of God have been before us! *Who is me*, saith Isaiah, for *I am a Man of polluted Lips*. Isa. vi. 5. Yea this is the Language of the Church. Jf. lxiv. 6. *But we are all as an unclean Thing and all our Righteousnesses, are as filthy Rags, and we all do fade as a Leaf, and our Iniquities, like the Wind have taken us away*. The Psalmist complains of the same Disease, and yet Hopes. Ps. lxxv. 3. *Iniquities prevail against me, as for our Transgressions, thou shalt purge them away*. And thus did the Apostle Paul. Rom. vii. 24. *Who shall deliver me from this Body of Sin and Death? But God will blot out our Iniquities, as a thick Cloud, and will remember our Sins no more*, Jf. xl. 22. . . CHRIST hath given himself for his Church, that he might sanctify it, by the washing of Water thro' the Word. Eph. v. 25, 26. And let us comfort ourselves with this, in all our Troubles, that he who now sanctify's us, will by and by glorify us, (Rom. viii. 30.)

But on the contrary all such as want the aforesaid Characters, are in a doleful Case! In the Gall of Bitterness and Bond of Iniquity. Such, so continuing, can have no Communion with a Holy God here, nor enjoy him hereafter. (1 Job. i. 6. --- Heb. xi. 14.) And especially how dismal is the Case, how impious the Course, of those who murmur at strictness in Religion, and deride Holiness. What do these in Effect, but rise up in Arms against God himself, while they practically deny his Holiness. The Language of their Practice is, that they would cause *the Holy One of Israel* to cease from among them. They would, if they could, destroy the divine Being; but by their impotent Malice, they will but

secure and heighten their own Ruin. But I proceed to a Use of Exhortation. From the Consideration of Gods Holiness, we should be exhorted, 1st. To glorify God on the Account of this divine Attribute after the Example of the Holy Angels. *Isa. vi. 3.*—2dly. Let us seek the Principles of Sanctification from God, in the earnest Use of all appointed Means, particularly by Meditation on its Excellency, and Necessity, by Prayer, reading and hearing the Word of God, and conversing with pious People. And 3dly. Let us exercise those Principles, in all Holiness of Conversation. Now we should be excited to Holiness, by the following Motives. 1st. God is Holy, yea Holiness itself, and Wills our Sanctification. 2dly. Holiness is his principal and universal Perfection, and therefore by the Study of Holiness we resemble God in his chief Excellency. 3dly. He who is Holy, is the Lord, or Jehovah, and so able to compensate the Labours we use to be like him. 4thly. He is our God, and so has given himself to us, and we ourselves to him in Covenant, and therefore we are bound to be Holy, both by Gratitude for his undeserved Love, & by our own Promise. 5thly. Holiness is exceeding excellent, it exalts and enables our reasonable Nature, by conforming it to the Divine. 6thly. It is as necessary as excellent, in a twofold respect viz. Both of *Command*, and *Mean*. As God enjoyns it by his sovereign Authority so it appears to be of absolute Necessity, from the very Nature of Things. For without Conformity to God, we can have no complacence in him, and so no Communion with him, either in this or a future World. And without Communion with God, there can be no Enjoyment of God. See *Heb. xii. 14.* 7thly. It is pleasant. *Solomon* justly observ'd, *That Wisdoms Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths Peace.* Hereby Fellowship with God is attain'd, which is the most sweet Entertainment; and

and our Hope of Glory confirm'd, which is the most supporting Prospect. 8thly. *Profitable.* (*Jer. ii. 31*) *Surely in serving God there is great Reward.* Farther what is the great Design of our eternal Election, next to the Glory of God, but that we should be Holy. *Eph. i.* And is not this the Scope of our Saviours Death, and of the Office of the Holy Spirit? Did not our Lord die *to purchase to himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works?* And to what Purpose, is our *effectual Calling*, but that *we should be holy in all manner of Conversation?* As a holy Conversation is pleasing to God, (*Prov. xi. 20.*) so it hath a noble Tendency, to promote his Kingdom among Men: Whereas the contrary dishonours God's Name, grieves the Hearts of the Godly, and hardens the Hearts of the Wicked. Is not the Design of all the Parts of God's Word, whteher Doctrinal, Historical, Perceptive, Promisory, Minatory, as well of the various Dispensations of Providence we meet with to promote Holiness? And are not all these lost to us, if this be not obtain'd, Afflictions and Comforts are lost? Yea and the Ordinances, are also lost to us. Our Profession and Prayers, yea and the Eyes of God, Men and Angels that are upon us, oblige us to be Holy. In this Way we may expect that God will be our Sun and Shield, and will give us Grace and Glory. *Amen.*

SERMON XIV.

DEUTERONOMY, XXXII. 4.

He is the Rock, his Work is Perfect: For all his Ways are Judgment: A God of Truth, and without Iniquity, Just and Right is he.

MOSESES introduces his Song in this Chapter with the most solemn and commanding Magnificence, and yet with the softest Charms of Language!

He summones the Attention of the inanimate Creation partly to reprove the Stupidity of *Israel*, and partly to bear Witness to the Truth of what he was about to deliver to them in the following Song, either for their Instruction or Warning, as well as to witness to the Justice and Equity of the divine Proceedings against that unhappy Nation! *Give Ear O Heavens and I will speak; and bear O Earth the Words of my Mouth!*

In the 2d Verse the devout Penman of this Song, wishes that the Instructions contain'd in it, may be refreshing to and effectual upon his beloved Nation, as the Rain and Dew upon the Earth, *my Doctrine shall drop as the Rain, my Speech shall distil as the Dew.*----These Words may be considered as a Prayer of *Moses*, as if he had said, *O! That it might do so;* thus Bishop *Patrick* understands the Words. In the next Verse he signifies his Intention to make known the Glory of God; and therefore excites them to *ascribe Greatness to him*; which Intention he performs in the Words
of

of our Text, wherein we have a Representation of the divine Glory and Greatness apparent in the Perfection of his Works, and equity of his Government, in a Variety of Particulars, viz. 1st. He is call'd a *Rock*, to signify the *Stability* of his *Nature*, the *Firmness* of his *Councils*, the *immutability* of his *Promises*, and *Almightiness* of his *Power*! In all which Respects he is a secure Shelter and unshaken Foundation for our Resort and Confidence.

2dly. His *Work is Perfect*, "His Work of Creation was so, all that he made in its original Constitution was very Good; his Works of Redemption and Providence shall be so when the Mystery of God is finished." God's Works are true, and cannot be blam'd, saith *Ainsworth* upon the Place, God never recalls his Councils, but perfects them. "God's Work is call'd Perfect, because he has fulfill'd what he promis'd to the Fathers."

3dly. All his Ways are Judgment, i. e. sayeth *Henry*, "the Ends of his Ways are all Righteous, and he is Wise in the Choice of the Means in order to those Ends," By God's Ways, we are to understand all Gods Providential Administrations towards intelligent Creatures, and by Judgment, Prudence, and Justice, (Hos. xlv. 9.)

4thly. He is a God of Truth, i. e. as Mr. *Pool* observes in his *Synopsis*, "Faithful in his Promises; whose Word we may depend upon, for he cannot Lie."

5thly. Without Iniquity, he is perfectly Free from all moral Blemish and Defect. "He deceives none that confides in him, and wrongs none that apply for Justice, and is hard upon none that cast themselves upon his Mercy."

6thly. Just and Right is he: God is Holy and Equal in his Distributions; as he is just in himself, so he is just in all his Dealings with Mankind, none can with Reason accuse him of Insincerity, Unrighteousness, or Levity.

Now

Now that *Attribute* or *Perfection* of God which is principally represented in our Text, by a beautiful variety of Expressions, is his *Justice*; this therefore is the Subject of our present Meditations. That God is *just*, the Scripture proves many Ways, particularly 1st. *Metaphorically* and *Figuratively*, when he is therein call'd a *consuming, Fire, an angry Lyon, a Man of War.* (*Deut. iv. 24. Isa. xxxviii. 13.*)

2dly. *Affectively*, by attributing to him *Zeal, Anger, Jealousy, Fury.* (*Num. xi. 10. Exo. xx. 5. xxxii. 10.*) The aforesaid Affections suppose *Justice* in Creatures, and tho' they be Passions in them, they are in God but an Act of *immutable Justice.*

3dly. *Effectively*, by shewing that he renders to every one according to his Works. (*1 Sam. xxvi. 23.*)

4thly. *Negatively*, by removing from him all Injustice, and Iniquity, all respect of Persons; and in a Word all the Causes and Effects of *Injustice.* (*Job. viii. 3.*) Doth God pervert *Judgment*, or doth the Almighty pervert *Justice*? (*Dan. ix. 14. Rom. iii. 4.*)

5thly. *Positively*, by affirming and extolling his *Justice* by calling him a *Revenger, Holy, Right.* (*Jer. xii. 1.*) *Psal. xi. 7, For the Righteous Lord loveth Righteousness, his Countenance doth behold the Upright.* To these we may add the Words of our Text, then which nothing can be more Full and Express, *He is a Rock, his Work is Perfect, for all his Ways are Judgment: A God of Truth, and without Iniquity, Just and Right is he:* And also that of the *Psalmist*, *Psal. cxix. 137. Righteous art thou O Lord, and upright are thy Judgments.*

And does not Reason confirm the same Truth? For 1st. If God be not Just, whence is there any *Justice*? Either there would be no *Justice* at all, or if there was any

any it would not proceed from God! Or if it did, it must proceed from one who had none; each of which Particulars is absurd. Besides

2dly. Inasmuch as the Lord is Governor of the whole Universe, he would degenerate into a Tyrant, if he was not Just. And

3dly. Seeing *Jehovah* is judge of all the Earth, how could he judge a right without being just himself? Neither can it be otherwise but that God should be just, seeing he is absolutely Perfect: All confess Justice to be an Excellency, involving no imperfection in it, and therefore it cannot be wanting to that Being, who is absolutely and infinitely Perfect!

In discoursing upon this divine *Attribute* of God's *Justice*, I purpose to consider its *Nature*, *Kinds*, *Properties*, *Displays*, and in the 5th Place to Answer some *Objections*, and then proceed to the Improvement. And

1st. *Justice* in its general Nature may be said to be an *Agreement with Right and Rule*: It is oppos'd to Crookedness and Obliquity, by which any Thing declines from its proper Rule. Crookedness in Morals is the same with Sin; which the Apostle *John* calls a *Transgression of the Law*. 1 *John* iii. 4. Or as the original Word, *Anomia*, may be rendered a Being without the Law, or a wandering from the Law. *Justice* does therefore coincide with Rectitude or Uprightness, *Ecle*. vii. 29. *Lo this only I have found that God hath made Man Upright*:---So that Justice includes two Things in it especially, *viz.* *Right*, and an *Agreement with that Right*, 1st. I say it includes *Right* or that which belongs to every one, *Luk*. xx. 25. *Render therefore unto Cæsar the Things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the Things that are God's*. *Rom*. i. 32. *Knowing the Judgment of God that they that do such Things are worthy of Death*.---It

is from this *Right* that the very Name of *Justice* is deriv'd,
And

2dly. It includes an *Agreement with this Right*; and in this the Form of *Justice* consists: And the Contrary to this *viz.* A Disagreement from Right, constitutes the Form of Injustice. From this general Description it is evident that Justice admits of no Degrees, for a Thing either agrees with the Rule of Right or not, if the Former, it is Just, if the Latter, it is Unjust.

Undoubtedly the *Justice of God*, as well as of Creatures consists in an Agreement with Right, but with this difference, that the Creatures have their Rule of Right prescrib'd by another; whereas the divine Nature is a Rule of Right to the Almighty. But let me pass to the

2d. Propos'd, which was to speak of the *Kinds of Justice*:

And here it may be observ'd that Justice may be considered under a threefold View, *viz.* As relating to God's *Will, Word, and Deeds*. And 1st. *Justice*, as it relates to the *Will* of God, is thus describ'd by *Wendeline*, *viz.* "That it is that whereby God is just in himself and without himself gives to every one their own by a constant Will." "Justice in Man, sayeth Mr. Leigh, is a settled Will, to do Right in every Thing to every Person." Thus God hath a settled Will to do Right, shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right? This constant Will of God, to render to every one his own, Coincides with the divine Essence, and may be call'd *his essential Justice*, and is no other but the essential Rectitude of his Nature. And that *Justice of God*, which respects his *Words and Deeds*, may be call'd his *declarative or relative Justice*; because it is a Manifestation of the Former, and respects the Transactions of God with Creatures.

But 2dly. The *Justice of God*, as it relates to his *Words*, is call'd, *Truth, Faithfulness and Constancy*; because it agrees

grees with the Rectitude of his Nature to speak so and no otherwise. Faithfulness may be well call'd *Justice*; because it is a doing Justice to his Word.

3dly. The *Justice of God*, as it respects his *Deeds*, is twofold, viz. Of *Dominion* and *Jurisdiction*. And 1st. God's *Justice of Dominion*, or, as some Divines term it, *his disposing Justice*, is that whereby *Jehovah*, as the sole Monarch and supream Lord of all, disposes and governs every Thing in a just Order; and in Particular he disposes his own Actions, according to the Rule of Equity, requiring and prohibiting nothing but what is fit for intelligent Creatures, in right Reason to do and forbear. In a Word this Justice of Dominion consists in governing reasonable Creatures, agreeable to the original Rectitude of their Natures.

2dly. God's *Justice of Jurisdiction*, consists in prescribing to reasonable Creatures their proper due, and in governing them accordingly: And this the Almighty doth by three Things, 1st. By prescribing *Laws*, which are Rules tending to direct Mankind in their Duty to God and Man, agreeable to his own Sanctity, attended with Rewards and Punishments. Jam. iv. 12. *There is one Law-giver who is able to save and to destroy.*

2dly. By establishing his Laws by proper *Sanctions* of Rewards and Punishments promis'd and threatn'd. (*Deut.* xxx. 15.) Now the Sanction consists in Promises and Threatnings. And

3dly. By *fulfilling the Sanction*, and that both as to the Reward and Punishment, the former is call'd *Remunerative*, and the latter *Vindictive*. And 1st. "*The Remunerative Justice of God, is a most ready Will to perform Gods Promises.*" as *Wendline* observes. When God rewards the Obedience of his Creatures with a free Reward, proceeding from his own pure and abounding Goodness, not for any

Worth or Condignity in his Peoples Works, as the *Papists* vainly Dream ; but for the Sake of his gracious Promise, by which he makes himself a Debtor to them, Rom. ii. 6. 7, 8. *Who will render to every Man according to his Deeds ; to them who by patient Continuance in Well-doing, seek for Glory, and Honour and Immortality, eternal Life : But to them that are Contentious and do not obey the Truth, Indignation and Wrath.* Luke xvii. 10. *When we have done all that is commanded, we must say, that we are unprofitable Servants, we have done that which was (but) our Duty to do.* Rom. xi. 35, 36. *Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again ? For of him, and thro' him, and to him are all Things.* Altho there be no intrinsic Worth in Man's Obedience, to merit the Glory or Reward promised, yet God having promised it to the Creature, and having a Right and Power to confer it, it is just and right in him to perform his own Word. And certainly he would wrong his Truth if he did not. When Happiness in Scripture is represented as a reward, it is only to encourage or excite to Obedience, by shewing the inseparable Connection between Grace wrought in us, and Glory conferr'd upon us : It cannot intend any merit in our Works ; for if we ourselves be less than the least of God's Mercies, then the best Actions put forth by us must be so : For as Doctor *Ridgely* observes, "*The Action cannot have more Honour ascrib'd to it than the Agent.*" Being God's Creatures we have deriv'd all from him, and consequently can offer him no more than his own. And Being corrupt Criminals, our Services are Defective, and so cannot merit Good at the Hand of God ; nay on the Contrary, for our Transgressions we merit his Wrath. And therefore in respect of us, the Reward of Happiness is wholly Gracious ; but indeed in Respect of Christ, who has fully answered the Demands of Law for his People

ple, by his Obédience and Suffering, and thereby according to the Covenant Transaction between his Father and him, compleatly purchas'd for them everlasting Life, it may be call'd an *Act of divine Justice*. Hence it is said Rom. ii. 26. *That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus.* But

2dly, The *Vindictive Justice of God*, is the Almighty's Will, to execute the Threatnings of his Law upon Transgressors, by punishing or inflicting on them Evils of suffering equal to their Crimes: This is call'd *Wrath, Hatred, Revenge and Judgment*. It is likewise term'd *God's visiting Iniquity*, (Jer. 5. 9.) *His setting his Face against a Person*, (Lev. xvii. 10.) Its call'd *the Fire of God's Jealousie*, and those that are expos'd to it, are said *to fall into the Hands of the living God*. Some Divines use the Terms of rewarding and Revenging Justice, instead of Remunerative and Vindictive.

But here I would have it observ'd, that there is a less proper Sense in which the Word *Punishment* is used in Scripture. Thus when God corrects his People with his Rod, this is often call'd *Punishment*. (Psal. lxxxix. 30, 33). And hence they are said *to bear the Indignation of the Lord, because they have sinned against him*. Mic. vii. 9. These Afflictions are call'd *Punishments*, because occasion'd by Sin, and afflictive to Sense: But they are not inflicted by God as a Judge, with any Demand of Satisfaction, for that was made by CHRIST, for those that believe in him; and surely it is contrary to the Nature of divine Justice, to require a double Satisfaction for the same Crimes! No! the Afflictions of God's People spring from his Fatherly Love to them, and are sent either to prevent or correct sinful Disorders. By these the Almighty humbles his People, by shewing them the Desert of their Impieties; and by these he brings
them

them nearer to himself, and deadens them more to a vain World, and all it's varnish'd but empty Entertainments! Afflictions are the Medicines which the great Physician Uses to cure his People's manifold Disorders.

But that what has been said, concerning the Nature of divine Justice, may be farther explain'd and illustrated, let these Things following be considered. 1st. That Justice among Men is Two-fold, viz. Either *Commutative* or *Distributive*. *Commutative*, respects Trade and Bargains among equals, and consists in observing the Rules of Equity and Right therein. *Distributive*, is that which is exercis'd by a Superior towards his Inferiors, and consists in the Conformity of their Administrations to rule and law, and therefore comprizes these four Things in it, viz. 1st. A *Law* to which the Acts of Government should be conform'd. A Law, says *Maresius*, "*Est faciendorum & fugiendorum norma, sub Ratione præmii et Pænæ. i. e.* It is the Rule of Things to be done and avoided, on Consideration of a Reward or Punishment." All Justice and especially *Distributive*, has respect to a Law; this is the Foundation on which it is Built, and Rule according to which it must be squar'd and accommodated.

Now the Law that is the Ground and Foundation of Justice among Men, must have the following Characters, viz. 1st. It must be bottom'd upon natural Equity, upon the Nature, Relation and Reason of Things: Otherwise it will be a crooked Rule, and so unworthy of Observation. No human Authority can alter the intrinsic Goodness and Badness of Things; and therefore bad Laws (in a moral Sense) are but a recommending and enforcing Iniquity by human Authority. And 2dly. The Law must be enacted by *competent Power* and Authority; because Legislation, as well as the Execution thereof, are Acts of Government, which

which those that exercise should have a Right so to do, either originally or by Delegation : The Contrary to which tends to open a Scene of Confusion and Blood. And hence it is well observ'd by some, that however just any Act of Government be in itself, yet it is unjust for those to meddle with it that have no Right thereto, *e. g.* For a Judge to condemn one Guilty of a Capital Crime to Death is Just ; but for a private Person divested of Authority to do it, is Murder !

And 3dly. The *Law* must be *promulgated* that it may be known ; *for where there is no Law there is no Transgression.* Rom. iv. 15. But the

2d. Particular that Civil Justice, or Justice among Men includes, is *Conformity* to the Law in all Administrations. When a Judge doth this, in all his Enquiries and Examinations respecting Cases brought before him, he does his Duty, and otherways he perverts the Ways of Judgment. It is this Kind of Justice among Men, that is an Emblem or Shadow of the Justice of God, and therefore I have so long discours'd upon it ! But to shew the Similitude, let me add a few Words more, and enquire what is God's Declarative or Relative Justice, but his Conformity to the Law, he has given his Creatures in his Transactions with them. Here observe. 1st. That the Law which God gave to Man to direct him in his Service is grounded on natural Equity, or the nature and reason of Things ; which appears by the Harmony of its Precepts among themselves, and their direct Tendency to promote the Glory of God, and make the Creature happy in his Service. The Contraries to which tend to dishonour God, debase our intelligent Nature, and destroy our Happiness. The moral Law is but a Transcript of the divine Nature as far as it is imitable. And hence is the Apostles just commendatory Encomium concerning it. *Rom. vii. 12.* *Wherefore the Law is Holy, and the Commandment Holy, and Just*

just and Good. And 2dly. That God had Authority to enact Laws, appears evidently from his creating all. As his infinite and eternal Excellency makes him worthy of absolute Sovereignty and Dominion, so his producing all by his Almightyness, gives him an irrefragable Right thereto. Human Power is deriv'd, delegated and limited, but his is Original and Absolute. And 3dly. Almighty God having annex'd the Sanction of Rewards and Punishments to the Law he has given his Creatures: His Truth stands engag'd to execute the same upon suitable Objects; which is likewise necessary to answer the Design of Government. This Execution therefore of the Sanction of the Law, or conformity thereto, in the Dealings of God with his Creatures, is his declarative Justice, and with this even all his Acts of Sovereignty do really harmonize; which appears by considering,

3dly. The Properties of divine Justice, which are these following, *viz.*

1st. Divine Justice is *impartial, with him is no Respect of Persons* in Judgment. *2 Cor. v. 10. For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of CHRIST, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to that he hath done whether it be Good or Bad.* Justice will nor spare for the sake of the Multitude, Greatness, or Nearness of the Guilty. Did not *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* perish by Fire, & was not the whole Antidiluvian World drowned with Water? And what vast Multitudes of People may we suppose did the aforesaid Cities, together with *Zeboim* and *Adma* contain? And how much more the whole World before the Flood; and yet all were destroy'd by a suddain and terrible Ströak of divine Justice. And when the Angels, those Spirits of excelling Dignity, sinned, did not divine Justice cast them into an Abyfs of Woe? And does it not still confine them in Chains of Darknes,

to

to the Judgment of the great Day? When *Adam* our federal Head, had transgressed the Covenant, was he not banished from that Paradise of Pleasure he before possess'd, and kept out of it by a flaming Sword. Divine Justice scatters Kings as Snow in *Salmon*; and before its adverse Edge their pompous Armies *flee apace!* (*Pf.* lxxviii. 12, 14.) And were not *Moses* and *David* tho' so near and dear to God punished with awful Severity? Hence is that solemn and Soul affecting Saying of the Prophet, *Amos* iii. 1, 2. *Hear this Word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O Children of Israel!--- You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth, therefore I will punish you, for all your Iniquities.* But divine Justice is

2dly. *Universal*, so that not one Sin can escape severe Punishment, either in the Sinner or Surety. *Gal.* iii. 10. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things, that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.*

3dly. Divine Justice is *inexorable*, no Importunities can alter its Course. When once a Sinners Season of Mercy expires, *Jehovah* refuses to be intreated. *Ezek.* xiv. 18, 20. *Tho' Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, As I live saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither Son or Daughter, they shall but deliver their own Souls by their Righteousness.* This is twice repeated in that Chapter to shew the Infallible Certainty, and unspeakable Importance of the Truth delivered. The Almighty cannot be corrupted or brib'd. But that which farther confirms this awful Truth, is the

4th. Propos'd. *viz.* The Displays of divine Justice; and here to be as brief as I can, I shall only mention two Instances thereof. The First of which, was the Sufferings our LORD endur'd, when he stood in a Sinners Room and Place: How unspeakable were the Tortures he endur'd in his sacred Body, every Part of which was put to exquisite Pain.

Deep Furrows were made in his sacred Back by cruel Scourges, and his beauteous Face expos'd to contemptuous Blows, yea to Shame and Spitting, by the insulting Herd, his venerable Temples were pierc'd by Thorns, his Side and Heart by a Spear, the whole Weight of his Body, hung upon a few Sinewy and sensible Parts in his Crucifixion, and his Name was treated with the greatest Ignominy and Scorn. But as Mr. *Flavel* justly observes, "*The Soul of our Lord's Sufferings was his Sufferings in his Soul.*" When he who knew no Sin, was made Sin for us. His Soul was made an Offering for Sin, his Soul became sorrowful even unto Death. How unconceiveable must be the Anguish, which our LORD endur'd in his Soul, when at one Instant of Time, that whole Weight of Distress and Pain, which was due to divine Justice, for all the Sins of the elect World was laid upon it? And in the mean Time deserted by the Father in respect of his comfortable Presence. This press'd a Bloody Shower from all the Pores of our LORD'S Body in the Garden of *Getsemane*. This extorted that Heart-rending Out-cry on the Cross, *Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani? My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* No wonder the Earths Foundations trembled, and the Dead awoke out of their long and silent Slumbers, and the Sun himself, that glorious Orb of Light and Beauty, put on a funeral Robe of Darkneſs and Obscurity, to testify their Surprize and Sorrow on so awful an Occasion, and to compleat the Train of Mourners. But!

2dly. The vindictive Justice of God, has a dreadful Display in the Torments of the Damned, who are punish'd with everlasting Destruction, from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power. As the Damned are depriv'd of all the Honours and Comforts of the Heavenly Paradise. As they are burnt in a Lake of Fire, which is kindled by the
Breath

Breath of God, as by a River of Brimstone ! So their intolerable Tortures by God's inflam'd Jealousy, by their own guilty Consciences, by wicked Men and Devils, will know no Intermiſſion and no End. The ſmoke of their Torments ascendeth up for ever and ever. But I haſten to the

5th. Propoſ'd, which was to answer ſome Objections offered againſt the Juſtice of God. And

1ſt. It is objected by the *Socinians*, that according to our Doctrine God, puniſh'd the Innocent in the Room of the Guilty, namely our Saviour in the Place of Sinners.

Anſ. *Tho' our Saviour was perſonally innocent, yet he was with his own Conſent, and by his Fathers Imputation, guilty. And hence he is ſaid to be made Sin for us, he willingly became the Sinners Surety, and ſo assumed their Guilt, in order to ſatisfy for it, and ſave them from Ruin, and to a willing Perſon who had a Right to diſpoſe of his own Life, eſpecially ſeeing ſo valuable an End was answered by it, as the Salvation of Sinners, no Injury was done, by his Father in putting him to Death.*

2dly. It is Objected that God ſometimes puniſhes the Sins of the Parents in their Children. *Ex. xx. 5.*

Anſ. *God never puniſhes the Sins of the Parents in innocent Children. As to the Sin of Adam he being the federal Head, or covenant Representative of his whole Offspring, they ſinned in him. Hoſ. vi. 7. But they like Adam (as the Words ſhould be rendred) have tranſgreſſed the Covenant. Rom. v. 12. Wherefore as by one Man Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin, and ſo Death paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned (i. e. in Adam) And as to the Sins of private Parents, they are not puniſh'd in Children, unleſs they be propenſe to them, or imitate them.*

3dly. It is objected that God is a Reſpecter of Perſons in the Affair of Predeſtination, by diſpenſing unequal Things:

to those that were in an equal State, choosing one, and rejecting another, without any Reason but his own Pleasure.

Anf. To respect Persons, is when in Matters of Judgment, equal Things according to Law and Right are due to several Persons, and yet we dispense unequal: But this is not the Case with the Almighty. Who hath given to him, sayeth the Apostle, and it shall be repay'd, for of him are all Things. Rom. xi. 36. As to God's Grace, he owes it to no Creature as such. He is Lord of his own Treasures, and may do with his own what he pleases. Rom. ix. 18, 21. And therefore such as Favour the Objection, do but reply against God, as the Apostle there observes. Predestination is but an immanent Act of God, which produces nothing without himself, and consequently dispenses neither Good nor Evil, tho' it be the Pattern according to which his Providence dispenses all Things in Time. But if we consider God's Providence, which dispenses Salvation and Damnation, that does not confer unequal Things upon those that are equal. But it confers unequal Things upon those that are unequal, viz. Believers and Unbelievers. For CHRIST'S Sake Salvation to the Former, and for Sins Sake, Damnation to the Latter. If a Prince of a Number of Rebels, who all according to Law deserve Death, purposes and passes an Act of Pardon upon some to shew his Clemency, and lets the Law take place upon others to shew his Justice, where is the Wrong? And that is the Case, for God in his Purposes look'd upon Men as fallen, and meriting his Displeasure, he might have left the whole Race to perish for their Sins with the Devils, who after their Fall had never an offer of Mercy. And because Jehovah has chosen some, when he might have condemned all, shall our Eye be Evil because God is Good?

4thly. It is objected that God suffers the Wicked to prosper, and the Pious to be afflicted and oppressed.

Anf.

Ans. *This World is a Time of Probation, and not of Repompence. The Scales will turn at the Conclusion of this short Scene, this transient Drama! Besides the Miseries of God's People are necessary Physick to cure their Maladies, to which End they are sanctified by the Spirit of God. Rom. viii. 29. They are also at Times sweeten'd with the Love of CHRIST, and shall soon expire, and then an everlasting Sabbatism shall commence. Whereas on the contrary, the abus'd Prosperity of the Wicked, tends but to secure and encrease their Destruction. But it is Time to proceed to the Improvement. And*

1st. This Subject speaks *Terror*, to all Ungodly and Christless Sinners of every Kind. How deplorable is their Case, *Who must drink of the Wine of the Wrath of the Almighty, which is pour'd out without mixture into the Cup of his Indignation? O!* Let the Secure and Impenitent Transgressor, think on the following Particulars, 1st. That God upon the Account of his Justice and Judgments, is call'd the *Great and dreadful God*, Dan. ix. 4. likewise *migbty and terrible*. Deut. vii. 22. *With God, sayeth Job, is terrible Majesty*, Job .xxxvii. 22. 2dly. That *the Wages of every Sin is Death*, and that you have been guilty of a prodigious Multitude, attended with awful Agravaions: Sins against Light & Love, against Law and Gospel, Mercy, and Judgments, your Iniquities for Number rival the Stars, & for Agravaion are red as Crimson. And 3dly. That the Justice of God will not, cannot pass by one of them, except ye repent; but will surely Proportion Pains equal to all their Number and Heinoufness. For as has been observ'd, it is *impartial, universal, inexorable*. And now seeing every Imagination of the Thoughts of your Hearts have been since your Birth till now, only evil continually, and all your Words and Actions evil. *For a corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit, neither can he that is in the Flesh please God.* How dreadful must that Wrath be which is proportion'd to them all? Surely

Surely it is 1st. *Incomprehensible Wrath*; the most fearful Imagination cannot fully represent it by its most gloomy Ideas, Psa. xc. 11. *Who knoweth the Power of thine Anger, even according to thy Fear, so is thy Wrath.* 2dly. *It's unavoidable Wrath.* If we take the morning Wings and flee to the utmost Ends of the Earth, lo there God's allseeing Eye will discern us, and his righteous Arm arrest us. If we ascend the Top of Carmel, or descend into the Depths of the Ocean, or seek to conceal ourselves with the Curtains of obscurity, darkness and retirement! Even then our Persons and Purposes will be open to the all penetrating Eye of God! For the *Darkness is as the Light to him, and the Night shines as the Day!* Sinners ye cannot escape by *Policy*, for God is Infinite in Wisdom; nor by *Power*, for he is Infinite in Strength, as *Job* observes, ix. 4. *He is Wise in Heart and Mighty in Strength, who hath hardened himself against God and prospered?* Nor can ye escape by *Flight*, for *Jehovah* is Omnipresent. 3dly. It is *eternal Wrath*, (Mat. xxv. ult.) It will continue as long as God endures, never, never, never shall it know a Period! O this gives it a dreadful and heart rending Accent! And 4thly. It is *intollerable Wrath*. If the Redeemer, who was personally Innocent and supported by the Godhead, cry'd so dolorously under this Wrath: How can your Hands be strong or your Hearts endure, when a Jealous God deals with you, and pours out the Vials of his unmix'd Wrath upon you, who are full of real and crimson Guilt, and shall have none to succour you! And do you think that that just God, who spared not his own beloved Son, when he but stood in Sinners Place, but smote him dead by the Sword of his Justice, and made all the Waves of his Almighty Vengeance beat upon him, and roll over him, will spare you who are cover'd all over with real and Scarlet Guilt? No! Friends, *be not deceived, God is not* mock'd

mock'd, that which a Man sows that shall be also reap; he that sows to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption! The Intollerableness of the divine Wrath, Anger and Hatred, as well as its terribleness, is represented in Scripture by a variety of bold and dreadful Images of thought! I shall mention a few of them, and in the Name of the great God, charge the ungodly to think upon them. Deut. xxxii. 22, 23. *For a Fire is kindled in my Anger, and shall burn to the lowest Hell, and shall consume the Earth with her increase, and set on Fire the Foundations of the Mountains. I will heap Mischiefs upon them, I will spend my Arrows upon them.* Job. ix. 5, 6, 7. *Which removeth the Mountains and they know it not, which overturneth them in his Anger. Which shaketh the Earth out of her Place, and the Pillars thereof Tremble. Which commandeth the Sun and it riseth not, and sealeth up the Stars.* Psa. xi. 6. *Upon the Wicked be shall rain Snares, Fire and Brimstone, and a horrible Tempest, this shall be the Portion of their Cup.* Elsewhere Jehovah threatens to wound the hairy Scalp of the Wicked, and to tear them in Pieces when there shall be none to deliver them. That he will tear and go away (Hos. v. 14.) That he will be to them as a Lyon and as a Leopard, and meet them as a Bear bereav'd of her Whelps, devour them like a Lyon, and rent the Caul of their Heart, Hos. xiii 8. And with what Magnificence and Grandeur of Diction, does the Prophet Nahum speak upon this solemn Subject? Nahum i. 2,---7. *God is Jealous; and the Lord Revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is Furious; The Lord will take Vengeance on his Adversaries; and he reserveth Wrath for his Enemies.---And will not at all acquit the Wicked, the Lord bath his Way in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm, and the Clouds are the Dust of his Feet. He rebuketh the Sea and maketh it Dry, and dryeth up all the Rivers. Bashan languisheth, and Carmel and the Flower of Lebanon*

banon languisheth. *The Mountains quake at him, and the Hills melt, and the Earth is burnt at his Presence; yea the World and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his Indignation, and who can abide in the Fierceness of his Anger? His Fury is pour'd out like Fire, and the Rocks are thrown down by him!*

Now as the Consideration of God's Justice and Wrath, Ministers *Terror* to all the ungodly in General, so especially and particularly to these following. viz: 1st. *Epicures*, who indulge a sensual Security, and put the Evil Day far from them. Surely such treasure up to themselves Wrath, against the Day of Wrath, and the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God! Surely the Day of the Lord will be to them, as the Prophet expresseth it, *cruel with Wrath and fierce Anger!* (*Isa. xiii. 9.*) And 2dly. *All unjust Persons*: who are guilty of Fraud in Contracts and Dealings with Men, or respecting of Persons in Judgment (*Jer. xxii. 13*): *Woe to him that buildeth his House by Unrighteousness, and his Chambers by Wrong.*—*Psal lxxxii. 2, 5.* 3dly. *All Hypocrites*, such as are unjust to God and their own Souls, they cover their inward Injustice with an outward shew of Piety, such are an Abomination to God, and may expect to be cut asunder by the Sword of *divine Justice*. (*Mat. 24. ult.*) 4thly. *All Murmurers*, who call in Question the Justice of God in his Judgments, and kick with the Heel against the most High, under Frowns of Providence. For this the whole Congregation of *Israel* fell in the Wilderness, and never saw *Canaan*, two excepted. (*Num. xiv. 27,--30.*) Now the Use that I would advise poor graceless Sinners of every Age and Order, to make of the Justice of God, is to be excited by it to fly to Christ for Security and Defence. *He is a hiding Place from the Wind, and a Covert from the Storm,* (*Isa. 23.*) *He was made Sin for us, that we might be made*

made the Righteousness of God in him: In him God the Father has declared his Righteousness, (*Rom. iii. 25.*) And him he is willing to make Righteousness to such as accept of him: (*1. Cor. i. 30.*) Well seeing divine Justice must be satisfy'd for the Wrong done by our Offences, either by us or a surety in our Place, or else we must perish eternally: Then seeing we ourselves cannot satisfy, because we are poor, imperfect and finite Creatures, let us hasten to Christ and receive him by Faith, as the Gospel offers him, that so we may be justified by Faith, and securely rest on and rejoice in that JESUS, who has fulfilled the Righteousness of the Law for his People. (*Rom. viii. 3.*) But

2dly. This Subject speaks Comfort to all Believers in every of their Troubles: For from this they may see that they are afflicted less then their Iniquities deserve, that a Fathers Love is the Spring of them, who chastens them, lest they should be condemned with the World: And particularly we may draw Comfort from this Subject, under Calumnies and Wrongs, when we think that we have a Witness in Heaven, a just Judge there, who will uphold us in a good Cause, and reward us according to our Righteousness, and make it sooner or later to *shine forth as the Light, and our Judgment as the Noon Day, Psal. xxxvii. 6.* yea in Troubles of Conscience God's Justice yields Support, when we consider that it was once satisfy'd by our Lord, and that it is contrary to its Nature to require a double Satisfaction. Hence is the Apostles Query, *Rom. viii. 34. Who is he that condemneth, it is CHRIST that dyed.*

But there are these following Duties, which from the Consideration of divine Justice, we should be exhorted to perform, *viz.*

1st. That we beware of depending upon our own Righteousness, upon the one Hand with the *Pharisee*, (*Luk. xviii.*

11.) And of the Neglect of Duty on the other with the Sluggard, whose Hands refuse to labour; *for without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* Heb. xii. 14. 2dly. Let us walk with humble Reverence and Child-like fear before the Righteous God, as with a consuming Fire, avoiding every Appearance of Evil, and continually in all our religious Service, eyeing JESUS the Mediator and Intercessor, who is only able to cover their Defects, and render them acceptable to his Father by his abundant Righteousness. In whom alone we are compleat and safe from every impending Storm: For when in him, the flaming Sword of divine Justice, which before kept us out of Paradise, guards and assists our Entrance into it! And

3dly. Let us glorify God on the Account of his Justice of every Kind, whether *Essential* or *Declarative*, *Governing*, *Judicatory*, *Legislative*, *Remunerative*, or *Vindictive*; for transcendent Beauty shines therein. Let us say with the *Psalmist*, Ps. lxxxix. 24. *Justice and Judgment are the Habitation of thy Throne.* And with *Paul*, Rom. xi. 33. *O the Depth of the Riches of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, his Judgments are unsearchable, and his Ways past finding out!* Such is the Strictness of divine Justice in all his Proceedings, that it is compar'd to Mountains and to the Abyss, Ps. xxxvi. 6. *Thy Righteousness is as the great Mountains thy Judgments are a great Deep.* And let us join with the Inhabitants of Heaven in celebrating the Justice of God, Rev. xix 1. 2. *And after these Things I heard a great Voice of much People, in Heaven, saying Haleluja, Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power unto the Lord our God, for true and Righteous are his Judgments.*

In fine, Let us labour to imitate the Justice and Righteousness of God, by seeking the Righteousness of CHRIST to our Justification, in the manner before expressed. Also by seeking

seeking the Inherent Righteousness which it pleased God at first to implant in our Natures by Creation (*Eccles. vii. 29.*) which we have lost by Sin. I say let us fervently and frequently cry to God by humble Supplications, in the Name of CHRIST, that he would be pleased to implant or infuse into our Souls, by Regeneration, the Habits or Principles of that Righteousness: And having the same implanted, let us exercise them in our whole Practice, 1st. *Towards God*, by rendering to him his Due, *viz.* our selves, and all that Honour, Love, Trust and Service which he requires in his Word. And 2dly. *Towards our Neighbour*, In all Matters of Government, Judgment and Commerce, ruling without Oppression, judging without respect of Persons, and dealing without Fraud, Falshood or Imposition. And 3dly. *Towards ourselves*, in a right Improvement of the Seasons of Mercy, thereby securing our Salvation. And also in not suffering ourselves to be wronged in our temporal Interest. A great Part of the Image of God and Beauty of Religion, consists in Justice; and as the Blessing of God rests upon such here, so they shall receive from the just Judge of Heaven and Earth, a Crown of Righteousness hereafter, which shall never fade away. That this may be the Happy Lot of us all, may God grant for CHRIST Sake. *Amen.*

SERMON

SERMON XV.

HOSEA. iii. 5.

And shall fear the Lord, and his Goodness, in the latter Days.

AFTER the Prophet had in the Preceding Verses, represented the bad Characters of the People of *Israel*, under the Similitude of an adulterous Wife, as well as the low Condition, they should be reduc'd to on this Account, by their Captivity and other Instances of God's controversy with them: He in the Words of our Text, prophesies of a blessed Reformation; that should be wrought upon them *in the latter Days*.

By the *latter Days* we are to understand the Days of the *Messiah*, or the Time of the Gospel Dispensation, and probably the latter Part of this Time: Then we are told, that the Jews should reverence God, *because of his Goodness*. We must admire and adore the Goodness of God, as *Moses* did when this Name was proclaimed. (*Ex. xxxiv. 6.*) “*And* “*fear the Guilt of unkind Returns.*” The Consideration of God's Goodness, should make us afraid of offending him, which so grossly violates the Laws of Gratitude. And hence the Psalmist observes, *that there is Forgiveness with God, that he may be fear'd.* *Pf. cxxx. 4.* This Prophecy had its Accomplishment in the early Times of the Gospel, when thro' the Blessing of God, upon the Ministry of the Apostles,

great Numbers both of Jews and Gentiles were brought to believe in JESUS. And hereby to fear God, because of his *Goodness*, more especially apparent in the Redemption of Mankind, by the Sufferings and Obedience of the Son of God the spiritual *David*! But some do probably (at least) expect a farther Accomplishment of this Prophecy, in Time coming, agreeable to the Words of the Apostle, *When the Fullness of the Gentiles is brought in, then all Israel shall be saved.*

In discoursing upon this Text, I shall

I. Speak upon the *Goodness of God*, And

II. Upon the *Fear of God*. And then proceed to the Improvement.

That God is truly and supremely Good, the sacred Scriptures Testify various Ways, *viz.* 1st. *Effectively*, when it asserts that all the Works of God are good. *Gen. i. 31. And God saw every Thing that he had made and behold it was very good.*

2dly. *Figuratively*, when it commemorates and commends the Riches of his Goodness. (*Rom. ii. 4.*)

3dly. *Negatively*, When it denies that there is any Evil in him. *Pf. xcii. 15. He is my Rock and there is no Unrighteousness in him. (Deut. xxxii. 4.)*

4thly. *Affirmatively*, by expressly, asserting his Goodness. *Pf. xxv. 8. Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach Sinners in the Way.*

And Reason likewise confirms the same Truth, by asserting 1st. That God is a Being, and therefore Good: For *Being* and *Good* are concertible Terms among Philosophers: Yea that he is the first and chief Being, and therefore the first and chief Good. And 2dly. By asserting that God is perfect, and therefore desirable and communicative, in which the Sum of Goodness consists. Besides as God is the Author of all that Good that is in
Creatures

Creatures, (for none of them has his Goodness of himself.) So he contains all the Kinds of Good in him, *viz.* Pleasant, profitable, honest. In respect of *pleasant Good*, the Psalmist bids us *taste and see that he is good*, Pf. xxxiv. And he tells us *that in his Presence is fullness of Joy, and at his Right Hand Pleasures for ever more*, Pj. xvi. 11. In respect of *profitable Good*, he diffuses his Kindness among his Creatures, and in possessing him we possess all besides him, and more than all! In respect of *honest Good*, God is by his Sanctity the original Rule and Pattern, of all that Holiness that is in Creatures. Hence sayeth *Augustine* "God only is immutably Good, he only is the Good, of all Good, he only is the Cause of all Goodness, to all that are Good. There would be no communicable good Things (said he) if there was not an incommunicable Good." And therefore God is Good in three Respects, *viz.* 1st. By his *Essence*, that is originally, the Foundation of Goodness, whereas Creatures are only good by Participation, as Streams running from the Fountain. 2dly. God is good by *Efficiency*, inasmuch as he only can communicate Good independently, whereas Creatures only so far as they are assisted by his Power, and excited by his Influence. 3dly. God is good by *Existence*, inasmuch as he only is a Good necessarily existing, whereas all Creatures are but contingently good, and exist by the meer Will and Pleasure of God. This Truth the Gentile Philosophers acknowledged. "There is no good Mind without God, sayeth *Seneca*." "Vertue is not in us by Nature, but by divine Providence, sayeth *Plato*." The Jews were likewise of the same Sentiment. Hence *Philo*, *one is good* meaning God, who was wont to be call'd by them "one without Addition."

In discoursing upon this *Attribute* of divine Goodness, I shall enquire into its *Nature, Kinds* and *Properties*, and consider

sider the Force of some *Objections* against it, and then proceed to the *Improvement*, after some brief Hints premis'd, respecting the other general Head of Discourse, viz. *The Fear of God*, And

1st. *Good* according to *Aristotles* Definition, is that which all desire. But it is more accurately defin'd by others, thus, viz. "That it is that which for the Perfection of its Nature deserves to be desired, and is communicative of itself." So that three Things are included in it viz. 1st. An essential *Excellency* or Perfection, for which it merits Desire and pursuit. 2dly. A *Faculty* of communicating this Perfection to others, on this Account its call'd profitable. And 3dly. The *Relation* of both the Former to the Appetite or Desire, on which Account it is call'd desireable. And hence some learned Men observe that Good is threefold, viz. *Metaphysical*, *Physical*, *Ethical*. Or in more plain Terms, it may be call'd a *Good* of Being, Use and Manners. And 1st. *Metaphysical Good*, or the Good of Being, is that Perfection, which is communicated to every Being by its Cause, or it is that Excellency which every Being obtains, as it is a Being: For which it may be desir'd. This has no Evil oppos'd to it, and only serves to shew the Pre-eminence of Existence, to Non-Existence, or Being to no Being. 2dly. *Physical Good*, or the Good of Use, is that Perfection or Excellency, by which any being design'd for another's Use, is fitted for it, whether the Use be General or Particular! Every Creature in its original Constitution was fitted for this two-fold Use, it not only serv'd to compleat and adorn the whole System of Things, but also for Food, or Medicine, or some of the Uses of human Life: And in this Sense all Things at their Creation were call'd *Good*; and to this Kind of Good is oppos'd, whatsoever is Unfit, Unprofitable, or Hurtful. 3d. *Ethical* or *moral Good*, or the Good of Manners, consists

in the *Rectitude* of a reasonable Creature, or in its *Conformity* to *Rule* and *Law*; and to this Vice and Sin is oppos'd: And hence we call a holy Man, a *good Man*: and on the Contrary one who goes on in a Course of Sinning a *Bad-Man*.

Having offer'd these few Hints concerning the General Nature of Good, I proceed to observe more particularly concerning the divine Goodness, that it is no other than his Perfection, by which he can communicate himself, and for which he deserves and ought to be desir'd, and therefore it includes these three following Particulars in it, namely 1st. His infinite *Perfection*, which appears to us from all his Attributes, by which he is sufficient for himself, and his Creatures, and that to infinite Blessedness. (*Gen.* xvii. 1.) By this he is good in himself, yea Goodness itself. (*Psa.* xxv. 8.) And free from every Evil. (*Deut.* xxxii. 4.) And 2dly. A *Faculty* to *communicate himself* when and how he pleases: Hence he is call'd *Good* and *Beneficent*, (*Psa.* cxix. 68.) *Thou art Good and doest Good, teach me thy Statutes.* 3dly. A *Relation* or *Suitableness*, which arises from the two former Particulars mentioned, for which the Almighty deserves to be sought after, and desir'd by all intelligent Beings, with the utmost Intensity and Vehemence. *Pf.* lxiii. 1. 2. *O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my Soul thirsteth for thee.—To see thy Power and thy Glory as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary.* But I proceed to consider the

2d. Propos'd; *viz.* The *Kinds of divine Goodness*. And here it may be observ'd, that the Goodness of God is Two-fold, *viz.* *Immanent*, and *Transient*, or *Essential* and *Relative*. Now God's *Immanent* or *essential Goodness*, is no other than his perfect Essence or Being: Whereas the *transient Goodness* of God, consists in the Manifestation of the Former to, or in created Beings, and is Three-fold

viz.

viz, *Universal, Common and Special.* And 1st. The *Universal transient Goodness* of God, is that whereby he creates, supports, governs, and beautifies all Creatures, Psa. cxlvii. 8. 9. *Sing unto the Lord with Thanksgiving, who covereth the Heaven with Clouds, who prepareth Rain for the Earth, who maketh Grass to grow upon the Mountains. He giveth to the Beast his Food, and to the young Ravens which Cry.* Psa. xxxvi. 6, 7. *O Lord thou preservest Man and Beast, how excellent is thy loving Kindness. O God! Therefore the Children of Men put their Trust under the Shadow of thy Wings.* 2dly. God's *Common Goodness* consists in conferring common Benefits upon the Children of Men without Distinction, whether they be Elect or Reprobates: And hence God is call'd the Saviour of all Men, especially of those that believe. (1 Tim. iv. 10. See also Rom. ii. 4.) And 3dly. The *Special Goodness* of God consists in dispensing saving Gifts upon the Elect. Ephes. i. 3, 4. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST who hath Blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be Holy, and without Blame before him in Love.* And hence we read in Scripture of the Faith of God's Elect, and the Things that do accompany Salvation. The

3d. Propos'd comes next to be considered, which was to discourse upon the *Properties of divine Goodness*: Now the *immanent, or essential Goodness* of God, hath the following Properties, viz. 1st. It is *Great, Nebc. ix. 25. So they did Eat and became Fat, and delighted themselves in thy great Goodness.* Whereas the Goodness of Creatures, is but as the Drop of a Bucket, Isa. xl. 15. 2dly. The Goodness of God is *Unlimited and Infinite*, equally incapable of Addition, as of Diminution, transcending the utmost Verge

of our Speech or Thought ! Whereas the Goodness of all Creatures is finite and limited. And hence the Love of CHRIST is said to *pass Knowledge*, and he is said to be able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think. *Ephes. iii. 19. 20. Psa. lvii. 10. For thy Mercy is great unto the Heavens, and thy Truth unto the Clouds.* 3dly. The immanent Goodness of God is without Beginning, Succession and End : Whereas the Goodness of Creatures as it hath a Beginning, so it hath Succession in Duration, and either has or can have an End. *1 Chron. xvi. 34. O give thanks to the Lord, for he is Good, for his Mercy endureth forever !* 4thly. The immanent Goodness of God is most Simple, without any Mixture of Imperfection or Defect, it is pure Goodness without the least Alloy : And hence he is said to be *Light, in which there is no Darkness at all*, *1 Joh. i. 5.* Whereas in Creatures there is no Goodness without Imperfection, at least Comparative. 5thly. The Goodness of God is Independent, because it is his Being, and hence he is call'd *the Fountain of Life*, *Psa. xxxvi. 9.* Whereas the Goodness of Creatures is something added to their Being, and so accidental and separable. God is Good originally by his own Goodness ; whereas all Creatures are good by Participation : They have but a deriv'd Dependant, and precarious Goodness : They themselves are like to *Vanity, whose Days are as a Shadow, that passeth away*, *Pf. cxliv. 4.* And how can their Goodness, which is but a quality superadded to their Beings, be more Stable then they on whom it depends ? But

2dly. The *Transient Goodness* of God which is the Cause of all that Goodness which exists in Creatures, may be said to have the following Properties, *viz.* 1st. It is *Efficient*, inasmuch as every Creature receives its Goodness therefrom. *Jam. i. 17. Every good Gift, and every perfect Donation, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights,*
with

with whom is no Variableness or Shadow of turning. 2dly.

The transient Goodness of God, is exemplary; as it is the Fountain from which all created Goodness flows, so it is the *Patern* according to which it is to be regulated: And hence we are bid to be *Merciful as our heavenly Father is Merciful*. *Jehovah* represents his infinite Perfection as it were by Parts in his Works; as reasonable Creatures bear its Image, *Gen. i. 26*. So even the irrational Creation carry more obscure Footsteps, as it were, thereof! 3dly. The transient Goodness of God is *Final*, *Pro. xvi 4* 'The Lord hath made all Things for himself, says *Solomon*. Of him, and thro' him, and to him are all Things, says the Apostle, *Rom. xi.*

36. All created Beings do either Labour after God, or are directed to his Glory passively. But I pass on to the

4th. General Head, which was to consider some *Objections* against this Attribute. And 1st. It is objected, that God hath said he will shew himself froward with the Froward *Pf. xviii.*

26. *Ans.* the Scope of the Place is only to signify that God will accommodate his Righteous judgments, to the perverse Practices of obstinate Transgressors. He will proportion Pains to their Presumptuous Impieties, and thus wherein they dealt proudly he will be above them.

2dly. It is objected, that God is not desired by all, nay that many labour to banish the Thoughts of him out of their Minds. *Ans.* It is true, but the Reason why he is not sought after by all intelligent Beings, is not any want of Goodness in him, but the *Blindness* of Creatures, whereby they discern not his Transcendent Amiability, or their *Guilt*, whereby they fear and shun him, as Criminals an avenging Judge! A

3d, Objection is this, That God does not impart his Goodness to all, to Rebribates; whereas Goodness is communicative of itself.

Ans. He does communicate his Goodness to all, but freely, according to his own good Pleasure, in respect of the *kind* and *degree* of *Good*. He is Lord of his own Treasures, and may do with them what he pleases, without being accountable to any. For as the Apostle *Paul* observes, *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?* God is so far Good to all, that he supports, preserves and nourishes them so long as they continue, and confers upon them whatever they enjoy, and that without their demerit. But he is by his Essence Good, and therefore cannot but be averse to evil, and those that are under the Government of it: And therefore cannot have Fellowship with them, while they continue such. But it is time to consider the

2d General Head of Discourse, viz. *the Fear of God*. Which may be thus describ'd, viz. *That it is a Reverence of God, arising from a View of his Attributes, and a Sense of his Love, disposing us to honourable Sentiments of Jehovah in our Minds, as well as to express the same by our Lips, and especially by the course of our Practice, to do those Things that we know are pleasing to him, and carefully to avoid the contrary.* Here observe,

1st. That there can be no true *Fear of God* without the *Knowledge* of him. And this *Knowledge* must be experimental and practical, such as is formed in us by the Holy Spirit's special Concurrence, with the use of proper Means. Such as proceeds from Faith in God thro' a Mediator, and has influence upon the Mind and Life! When we have a believing View of the infinite Excellency of the supream Being by Faith, then, and not before, we are inclin'd to entertain high and becoming Thoughts of God, and to express the same in our Speech and Behaviour. And

2dly. It should be observ'd, that *Love* is another *Principle* of the true *Fear of God*. Our Love to God proceeds partly from
from

from a view of his Excellency, and partly from a Sense of his Love to us. Hence the Apostle *John* observes, that *we love him, because he loved us first*. Now a transcendent Love to God, sweetly constrains us, by the ingenuous Bonds of Gratitude, to *fear God* because of his Goodness, as our Text asserts. But particularly in the

3d Place it may be observ'd, that there be two ingredients in the aforesaid *Reverence of God*, viz. a *fear to offend* him by any Sin, and a *care to please* him by every Duty; on which Account the whole Worship of God is sometimes in Scripture signify'd by *the fear of God*. Hence it is said of *Job*, that *he feared God, and eschewed Evil*.

Now the *fear of God* is twofold, viz. either *Servile* or *Filial*. The *Servile Fear of God*, is when we are afraid to offend God, chiefly because of the *Punishment* consequent upon it. And this, when it is attended with some Hope of Mercy, is profitable, as a preparative of Order to Conversion, but when accompany'd with Despair, it is hurtful. But a *filial fear* arises from Love, and sweetly allures us to serve God, and makes us afraid of his Anger as ingenuous Children. The Characters of this Kind of Fear, are these following. 1st. It makes those that have it Conscientious in the general Course of their Practice, to avoid every Evil, secret as well as open, small as well as great, fashionable and creditable Evils, as well as those that are more scandalous! Yea to avoid the very *Appearance of Evil*, and to seek the Mortification of Sin in the Heart; and all this from a hatred of Sin, chiefly because of its vile Nature, and contrariety to God. 2dly. It makes those that have it, painful in the Performance of good Works, and careful that they be done in a right Manner, viz. from a right Principle, *Love*; to a right End, *God's Glory*; and by a right Rule, *the Word of God*, as well as with *fervour* and *affection*! Besides it

it makes Persons that have it, to long after, and labour for a Perfection of Holiness : From pursuing which they will not be deter'd by the Fear or Hope of any Creature, or of any Evil ! 3dly. Those that fear God make mention of his Name and Attributes with religious Reverence, and read his Word with pious Solicitude. 4thly. The *Fear of God* is not a transient *Pang* or *suddain flash of Devotion*, but a *fixed good Temper of Mind*, a habitual Devotedness to God and his Service, which runs thro' the general Course of our Affections and Actions.

I proceed to the Improvement.

1st. From the Goodness of God, we may learn the Evil of Sin, which, in its Nature directly opposes infinite Goodness ; and, as far as it can, labours to dethrone the Almighty, and therefore it was call'd by the Antients *Deicide*. For *Sin*, poor Creatures are deserted by the Almighty, who is the chief Good, and that to all Eternity. (*Mat. xxv. 41.*) It is *Sin* that robs the Soul of the good Image of God, with which it was at first adorn'd, and renders it evil and indispos'd to any good. It is *Sin* that inclines those that are under its Government, to prefer the imaginary Goodness of the Creature, to the true and infinite Goodness of the Creator ! It is by *Sin*, that we requite the chief good from whom all our good is deriv'd, with Evil ! *Deut. xxxii. 6. Doye thus requite the Lord O foolish People and unwise ! Is he not thy Father that hath bought thee, hath he not made thee, and established thee ?* By *Sin* Men slight the Treasures of divine Goodness, and Treasure thereby to themselves *Wrath against the Day of Wrath !* (*Rom. ii. 4.*) Should not therefore the Consideration of divine Goodness, induce or lead us to Repent of Sins past, and to hate and shun every future Evil, and to seek a remedy against it in CHRIST JESUS, in whom alone the special Goodness of God is display'd to fallen Mankind.

kind. *Pfal. ii. 12. Kiss the Son lest he be Angry and ye perish from the Way.*

2dly. The Consideration of God's Goodness, offers Matter of Support to the People of God, in all their Calamities; and arms them against Poverty, and the Fear of Death itself. For God by his Goodness will be our Portion and Inheritance. (*Pf. xvi. 5. 6.*) He will supply out of his inexhaustible Treasures, all our Wants. *Mat. vi. 33. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, and all other Things shall be added unto you.* And tho' we walk thro' the Valley of the Shadow of Death, God's Rod and Staff shall comfort us. "I am neither ashamed to live or afraid to die (said *Ambrose* of old,) because we have a good Lord. *Nec pudet vivere, nec piget mori, quia bonum habemus Dominum.*" What tho' we be environ'd by many and powerful Enemies, God, by his Goodness will be to us a *strong Tower, a Shield and Buckler, Pf. xviii.* If we are afflicted in Body or Mind, *he will heal our Diseases, and forgive our Trespasses,* for his Goodness Sake! *Pf. ciii. 3.* Are we weak in opposing Sin, or under spiritual Desertion, *his Grace is sufficient for us, and his Power is made perfect in Weakness.* *The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to Anger and plenteous in Mercy, he will not always chide, nor keep his Anger forever. Pf. ciii. 8, 9.* See *Isa. liv. 7, 8. For a small Moment I have forsaken thee, but with great Mercy will I gather thee, in a little Wrath I hid my Face from thee for a Moment, but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.* All our Afflictions shall surely work together for our Good (*Rom. viii. 28.*) If we do but seek Relief in him alone, and put our Trust in him. *Lam. iii. 25. The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the Soul that seeketh him.*

3dly. The Consideration of God's Goodness should invite our Love, seeing it is the proper Object of Esteem and Respect.

Respect. If we regard small Rays and Drops of the Divine Goodness in Creatures, how much more should we regard the Sun itself and love with all our Souls that infinite and unexhausted Fountain of Goodness that is in God. "Love, faith *Anselm*, the one Good, in whom are all Good Things, and it shall suffice thee." Now our Love to the good God should express itself, in longing after Union to, communion with, and the Enjoyment of God in this and the next Life, as well as in acquiescing in his Goodness, as in our All, and only Good, not desiring the Almighty to be in any Respect otherwise than he is. *Pf. lxxiii. 25. Whom have in I Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee.* Our Love should likewise dispose us to devote all our good to God, and employ it for him, as well as to remove all moral Evil from his Sight, that so he may make all his Goodness parts before us. (*2 Cor. viii. 5. Isa. i. 16. Ex. xxxiii. 19.*) And seeing Jehovah is truly Good, our Love to him should be sincere, not in Speech and Carriage only, but in Heart, *Love out of a pure Heart and Faith unfeigned, Love in Deed and in Truth*, as the Apostle *John* expresses it. For nothing but this will avail us at last; and seeing God is the only Good, *superlatively, independently, immutably and efficiently Good.* Therefore we should neglect and contemn every other Good, so far as it stands in Competition with him. *Cant. viii. 7. Many Waters cannot quench Love, neither can the Floods drown it. If a Man would give all the Substance of his House for Love, it would be utterly contemned.* And we must love the superlative Good superlatively, or in the highest degree, *with all our Soul and Strength*, above any Thing in Heaven or Earth, because Jehovah is the chief Good infinitely transcending every other Good. And should not we love him *independently*, i. e. for himself alone, and not for any Thing else chiefly, forasmuch.

asmuch as he is an independent Good, who has made all Things for himself. Moreover should not that good Being, be lov'd *constantly* with an invariable and unfailing Affection; who is himself far from the Shadow of Change? And should not our Love to Jehovah be *operative* and *effectual*, not in Word and Tongue only, but in Deed and Truth? Seeing he is a good Communicative of himself to his Creatures! Now in order to obtain such a Love to God, as has been hinted, it would be of special Service, to meditate frequently upon the Goodness of God, which fills the Earth and reaches up to Heaven, which appears with wonderful Lustre in the Works of Creation, Redemption and Providence? Is not the Misers Love to Gold enflamed by a frequent viewing of it? And let us dear Brethren humbly pray, and earnestly labour to be more and more firmly fix'd, in the believing Perswasion of God's infinite Goodness; that so CHRIST may dwell in our Hearts by Faith, that being rooted and grounded in Love, *we may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height, and to know the Love of CHRIST, which passes Knowledge, that we may be filled with the Fullness of God.* Eph. iii. 17,--19. But

4thly The Meditation of God's Goodness, should invite us to seek all good in God, who is all sufficient, *a Sun and Shield to his People, yea an exceeding great Reward! A Fountain of Life in whose Light we enjoy Light.* From him every good Donation descends, and he it is that blesses us, with all *Spiritual Blessings in CHRIST.* Therefore if we want a *profitable Good*, the necessary Supports of Life, let us ask it of God, who has a Sovereign Empire and absolute Controle, over all second Causes. *He bears the Heavens, and they bear the Earth, and the Earth the Corn and Wine, and the Corn and Wine bear Jezreel.* Hos. ii. Surely it is in God

Q 9

we

we live, and move and are. Do we need pleasant Good, is it not Jehovah, who thro' his Goodness, fills our Hearts with Food and Gladness? *Gives us all Things richly to enjoy, and crowns us with his Goodness and tender Mercy.* Pf. ciii. Do we need *Honest and saving Good, Faith, Hope, Charity, &c.* Is not God the Father of Lights, from whom every good Gift is deriv'd? Let us not therefore dear Brethren, turn to empty Creatures, and *make to ourselves Cisterns that can hold no Water,* and say, *who shall shew us any Good?* But to the living God, and from him let us labour to derive all the Good we need for Life and Godliness, by Faith in the Mediator, in whom all the Promises are *Yea and Amen,* and likewise by earnest Prayer and humble Reverence as well as by a sweet Complacency in, or contentedness with the Good, that God is pleas'd to dispence to us, by the Course of his unerring Providence. In God's Goodness our Happiness is to be only sought: For indeed it can be only found therein. Here we may behold our *objective* Happiness, or that Good that makes us happy: Not a created Good as some *Philosophers* of old, have vainly dream'd. No! But an uncreated, independent and infinite Good, who as a *Shield* can turn away all Evil from us, and as a Sun can communicate all Good to us. And here we may likewise behold our *Formal* Happiness, which consists in Union to, Communion with, and the Enjoyment of this chief and infinite Good. Hence the *Psalmist* pronounces *that People blessed whose God is the Lord.* (Psal. xxxiii. 12.) And how sweetly does devout *Heman* triumph, on this Account, Psa. lxxii. 25. *Who have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee.* The chief Good hath certainly the chief Dignity and Excellency, and therefore deserves the first Place in our Thoughts, Desires and Labours. And is not securing of Happiness the great Design of

Life, next to the Glory of God, after which there is in all a natural Desire: Now is it not evident from the very Nature of Things, that that cannot be found in any created Good? Because it is gross and limited, and so unequal to the Nature and Desires of the Soul. Surely therefore all the Lines of Life, that do not tend to God as their Center are crooked, and besides the Mark. Let us then turn our Eyes and Hearts from Creatures to the great and good God, and seek for Rest and Happiness in him alone; his Goodness can only yield the solid Satisfaction we in vain seek and expect elsewhere.

5thly. The infinite Goodness of God, affords Occasion of glorifying him after the Example of many of his most eminent Servants, particularly of *David*, Psa. cvi. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, O give Thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his Mercy endureth forever.* Of *Asaph*, *Heman*, *Jeduthun*, who with their Sons and Brethren, by Cymbals, & Trumpets, and other Instruments of Musick, sounded forth the Praises of the divine Goodness. 2 Chron. v. 12, 13. *And it came to pass as the Trumpeters and Singers were as one, to make one Sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lift up their Voice with the Trumpets and Cymbals, and praised the Lord saying, for he is good for his Mercy endureth for ever; that then the House was filled with a Cloud, even the House of the Lord.* And is there not Reason why we should praise God for his Goodness, when we consider that it is a Property, whereby he especially communicates and commends himself to Creatures, a Property which most nearly touches us, & therefore should constrain us to grateful Emotions. Hence saith *Augustine*, " *Seeing that God is Good. and hath made all Things Good, and seeing that he who made all Things, is infinitely better than the Things which he made, you will not be able to say better of him, than that he is Good.*"

To the same effect speaks Bernard thus, "As there is not a Moment in which we enjoy not God's Goodness; so let there be no Moment in which we do not remember God as present." Is not the Praises of God for his Goodness the sweetest Employment of the Saints in Heaven or Earth? Says Augustine "I am seiz'd with Sweetness while I think upon the good God.—If therefore we Praise any other Thing, we therefore Praise it because it is Good; there can be no greater, better or firmer Cause of Praising God, than because he is Good." Now in order to glorify God, it is necessary that we know his Goodness, in its Nature, Kinds, Degrees, Effects. And likewise that we taste, behold and admire the same! that so what we feel in our Hearts, we may express with our Lips, in the Psalmists Language. Psal. ciii. 2. Bless the Lord O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits!

But in the next Place, let me intreat you, my dear Brethren, to imitate the Goodness of God. The Psalmist gives us a summary of the divine Goodness, Psal. cxix 68. *Thou art Good and doest Good*, i. e. Good by an intrinsic and immanent Perfection, in which respect God is lovely and lov'd by himself, as well as communicative of himself, and so to be desired by all. Besides he does Good, he distributes his Goodness among Creatures both Good and Evil, tho' in a different Manner and Degree. Now let us endeavour to imitate this noble Example. 1st. By being Good, i. e. fit for the use to which we were created; and what was that Use, but to know, love and glorify our Creator here, in order to enjoy him eternally! And what does fitness for it consist in, but in the Image of God, after which Man was at first created, viz. The Wisdom of the Understanding, the Holiness and Righteousness of the Will, and Harmony of the Affections! (*Ephes.* iv. 24.) Now this Image of God

OF

or original Righteousness being lost, by our Violation of the Covenant of Works, we are thereby render'd *unprofitable Servants*, unfit for our Use, and so altogether Evil. And therefore before we can imitate God aright, we must obtain, by Regeneration, the Image of God, which we have lost by Sin. And being Regenerated we must more and more abandon Evil, and learn to do Well, by progressive Sanctification. 2dly. After we are made Good, we must endeavour to do Good, agreeable to the Design or Use of our Creation. *Towards God*, by fearing of him, trusting in him, by Love and Obedience: *Towards our Neighbour*, by diffusing our Goodness upon all, Good and Bad, Friends and Enemies, but not in a like Degree: By this Imitation of the divine Goodness, we shall shew ourselves to be the genuine Children of our Father which is in Heaven: By this we shall have a certain Argument within ourselves, of our Restoration to the divine Image: And by this we shall resemble the blessed God in his most perfect Property, and so be made Partakers of the divine Nature! By this we shall glorify Jehovah's Name, and many Ways promote his Kingdom: And by this, thro the gracious Promise of God, our Comforts will be encreased in this Life, and the Degree of our Happiness in that to come.

What was said before concerning the *Fear of God*, should excite you my dear Brethren, to examine yourselves impartially thereby: for thus you will know your present State towards God, whether it be good or bad, which ye cannot but know is of great importance, both to your Comfort and Safety.

I must beseech you, Sirs, as a Messenger of God, and command you in his Name and by his Authority, to fear Jehovah. To this ye may be excited by the following Motives, 1st. It is equal and Reasonable: If Reverence and
Fear

Fear belongs to any, surely much more to the greatest and best of Beings! 2dly. It is *Safe*. He that fears God need fear none else! 3dly. It is *profitable*: This is *the Beginning of saving Wisdom*, as *Solomon* observes, and the Root and Spring of all Vertue and Goodness. To this the Promises of God are made, and to such his Mercy and Goodness is extended! 4thly. It is *generous* and *grateful*. His Goodness must induce us to fear walking unworthy of it, if we are not lost to all Sense of Gratitude! Now the Means that are helpful to the aforesaid Disposition are these, 1st. A frequent *Meditation* upon the Majesty and Goodness of God. 2dly. Upon our *Corruption* and propensity to Sin against him. 3dly. Upon the *Baseness* of the *Nature* of Sin, and its *dreadful Consequences*! 4thly. Upon the *Omniscience, Omnipresence, Power* and *Justice* of God, as an avenger of Sin. O may it please Almighty God to fulfill in us all the precious Promises our Text contains, that we may so *fear the Lord and his Goodness in the latter Days*: That having served our Generation according to the Will of God, during the Space appointed for our Residence in this Vale of Sorrow, we may be at last translated to that Kingdom of Peace, of Love, of Light, of Purity, of Rest, where divine Goodness appears in all its native Majesty, in all its inexpressible Beauty, without an intercepting Glass, that so we may be forever with the Lord. *Amen, Amen.*

SERMON

SERMON XVI.

EXODUS xxxiv. 6.

And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering.

IN the preceding Verses we are inform'd, that the Lord commanded *Moses* to hew out two Tables of Stone, like to the first, which were broken, and to come to Mount *Sinai* with them the next Morning. *Moses* readily obey'd the divine Injunction, and had a gracious interview of God. No sooner had he reach'd the Top, the summit of *Sinai's* Mount, but the Lord descended in a Cloud, and proclaimed his Name! The Cloud was doubtless some sensible Symbol or Token of the divine Presence! Probably *Jehovah* made a Cloud his Pavilion in order to affect *Moses* with with an awful Reverence of his Majesty and Glory, and to let him know, that tho' somewhat of God was reveal'd to him, yet that much more was conceal'd from him! But from the whole we may learn this profitable Lesson, viz. *That it is only in the Way of Obedience that we can reasonably expect the Intimations of God's gracious Presence!* In the Words of our Text it is more particularly observ'd, *that the Lord proclaimed his Name:* Doubtless this Repetition is to signify to us, the great Importance of the Thing spoken. Now in the Proclamation two Things may be

be taken Notice of, viz. the *Manner* and *Matter* of it. And 1st. As to the *Manner* or Time, it was while *the Lord passed by before him*. The Apprehensions we have of God in this World are short and transient, full and fixed Views are reserv'd for a future State. But 2^{dly}. The *Matter* of the Proclamation contains a Representation both of the Greatness and Goodness of God. And 1st. We have an Account of the Greatness of God in these Words, *The Lord, the Lord God*. As God hath his Being of himself, and is the Fountain of Being to all Creatures, so he is a Strong God, the great Original of all Power. This Declaration of God's Self-Existence and Almightyness, is prefix'd before the Display of his Goodness, to excite a Fear and Reverence of God's Majesty, and thereby to deter from an abuse of his Mercy. In the 2^d Place, we have an Account of God's Goodness, in three noble Instances, namely, of *Mercy, Grace* and *Long-Suffering*. As God's Greatness is mentioned to incite Fear, and prevent the abuse of his Goodness: so is his Goodness display'd to incite Hope, which is the Spring of Action, and to allay the Terror of his Greatness! The first Manifestation of divine Goodness here express'd is Mercy; he is *Merciful*, this speaks his compassionate Tenderness over poor miserable Creatures, like that of a Father to his Children. This is put first, because it is the first Wheel in all the Instances of God's good Will to fallen Man, whose Misery makes him an Object of Pity, *Jud. x. 16.* 2^{dly}. He is *Gracious*: This speaks the Freeness of God's Goodness to his Creatures, and that it is vouchsaf'd entirely because of his own good Pleasure, and not for the Sake of any Thing in them. It is oppos'd to the Payment of a Price (*Exo. xxi. 11.*) as well as to Justice and Merit. (*Psal xxxv. 7, 19. 1 Sam. xix. 5.*) 3^{dly}. He is *Long-suffering*, this speaks the slowness of *Jehovah*

Bovab to anger, and his deferring the Execution of deserved Vengeance upon Transgressors. Thus God waits to be Gracious to us, and wants to be exalted that he may have Mercy upon us! The Almighty now perform'd what he had but a little time before promised to *Moses*. Ex. xxiii. 18 *And he said, I beseech thee to shew me thy Glory; and he said I will make all my Goodness to pass before thee, and I will Proclaim the Name of the Lord before thee, and will be Gracious to whom I will be Gracious, and will shew Mercy on whom I will shew Mercy.* By which we may see, that God's Goodness is his Name and Glory! that by which he will be known by his intelligent Creatures, as Men are by their Names, and that in which he Triumphs and has Complacency! God had before made himself known to *Moses* in the Glory of his Self-Existence and Self-Sufficiency, by the Name I AM THAT I AM; and now he makes himself known by the Glory of his *Mercy, Grace* and *Long-suffering*.

Now that I may discourse distinctly upon those *three Attributes* of God, which our Text contains, I shall begin with the first, which is *his Mercy*.

The Holy Scriptures frequently assert the Mercy of God. Thus he is call'd *the Father of Mercies*, (2 Cor. i. 3.) He is likewise said to be *abundant in Mercy*, (1 Pet. i. 3.) *Rich in Mercy*, (Eph. ii. 4.) *Of tender Mercy*, (Ps. xxv. 6.) *to have Bowels of Mercy*, (Psa. xl. 11. Luk. i. 78.) Seeing that Mercy among Men, is among the Number of Virtues and Perfections, in which Persons of a more generous Mind and Temper generally excell; it cannot with any shadow of Reason be denied to God, who is not only infinitely Perfect in himself, but also the Author of all that Good, that Creatures Possess! If any should object and say,

R 1

That

That Mercy is oppos'd to Justice, and therefore cannot be ascrib'd to God.

Ans. I deny it, it is not oppos'd to Justice, as the Verse following our Text shews, *keeping Mercy for Thousands, and yet will by no Means clear the Guilty.* God never shews Mercy contrary to Justice, as he never exercises Justice contrary to Mercy; yea the Almighty seldom or never executes Justice without some Preceding Expense of Mercy, and therefore by pitying the miserable, the Lord doth not contradict his Justice, but as it were exceed it. As if a Creditor gave a Debtor a Hundred Pounds, who owes a Thousand. It is in this Sense that the Apostle James observes, *That Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment,* (*Jam. ii. 13.*) 2dly. Some do object, *That Mercy cannot be ascrib'd to God, because it implies a Sense of anothers Misery,*

Ans. It is true, Mercy is not in God, as it is in Men; by Way of Quality or Passion! For then his Simplicity and Happiness would be destroyed. However such a Knowledge of the Misery of Creatures belongs to God, as inclines him to relive them! This *Anselm* speaks pertinently upon in the following Manner, "*Thou art Merciful O God according to us, and according to thee.---When thou beholds our Miseries we feel the Effect of Pity, but thou dost not feel the Affection of Pity!*"

In discoursing upon this divine Attribute of Mercy it will be necessary to speak upon its *Nature, Kinds and Properties.* And

1st. Mercy, in respect of its *Nature*, may be thus describ'd, *viz. That it is the Goodness of God, extended to the Miserable.* Here good and bad Angels are excluded. The Good because they are not miserable, and the Bad because they are wholly given up to Justice, *2 Pet. ii. 4. But God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell,*

Hell, and delivered them into Chains of Darkness to be reserv'd unto Judgment. Or the Mercy of God may be thus describ'd, viz. *That it is that Property of the Supream Being whereby he is inclin'd to succour his Creatures in Misery, together with its kind Effects upon them.* Here observe 1st. That the special Object of Mercy, is the Creature in Misery, and thus it is distinguish'd from other Attributes. Goodness considers it's Object as *Indigent*, and so communicates needed Benefits; but Mercy considers its Object as *Miserable*, because of Sin: And therefore tho' an Innocent Creature be the Object of divine Goodness and Bounty, it's only a fallen and sinning Creature, that is the proper Object of God's Mercy. Grace, is *Mercy or Goodness freely dispens'd*, and therefore it considers its Object, not only as Miserable, but Unworthy! Whereas Long-suffering consists in the Suspension of merited Vengeance, and the Communication of immerited Benefits! Thus you may see that all these Attributes of the Deity, import the Communication of some Good to the Creature, and are only distinguish'd in Relation to the Objects upon which they are exercis'd! Misery is the Foil of Mercy, it can have no other Object; hence it is said *Jud. x. 16.* That *his Soul was griev'd for the Misery of Israel*; Undoubtedly the Vertue of Mercy was in God from all Eternity, but there was no Room or Occasion for its Displays, till the Creatures fatal Fall from God and Misery consequent upon it, provided it an Object to be exercis'd upon. Man by Sin robb'd himself of his Beauty and Happiness, and expos'd himself to all the manifold Miseries of this and the next Life. All which are included in the Sentence of Death annex'd to the Breach of the first Covenant. As Man by Sin had lost all Right to Happiness, and on the contrary, rendered himself lyable to all the Threats of the divine Law;

so by this he likewise became *altogether unprofitable*, (Rom. iii. 12.) having lost all his original Power to glorify God by active Obedience, and thus he had no ground from himself to expect the divine favour.

2dly. Seeing the Misery of fallen Mankind is Two-fold, *viz.* Of Sin and Punishment, consequently the Operations of Mercy consist in affording suitable Succours under these Maladies. In respect of Sin the Mercy of God succours in the following Instances.

1st. In *reconciling Sinners to himself, by the Blood of his only begotten Son* 2 Cor. v. 18. *For the Purchase of which Reconciliation, the eternal Father gave his beloved Son to Shame Pain and Death.* John iii. 16. And for the Application thereof, he confers Faith upon the Elect, whereby they are enabled to accept of and rely upon the blessed JESUS as Mediator and Reconciler. And

2dly. By renewing Sinners by his Spirit, hereby the Tyranny and Dominion of Sin is broken, and the People of God enabled to overcome Sin, and triumph over it. Rom. vi. 12. *Let not Sin reign in your Mortal Bodies, that ye should obey it in the Lusts thereof.* Rom. vii. 25. *I thank God thro' JESUS CHRIST our Lord.*

In respect of Punishment, divine Mercy Succours in the following Manner.

1st. By bearing with the Sinner for a Time before Judgment is inflicted. Rom. ix. 22. *What if God willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endur'd with much long suffering, the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction.*

2dly. By threatening Punishments against the Impenitent, in order to reclaim them from their Trespases. God warns before he wounds, and sends his Servants to slay Sinners by his Word, before he slays them by his Sword.

3dly.

3dly. By pointing to a Remedy, whereby the impending Stroke of divine Judgment may be averted. *Jer. xviii. 7, 8. At what Instant I shall speak concerning a Nation; and concerning a Kingdom to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil I thought to do unto them.* If Sinners repent of the Evil of Sin, God will avert the Evil of Judgment.

4thly. By inviting of, and exhorting with Sinners to accept of the Remedy propos'd. *Isa. i. 18. Come now and let us reason together, tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow, tho' they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool.* *Jer. ii. 5. Thus sayeth the Lord, what Iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after Vanity and become vain?*

5thly. By receiving into Favour those that comply with the Remedy, how great soever their Trespases have been, by forgiving their Sins, sanctifying and sweetening their Sorrows, and supporting them under them by his Spirit, Love, Power. *Psal. ciii. 3. Who forgiveth all thine Iniquities, who healeth all thy Diseases.* *2 Cor. xii. 9. And he said unto me, my Grace is sufficient for thee.* *2 Cor. i. 3, 4. Blessed be God even the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, the Father of Mercies and the God of all Comfort, who comforteth us in all our Tribulation.* And

6thly. Such as do not accept of the Remedy offered, after the Almighty has suspended the Execution of Justice, until there be no Remedy. When he begins to inflict deserved Judgment (in General,) he doth it by Degrees, first he sends lighter Calamities, and when those do not reclaim the Sinner, he sends heavier. In the Day of God's rough Wind, He stays his East Wind. First Rods are try'd, and if those do not avail, Scorpions may be expected.

Jehovah

Jehovah does not all at once, *stir up all his Wrath.* Psal. lxxviii. 38. But the

2d. Propos'd was to speak of *the Kinds of Mercy.* Now the Mercy of God, may be said to be Two-fold, viz. Either *common* or *special.* *Common Mercy* consists in conferring without Distinction, upon the Children of Men, the Outward Comforts and Conveniencies of Life, and hence the Almighty is said to *cause his Sun to rise upon the Evil and the Good, and to send his rain upon the Just and the Unjust.* Mat. v. 45. But the *special Mercy* of God, consists in conferring upon the Elect, such Things as do accompany Salvation, and that thro' Christ, in the Channel of the New Covenant, *Eph. i. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings, in Heavenly Places in CHRIST.* But I proceed to the

3d. Propos'd, which was to discourse upon *the Properties of divine Mercy.* And

1st. It is *eternal,* Psal. ciii. 17. *The Mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting.* It is repeated Twenty-six Times in one Psalm, *that his Mercy endureth forever.* Psal. cxxxvi. And this may justly enhance our Esteem of it, and desire after it. Tho' God may hide *his Face for a little Moment,* yet with *everlasting loving Kindness* will he return to his People. And

2dly. *God's Mercy is great,* and hence God is said to be *plentiful in Mercy,* Plal. lxxxvi. 5. *Rich in Mercy,* Eph. ii. 4. And in *Psal. li. 1.* We read of the *Multitude of his tender Mercies.* And in (*2 Sam. xxiv. 14.*) his Mercies are expressly said to be *great.* But methinks the greatness of God's Mercy appears especially, by considering these two Things, viz. What is the Sinners *Due* according to strict Justice, and the *Mitigation* thereof, which he enjoys in this World.

Surely

Surely *the Wages of Sin is Death*. Rom. vi. 23. which includes all the Miseries of this present Life, as well as the Pains of Hell hereafter. Now, therefore every Mitigation of those Miseries, every Comfort the Sinner enjoys is Mercy, it is what the Sinner has forfeited a Right to, it is what he deserves not.

3dly. The Mercy of God is *incomparable*, Jer. iii. 1. *They say if a Man put away his Wife, and she go from him, and become another Man's, shall he return unto her again?— But thou hast played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return unto me saith the Lord!* The Merciful God exceeds his Creatures both in giving and forgiving. And

1st. In giving: Our Donations are often extorted from us, but he gives of his own accord, without any incentive, but what is in his own Bosom. (*Isa. lxxv. 1.*)

2dly. We give but small Gifts, but he gives the greatest, viz. *Himself, his Son, his Spirit, his Kingdom.* Job. iii. 16.

3dly. We give to our Friends, but Jehovah confers many Donations on his Enemies. (*Mat. v. 45.*)

4thly. We are soon weary of giving, but so is not God, he is unwearied in his Mercy (to the Penitent) *he giveth liberally and upraideth not*, Jam. i. 5. And

2dly. The Merciful God exceeds his Creatures, in forgiving.

1st. Men are revengful to those that wrong them, but God is *merciful and gracious, long suffering*, as our Text asserts. How remarkable to this Purpose are these Words of the Prophet *Hos. xi. 9. I will not execute the Fierceness of mine Anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not Man.*

2dly. Men are difficultly drawn to forgive, and cannot forgive often, *God but is ready to pardon* Neh. ix. 17. *And docs multiply Pardons.*

3dly.

3dly. "Sometimes Men forgive when it is not in their Power to revenge themselves, but Sinners are always under God's Controle, and within the reach of his Arm. But

4th. The Mercy of God is *sure*, and infallible, *Iſa. Iv. 3. Incline your Ear, and come unto me, hear and your Soul shall live; and I will make an ever-lasting Covenant with you, even the ſure Mercies of David.* And hence it is, that the Gifts and Calling of God are ſaid to be without Repentance, and that the Foundation of God ſtands ſure. *The Lord knoweth who are his.* God's ſpecial Mercy to his People is built upon the ſure and invariable Foundation of his Purpoſes and Promiſes, as well as the Satisfaction and Interceſſion of CHRIST. And

5thly. God's Mercy is *free* *Ephes. i. 11. In whom alſo we have obtained an Inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the Purpoſe of him, who worketh all Things after the Counſel of his own Will.* Albeit the Vertue of Mercy belongs to God, in reſpect of his Being, yet the Diſpenſation of it depends entirely upon God's good Pleaſure, and hence the Apoſtle Paul informs us, *That it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth Mercy and that he hath Mercy upon whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth,* Rom. ix.

Now becauſe when ſuch Things as are really or ſeemingly contrary, are put together, they illuſtrate each other. It may not, be improper before I proceed to the Improvement of this Subject to diſcourſe upon the Severity of God in his Judgments, which is ſeemingly oppoſ'd to his Mercy. Of this mention is made *Rom. xi. 22.* and in many other Places of Scripture; and of this there be many Examples upon ſacred Record, ſuch as the Inſtances of the fallen Angels, our firſt Parents, the old World, *Pharaoh*, the Egyptians, *Korah*, *Dathan*, *Abiram*, *Achan*, *Ananias*,
and

and *Saphira*, and many others. From which we may gather, that God's Judgments which he exerciseth by his Severity, are no other than singular Punishments inflicted for singular Offences. The meritorious Cause of them, is some aggravated Iniquity, the Nature of which, is often pointed out by the Punishment inflicted, which is not common but singular. *Adonibezek*, who had cut off the Thumbs and Great-Toes of Threescore and Ten Kings, was served so himself. (*Judges* i. 6, 7.) And hence *Samuel* sayeth concerning *Agag*, *That as his Sword made Women Childless, so his Mother should be Childless among Women.* 1 Sam. xv. 33. Hence the Lord elsewhere threatens, *that those who shed the Blood of others, should themselves have Blood to drink.* Thus you see that the Punishment does often resemble the Sin that procur'd it. Now the Judgments of God, are of various Kinds, *viz.* Spiritual or Bodily, Private or Publick. *Spiritual Judgments* are such as these, *viz.* *A Famine of the Word*, *Amos* viii. 11, 12. *Leanness of Soul and Backslidings.* *Rev.* ii. 5. *Errors in Judgment.* 2 *Thes.* ii. 10, 11. *And for this Cause, God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie.* Corporal Judgments are War, Pestilence, Famine, Drowth & the like. Now the procuring Causes of publick and epidemical Judgments, are such as these following, *viz.* *Ingratitude against God*, *Isa.* i. 3. *Contempt of his Word*, *Isa.* xlii. 24. *Who gave Jacob for a Spoil, and Israel to the Robbers, did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned, : For they would not walk in his Ways, neither were they obedient unto his Law.* Another Cause of Judgments, is *slighting of the Ministers of God.* 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 16. *But they mocked the Messengers of God, and despis'd his Word, and misus'd his Propbets, until the Wrath of the Lord arose against his People, til there was no Remedy.* Besides *Pride* and *Idolatry* are procuring Causes, of divine

Judgments. *Isa. ii. 11. The lofty Looks of Man shall be humbled, and the Haughtiness of Men shall be bro't down* Jer. ii. 13, 14. Likewise the following Evils against our Neighbour, are Causes of divine Judgments. *viz Oppression of the Poor* *Isa. iii. 14. The Lord will enter into Judgment with the Antients of his People, and the Princes thereof: For ye have caten up the Vineyard, the Spoil of the Poor is in your Houses* 2dly. *Wronging the Widow and Fatherless* *Isa. i. 23. They judge not the Fatherless, neither does the Cause of the Widow come before them.* 3dly. *Cheating the Labourer of his Hire.* Jer. xxii. 13. *Woe unto him that buildeth his House by Unrighteousness, and his Chambers by Wrong, that useth his Neighbours Service without Wages, and giveth him not for his Work.* The Prophet *Hosea* mentions a Number of Causes together in the Fourth Chap. of his Book, 1. & 2. verses. *Hear the Word of the Lord ye Children of Israel, for the Lord has a Controversy with the Inhabitants of the Land, because there is no Truth, nor Mercy, nor Knowledge of God in the Land. By swearing and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing Adultery, they break out, and Blood toucheth Blood therefore shall the Land mourn.* To the aforesaid Causes of divine Judgments I may add, *Covetousness and Hypocrisy.* *Isa. v. 8, 13. Woe unto them that joyne House to House.—Therefore my People are gone into Captivity.* *Isa. x. 6. O Assyrian, the Rod of mine Anger—I will send him against a Hypocritical Nation.* Here it may be observ'd, that Judgments are not always sent, except the aforesaid Evils become general, and are attended with Impudence, after various Warnings (*Jer. v. 1. Isa. iii. 9. Ps. xcvi. 10. 11.*) Now the Judgements of God are always just, and sometimes unsearchable and wonderful: For sometimes he not only sends them on the Ungodly, but upon his own People. Yea as the Apostle *Peter* observes. *Judgment begins at*

at the House of God. The Lord threatned his People of old; that them only he had known of all the Families of the Earth, and therefore he would punish them for their Iniquities. Hence David tells us, that his Flesh trembled for fear of God, and that he was afraid of God's Judgments. I may add, that the End of God's Judgments, is the glory of God's Holiness, the Conversion and Humiliation of some, and the hardening of others. Witness the *Prodigal*, *Pharaoh* and others: But it's Time to proceed to the Improvement of this Subject. And

1st. We should be cautious of abusing God's Mercy, let us beware that we suck not Poison out of that sweet Flower. To take encouragement to go on in Sin, because of God's Mercy, is the vilest Instance of Ingratitude, and justly expoposes to an agravated Condemnation, abus'd Mercy turns into enrag'd Fury and Vengeance, *Deut. xxix. 19.* *If he bless himself saying, I shall have Peace, tho' I walk after the Imagination of my Heart, to add Drunkeness to Thirst. The Lord will not spare him, but the Anger of the Lord and his Jealousy, shall smoak against that Man, and all the Curses that are written in this Book, shall lie upon him.*

2dly. The Mercy of God offers Encouragement and Support to the People of God in all their Distresses, whether outward or inward! Are they afflicted with outward Straits? The Merciful God who is their Shepherd, will not suffer them to want, but *make their Bread and Waters sure!* He that hears and feeds the Ravens, will surely hear and help his Children! Have they backsliden from God, and are they labouring to be sorrowfully sensible hereof? Then may they encourage themselves in this, that *all God's Ways are Mercy and Truth*, and that the Mercy of Jehovah *endureth forever!* He will begin and end with Mercy, and such as are under the first Convictions of Sin, may take Encourage-

ment from the Mercy of God, which is great above the Heavens, and most freely dispensed upon the vilest Creatures! Mercy considers not what one deserves, but what he needs! God is more inclin'd to Mercy than Wrath; *Justice and Judgment is his strange Work, but Mercy is his Delight.* Mic. vii. 18. "*It's delightful to the Mother, sayeth Chry-*
“ softome, to have her Breasts drawn; so it is to God, to
“ have the Breasts of his Mercy drawn.” *The Almighty is slow to Anger, but ready to forgive,* Psal. lxxxvi. 5. Let us therefore entertain honourable Thoughts of God's Mercy, and *trust in it forever,* (Psal. lii. 8.) What greater Encouragement can there be to believe, than the Mercy of God. Mercy is one of the most orient Pearls of the Crown of God; he reckons it his *Glory* to be conferring Pardons upon penitent Transgressors! And therefore he invites poor Sinners to come and lay hold on his Mercy, Rev. xxii. 17. *Who-soever will, let him come and take of the Water of Life freely!* Mercy woo's Sinners in the most importunate moving and condescending Strains. Isa. lv. 1. *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no Money come ye. buy and eat; come, buy Wine and Milk, without Money and without Price!* And what Joy does the Almighty express when Sinners accept of the Proposals of his Mercy, when the Prodigal Son return'd from his Wandrings how much did it please the indulgent Father, who made a Feast to express his Joy on that Occasion?

We should be induced to enquire into the State of our Souls, in order to know whether we have an *Interest* in the special Mercy of God or not! For it will be miserable and ruining to us in the Issue, if we content ourselves with common Mercies! Now we may be help'd to determine this important Point, by an Impartial comparing of ourselves with the following Particulars, *viz.* 1st. Such who

who have an Interest in the special Mercy of God, have been (if of adult Age when converted) made sensible of their Misery without it, and their unworthiness of it, with the *Prodigal* and *Publican*.

2dly. They have been stir'd up to solicitous Enquiries how they might obtain an Interest therein, *Act. ii. 37.*

3dly. Such have deliberately and without Reserve consented to embrace CHRIST JESUS (the Fountain of Mercy) in all his Offices and Relations, and resolv'd to bear his Cross, and obey his Laws. (*Job. i. 12.*)

4thly. And in Consequence hereof they find the general Byass of their Affections going towards God and a habitual Carefulness to do the Things that are pleasing to him. Now those who upon Examination find themselves destitute of the aforetaid Characters, should, in order to obtain Mercy, 1st. Think seriously upon all the Kindnesses of Heaven towards them, together with their innumerable Sins against those Mercies, and the Dangers to which they are thereby expos'd. 2dly Attend with Diligence upon the preached Word; for it is by the Foolishness of preaching, that God saves those that believe. 3dly. Bewail your Sins against the Mercies of God. Let the Goodness of God lead you to Repentance. 4thly. Try to reform your Lives, *Let the Wicked Man forsake his Ways, and the Unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and turn unto God, for he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* And 5thly. Pray earnestly and frequently to God for Mercy, in the Name of CHRIST with Fear and Hope.

And let me exhort those that have obtain'd the special Mercy of God, to walk worthy of it, 1st. Praise God for his Mercy in the Psalmist's Language, *Psa. ciii. 1. Bless the Lord O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his*

holy

holy Name. Such as have been *Monuments* of Mercy, should be *Trumpets* of Praise.

2dly. Love God. Mercy is a powerful Excitement to this, *Psa. xviii. 1. I will Love thee O Lord my Strength.* Surely that Heart is harder than Marble and Adamant, which Mercy will not melt. “*I would hate my own Soul* (saith Austin) *if I did not find it loving God.*” We should love God for outward Comforts, but much more for special and enduring Mercies.

3dly. Let us imitate the Mercy of God in shewing Mercy to our fellow Creatures, God is the Father of Mercy, shew yourselves to be his Children, by being like him. It was a just Observation of *Ambrose*, “*That the Sum of Religion is to be rich in Works of Mercy.*” O let the Lamp of our Profession be fill'd with the Oyl of Mercy! And to this our dear Lord exhorts us, *Mat. vi. 36. Be merciful as your Father also is merciful.*

But let the Despisers and Abusers of Mercy, who go on in a Course of any of the Evils before mentioned, which procure the Judgments of God, be intreated to repent and reform speedily, otherwise ye may expect the dreadful Effects of divine Severity in some or all of the Instances thereof before expressed! By your ungrateful Returns for Mercies receiv'd, *You treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God. Tho' God be Gracious and Merciful, slow to Wrath, yet he will by no means clear the Guilty.*

SERMON

SERMON XVII.

EXODUS xxxiv. 6.

And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering.

YOU may remember that in the preceding Sermon upon this Text, after the Explication of it, I discoursed upon the *Mercy of God*. The next divine Attribute that comes now, according to the Order of our Text, to be consider'd, is the *Grace of God*. The Lord is *Merciful and Gracious*.

There is Nothing more frequently mentioned in Scripture, than the *Grace of God*. I shall mention but a few Passages, for if I should take Notice of all, I must transcribe a great part of the Bible. Ephes. i. 6. *To the Praise of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* Psal. cxii. 14. *He is Gracious and full of Compassion.* 2 Cor. xiii. 14. *The Grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and the Love of God be with you all.* In speaking upon this Subject, I purpose,

- I. To explain its *Nature*.
- II. Shew its *Kinds*.
- III. Mention some Considerations, serving to manifest its *Sovereignty and Glory*.

IV.

IV. Consider what is really and seemingly *oppos'd* there-to, and then proceed to some *Improvement*.

I return to consider the first *propos'd*, which was to *explain the Nature of the Grace of God*. Now the Word *Grace* signifies something that is free, as was observ'd in the preceding Sermon, and it is taken two Ways, either for an *Attribute* of God, which is in God, or for the *Gift* of God, which is from God. In the first Sense the Grace of God signifies his free and sovereign Benevolence, by which he peculiarly favours and doth Good to his Creatures, whence God is call'd *Gracious* as in our Text, *i. e.* Endow'd with Grace. As from his Goodness he is call'd *Good*, and from his Justice *Just*. The Gifts of God, which are the Effects of the Grace that is in him, are metonymically call'd *Grace*, especially such of them as are Peculiar and Special, *i. e.* Such as are confer'd upon some, rather than others. Hence some Divines observe, that the Word *Grace* intends either 1st. The Grace freely *Giving*, (Matt. xi. 26.) Which they term (*Gratiam gratis dantem*), or the free Favour of God, or the Grace freely *given*, (which they call *Gratiam gratis datam*.) And this imports any Kind of Benefit which the Almighty confers upon his Creatures, whether Good or Bad, which makes them not in the least the more acceptable to God. Or thirdly the Grace which makes acceptable, (which they term *Gratiam gratum facientem*) viz. All the saving Gifts of God, Faith, Hope, Charity, by which we please him.

Now the Grace of God may be thus described *viz.* *That is a Property of the Deity, whereby he is inclin'd to dispense undeserved Kindnesses upon his Creatures freely, and in a sovereign Way.* The Dispensations of Grace have no Dependence upon any Dignity, or Merit of Creatures upon whom Benefits are confer'd, (*Rom. xi 6.*) But the whole Reason

son thereof is the good Pleasure of God's Will, (*Mat. xi. 26.*) which respects all Creatures, even to the noblest Angels. Whatever any of these enjoy, they have it of Grace, for who among all created Beings, has first given to God, and it shall be recompens'd to him again *Rom. xi. 35.* In the mean Time, these Things are more properly and peculiarly ascrib'd to Grace, which are different from Nature. Nature and Grace should not be confounded; such Things as by the kind Constitution of God, belong to every Creature according to their different kinds, are not usually call'd Grace, because, tho' they be undue, yet they belong to Nature. But to make this more plain, let us consider the

2d. *Propos'd*, which was to speak of the *Kinds of Grace*; and here it may be observ'd, that Grace is Three-fold, *viz. Universal, common, and saving.* And

1st. *Universal Grace is that, whereby Jehovah dispenses natural Things upon all his Creatures,* and hence he is call'd *the Saviour of all Men.* *1 Tim. iv. 10.* And is said to *preserve Man and Beast.* *Psa. xxxvi. 6.* He cautes his Sun to rise upon the Fields of the Evil and the Good, and sends his Rain upon the just and Unjust: He gives to Man Life, Health, Strength, and all the Supports he enjoys therein, all which being undeserv'd, may be call'd Grace; but according to the Usage of Scripture and Antiquity, they seldom and less properly bear that Name.

2dly. *Common Grace consists in the Communication of moral good Things upon Men promiscuously, whether they be good or bad, elect or not elect, such as natural Wisdom and Prudence, and all the Train of moral Vertues, in which even some Pagans have excell'd.* And to these we may add, all outward religious Priviledges and Means of Grace; together with those transient Effects which are sometimes produced, by them upon the Unregenerate, such as some kind of Illumination,

T t

mination,

mination, and Stirrings of religious Affection. In a Word all those common Operations of the Holy Spirit, which are not follow'd by a habitual and saving Change, must be ascrib'd hereto. Of these mention is made *Heb. vi. 4. 5, 6.* and also in the Parable of the Sower, *Mat. xiii. 20, 21.* *But he that received the Seed into Stony Places, the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon with Joy receiveth it, yet hath he not Root in himself, but dureth for a while, for when Tribulation or Persecution ariseth, because of the Word, by and by he is offended.* But

3dly. *Saving Grace is that undue or undeserved Love of God, whereby he confers upon the Elect only, saving Benefits, of his own meer good Pleasure.* Here observe

1st. That it is *Love*, or the kind Inclination or Propension of God's Will to communicate good to his Elect.

2dly. It is *undue, undeserved Love.* The Objects of this Love, consider'd as Creatures, can merit no Good at the Hand of God, seeing they have receiv'd their All from him, surely they cannot put the Almighty in their Debt, by giving him what is his own; and consider'd as Sinners, who by their voluntary Transgression, have fallen short of his Glory, they deserve his high and dreadful Displeasure.

3dly. It is *distinguishing Love*, manifested to the Elect in a sovereign Way, according to the good Pleasure of God's Will. *Ephes. i. 9.* That is given to one which is denied to another, and only because it is God's Pleasure. Hence is that Query of one of CHRIST'S Disciples. *John xiv. 22.* *Lord how is that thou wilt manifest thy self to us, and not to the World* And does not our Lord himself, thank his eternal Father for the Displays of his Sovereignty in this Respect, *Mat. xi. 25, 26.* *I thank thee O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these Things from the Wise and Prudent, and revealed them unto Babes, even so*
Father,

Father, for so it seemed good in thy Sight. It is but a few, a Remnant of the fallen Race of Mankind, upon whom God is pleased to vouchsafe, and in whom he is pleased to glorify, his special Grace *Luke xiii. 24. Rom. ix. 2, 7. Esaias cryeth also concerning Israel, tho' the Number of the Children of Israel, be as the Sand of the Sea, a Remnant shall be saved.*

4thly. It is *efficacious Love*, which confers saving Benefits, hence it is call'd *the Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation.* *Tit. ii. 11.* And the Blessings it vouchsafes, are term'd Things that *accompany Salvation Heb. vi. 9.* And hence the Psalmist prays, *Pf. cvi. 4. Remember me O Lord, with the Favour that thou bearest unto thy People. O visit me with thy Salvation! that I may see the God of thy Chosen, that I may rejoice in the Gladness of thy Nation, that I may glory with thine Inheritance.* And here it may be necessary to observe particularly that divine Love confers freely upon the Elect, or Concerts, for them the following important Benefits, *viz.*

1st. *Election, this is free and gracious*, without Faith or Works foreseen *Rom. xi. 5. Even so then, at this present Time also, there is a Remnant according to the Election of Grace. Ephes. i. 5. Having predestinated us, unto the Adoption of Children, by JESUS CHRIST to himself according to the good Pleasure of his Will. If it be by Grace it is no more of Works, otherwise Grace would be no more Grace, and Works would be no more Works. Rom. xi. 6.* To the same Effect the Apostle elsewhere observes *That it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy, Rom. ix. 16.* It is inconsistent with the Independency and Immutability of God, to suppose that any Thing without him, should alter or incline his Will.

2dly. *Redemption* is likewise of *Free Grace.* The contrivance of this Scheme of Happiness, as well as the sending of the blessed Son of God to effect it, by his Obedience and

and Sufferings were marvellous Displays of the Fathers pure Affection to a miserable World! 1 *John* vi. 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.* And to what else than *Free Grace*, can we ascribe God the Father's Acceptance, of the Suretyship of CHRIST in the Sinners Room and Place? Strict Justice certainly demands personal Satisfaction; and does not the Love of CHRIST pass Knowledge, in that he who is over all God blessed for ever came into a State of the lowest Abasement; voluntarily to save worthless Dust from perpetual Ruin? How sweetly does the Apostle *Paul* speak to this Effect? 2 *Cor.* viii. 9. *For ye know the Grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST that tho' he was Rich, yet for your Sakes he became Poor, that ye thro' his Poverty might be Rich.* Besides it may be here observ'd, that Redemption by the Satisfaction of CHRIST, is frequently in Scripture restrain'd to a certain Number, who are call'd the *People of God*, the *Sheep of CHRIST*, and such as were given to him by his Father *Mat.* i. 21. *John* x. 15. xvii. 9.

Albeit the Blood of the Son of God be of infinite Value, and therefore the Satisfaction made by it, may in this respect be said to be universal; yet inasmuch as it was neither the Design of the Father, nor the Son, that it should be spent for all, so as to be saved by it. It is therefore to be referred to singular Grace. Moreover

3dly. The *Application of Redemption* in all it's Branches, is of *Free Grace*, as may appear by the following Induction of Particulars, viz.

1st. *Effectual Calling*, is said to be according to God's Purpose. *Rom.* viii. 29.

2dly. *Faith* is call'd the Gift of God, *Ephes.* ii. 8. *For by Grace are ye sav'd thro' Faith, and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God.*

3dly.

3dly. *Conversion is not of Flesh, or Blood nor of the Will of Man but of God.* None of these Graces which I have mentioned, are the Fruits of Free Will: *For we are not sufficient to think any Thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.* 2 Cor. iii. 5. *No they are all the Fruits of the Spirit.* Gal. v. 22. Who produces them not by moral Swasion like poor Creatures, but by an Almighty creating Power, taking away the *Stony Heart, and giving a Heart of Flesh.* (1 Cor. iii. 5, 6. Pf. ii. 10. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.) And

4thly. *Justification*, whereby an elect Sinner is freed from the Guilt of Sin, and hath a Right to eternal Happiness, is of *free Grace.* Rom. iii. 24. *Being justified freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS.* It is entirely without Works, Gal. ii. 16. *Knowing that a Man is not justify'd by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of JESUS CHRIST,---For by the Works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified?*

5thly. Our *Adoption* or Right to the important Priviledges of Children, and joint Heirship with CHRIST is also of *pure Grace,* Ephes. i. 4, 6, *Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by JESUS CHRIST to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will, to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

6thly. Our *Salvation*, in regard of the Right thereto, is of *Grace.* And hence eternal Life is said to be the *Gift of God, thro' JESUS CHRIST our Lord,* Rom. vi. 23. And elsewhere we are said expressly to be *sav'd by Grace,* Ephes. ii. 8. In the mean Time it should be remembred, that good Works are the Way to the Kingdom, tho' they be not the Cause of our reigning, as *Barnard* of old observ'd. Tho' our Right to Happiness is of *Grace,* as was before observ'd, yet the Almighty hath by his gracious Constitution, so ordered

dered the Matter, that good Works are necessary to the Possession of it. (*Mat.* xxv. 21, 34, 35.) I proceed to the

3d. Propos'd, which was to mention some Considerations serving to manifest the *Sovereignty* and *Glory* of God's Grace. And 1st. Methinks the Glory of divine Grace appears by considering the *Author* of it, who is a Being infinitely and invariable Happy in himself, as well as essentially and eternally Glorious: And so neither needs the Services of Creatures, nor can be benefited by them. Our Goodness extends not to him, neither is it any Gain to the Almighty that we are Righteous. To acknowledge God's Glory, adds no more to its Lustre than speaking well of the natural Sun adds to its Beauty.

It may be here also observ'd, that *Yehovah* would have had Millions of Angels to celebrate his Praise and execute his Pleasure, altho' he had made his Justice triumph in the Ruin of the whole human Race; which certainly he might have done. Or he could have form'd innumerable Creatures of a more noble Order, than any of the Creation to celebrate the Glory of his Attributes, if it had so pleas'd his Majesty: For he is Almighty in Power, hath the residue of the Spirit, and can raise up Children even out of the Stones to *Abram*. But

2dly. Let us consider the *Object* upon which this divine Grace is conferr'd, and we shall find

1st. That it is *Man*, not Angels. Our Saviour took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of *Abram*; because he design'd to save the one, and to reserve those that fell of the other, in Chains under Darkness, unto the Judgment of the great Day. What is Man but Dust and Ashes? A Worm that is crush'd before the Moth, altogether unworthy of the kind Notice of the great and glorious

rious

rious God! How amazing is the distinguishing Grace of God in passing by Creatures of a higher Order, and fixing his Love upon Man?

2dly. It is *Sinners*, upon whom divine Grace is confer'd. Man by Creation was but Dust, but by Sin he is become polluted Dust, and so Odious and Loathsome, as well as Wretched and Miserable! And this doleful State he has wilfully brought himself into, and wilfully continues in against all the Remonstrances of Conscience, against all the kind Importunities of a condescending God and Saviour! Man by Sin has brought this twofold Misery upon himself, 1st. That he deserves no Good. And 2dly. That he deserves all Evil! How can these deserve Good at the Hand of God, whose Persons and Performances are cover'd with Deformity and Pollution? Indeed we deserve not the least common Mercy, how much less then can we merit special Benefits? *Gen. xxxii. 10. I am not worthy of the least of all the Mercies, and of all the Truth which thou hast shew'd unto thy Servant!* Men in a State of Nature are unprofitable Creatures, they are neither prepar'd to receive Benefits, nor able to prepare themselves, seeing they are dead in Sins and Trespases. And by their multiply'd Impieties they deserve the divine Displeasure, and provoke him to inflict it. As they are Children of Wrath by Nature, so they weary the Almighty by continued Iniquities in Practice, (*Ephes. ii. 3. Isa. xliii. 24.*) And

3dly. The Persons to whom divine Grace is given, are Enemies to God, both in their Minds and Lives, *Rom. viii. 7. The Carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not Subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be!* Now Enmity imports a high Degree of fixed and implacable Spite, O dreadful State! This inward Enmity, unregenerate Sinners bewray by their Rebellion against God, in Practice

Practice and cruel Confederacies with his declared Enemies Col. i. 21. *And you that were sometime allienated, and Enemies in your Mind by wicked Works, yet now hath he reconciled.*

4thly. It is generally the poorer and meaner Sort of Men, that are favour'd with divine Grace, while the Rich, Honourable, and Great are passed by. Many who make a considerable Figure in the World by the Keeness of their natural and acquired Endowments, and by the Splendor of their outward Circumstances, who are entirely destitute of special Grace, while others who are Poor and despis'd are favour'd therewith! This Subject the Apostle Paul discourses largely upon, 1 Cor. i. 26,---28. *Not many Mighty, not many Noble are call'd, but God hath chosen the foolish Things of the World, to confound the Wise, and the Weak Things of the World, to confound the Things that are Mighty; and base Things of the World, and Things which are despis'd, hath God chosen; yea Things that are not, to bring to nought Things that are.*

5thly. Many of those to whom divine Grace is given, were before Conversion notorious Sinners, some Blasphemers, Persecutors, and Injurious: These Things the Apostle Paul ascribes to himself, he shut up many of the Saints in Prison, consented to their Death, Punish'd them in every Synagogue, compell'd them to Blaspheme, and being exceeding mad against them, he persecuted them to strange Cities. (*Act. xxvi. 10. 11. 1 Tim. i. 13, 15.*) Some, before Conversion, have been Idolaters, as the *Ephesians*. Some *Fornicators, Adulterers, Effeminate, Abusers, of themselves with Mankind, Thieves, Covetous, Drunkards, Revilers, Extortioners*, such were some of the *Corinthians*, and yet they were wash'd, sanctifi'd and justifi'd 1. Cor. vi. 9. 11. O rich and glorious Grace! How admirable is the Grace

of

of God, in the Instance of *Manasseb's* Conversion? Who tho' a Conjurer a Murderer, and one who despis'd God, and bid defiance to Heaven in Prosperity, yet when in Adversity he humbled himself and made Supplication to Jehovah, was graciously heard and accepted. (*2 Chron.* xxxiii. 9, 12, 13.) I shall only add the famous Instance of *Mary Magdalen*, who was a notorious Sinner. This poor Woman loved much, because much was forgiven her; her Heart was so melted with a Sense of divine Goodness, that she could wash our Lords Feet with her Tears! (*Luke* vii.)

3dly. The Glory of divine Grace appears not only from it's *Author* and *Object*, but also from the *Season* in which it is vouchsaf'd. The Almighty bestows Benefits upon his People, at such Seasons, when they are most suitable. *In the Mount of Difficulty and Distress, the Lord is seen, yea he is a very present Help in Trouble.* When Sinners have wearied themselves in the greatness of their Way, and thro' a Series of Disappointments are brought to the last Extremity, the blessed God manifests his Grace and Mercy! And thus when gracious Persons are encircled with manifold Miseries, outward and inward, and their sorrowful Hearts are ready to sink into Despondency, with a long continu'd oppressive Weight of Woe, from which they can hardly see any way of Deliverance; they are desolate and afflicted, their Hearts almost overwhelm'd, then Jehovah sends Deliverance! (*Psa.* xxv. 16, 17.) *And they are as those that dream'd.* When the compassionate Jehovah returns to his People, after their sinful Wandrings from him. O! It makes them admire the pure and glorious Riches of divine Grace! And truly the Lord teaches his People more and more of this Doctrine, namely, the freeness of his Grace, while they are in the World. And

U u

4thly.

4thly The freeness of divine Grace appears likewise from the *Manner* in which divine Benefits are confer'd *e.g.* we contribute nothing to the Change wrought upon us by Conversion. The natural Byass of our Wills is against it, and this Reluctance and Opposition remains, until it be overcome by the Almighty Power of God, who is hence said to *make his People a willing People in the Day of his Power.* P^{sa}. ciii. That Alteration of Dispositions which is imply'd in Conversion, is not desir'd by the Sinner before it; tho' unregenerate Sinners desire to be deliver'd from Misery, yet they do not desire to be deliver'd from Sin the Cause of it! For that is as their right Eye, and right Arm! Well then seeing thote Benefits whereby the Soul is sanctified are undeserv'd, undesir'd, yea oppos'd by the unconverted, surely then they must be freely vouchsaf'd. But

5thly, The Riches of divine Grace appear from the *Nature* of the Benefits confer'd; which are attended with these two following Properties, *viz.* *Freedom* from the greatest *Evils*, and a *Right to, and Possession of,* the greatest *Good.* Sinners while in a State of Unregeneracy are immers'd in, and expos'd to the greatest Evils, both moral and penal. They are under the Dominion of Sin, and all over tainted by it; and by Reason thereof they are expos'd to the Curse and Wrath of God, in this and the next World. They are in a Dungeon of Darknes and Distrets, in a Pit in which there is no Water! Bound and shackled with the heavy Curse of God, void of Light and Beauty, and cover'd with the basest Deformity! Now the Benefits of divine Grace, bring the Sinner from this Depth of Woe, loote his Shakles, and release him out of Prison! Hereby he is freed from the Guilt of Sin, thro' the Righteousness of CHRIST imputed to him, and hereby he is freed from the Dominion of it, thro' the sanctifying Influences of the Holy

Holy

Holy Spirit; and as he is thus freed from the greatest Evils by divine Grace, so he is thereby entitled to, and made a Possessor of the greatest Good, both Physical and moral, being made a Partaker of the divine Love, and beautified with the Divine Image, *viz.* Holiness. By the former he is refresh'd, and by the latter adorn'd. And as he is under the unerring Conduct and Almighty Protection of God here, so he is entitled to the perfect Enjoyment of God hereafter; which is the greatest Good, that it is possible for a Creature to receive. I proceed to the

4th. Propos'd, which was to consider, what is *really* and *seemingly oppos'd* to the Grace of God. Now the Things that are *oppos'd really*, are these two, *viz.* *Nature* and *Merit*. And

1st. *Nature*. *Hereby we are Children of Wrath, being dead in Trespasses and Sins*, Eph. ii. 1, 3. By Nature we have blind Minds, and stony Hearts, neither discern the Things that be of God, nor are willing to be subject thereto, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *The natural Man understands not the Things of the Spirit of God, neither can he discern them, because they are spiritually discerned*, Rom. viii. 7. *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be*. Nature in its present fallen and corrupted State, fights against the Grace of God, as long as it can. And therefore the Citadel of Man's Heart, must be taken by Storm, if the King of Glory takes Possession of it. And

2dly *The Papal Doctrine of the Merits of Works*, in the Business of Justification, directly opposes the Grace of God: For Grace is undue and undeserved Love, as was shewn before Rom. iii. 28. *We conclude that a Man is justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law. If it be of Works, it is no more of Grace, otherwise Works would be no more Works, and Grace would be no more Grace*. But to proceed.

U u z

3dly

3dly. The *Wrath* of God is seemingly oppos'd to Grace. Now the Wrath of God is no other, than his vindicative Justice, or Disposition to punish the Guilty; which includes three Things in it.

1st. A Purpose of punishing the Transgressor, Rom. i. 18. *For the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness.*

2dly. It includes the Denunciation of the aforesaid Purpose by Threatnings Ps. vii. 11, 12, 13. *God is angry with the Wicked every Day, if he turn not he will whet his Sword, he hath bent his Bow and made it ready. He hath also prepar'd for him the Instrument of Death he ordaineth his Arrows against the Persecutors,*

3dly. It includes the Execution of the Threatnings, by all Kinds of Revenge and Judgments. Ephes. v. 6. *Let no Man deceive you, with vain Words, for because these Things, cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience, i. e. Fruits and Effects of Wrath in divine Judgments.* Sin wrongs the Almighty by insulting his Sovereignty and Legislative Authority, by contradicting his unspotted Holiness, and by slighting the Riches of his Goodness. By Sin God is wrong'd, and rob'd of that Tribute of Honour and Service which is due to him, from all created Beings, by the strongest claims of Right, viz. Creation, Preservation, Provision: And some are under the additional Engagement of redeeming Love. It is Sin therefore, that stirs up the divine Wrath, and because there be various Aggravations of Sin, therefore there are various Degrees of Wrath excited thereby, and proportion'd thereto. And hence the Scriptures speaking after the manner of Men, make mention of God's hot Displeasure, Fury, and Rage, Ps. vi. 1. Ezek. viii. 18. *Therefore will I also deal in Fury, mine Eye shall not spare, neither will*

I have Pity, and tho' they cry in mine Ears, with a loud Voice, yet I will not bear them. Job xl. 11. *Cast abroad the Rage of thy Wrath.* These Expressions do not signify any Tumult of Passion in God, for he is incapable of Passion, being simple, immutable, and perfect! They serve therefore only to represent the great contrariety of the Nature of God to Sin, as well as the more dreadful Effects of his Wrath upon heinous Transgressors! But in the mean Time, it may be observ'd, that the Wrath of God in every Instance of it is terrible, and irresistible; because it proceeds from an infinite and Almighty God. And hence it's compar'd to a *burning Fire*, and to a *Whirlwind, that sweeps all before it.* Zeph. i. And except Repentance intervene, it will be continual and eternal.

Altho' the Doctrine of *Free-Grace* has been abus'd into Licentiousness, by some sordid Spirits, which the Apostle *Paul* mentions with great Abhorrence! *Rom. vi. 1, 2. Shall we continue in Sin that Grace may abound, God forbid!* Yet it's Design and Tendency is to promote the Contrary. And indeed nothing more powerfully incites an ingenuous Mind to Holiness, than the Consideration of God's free and distinguishing *Grace*. And here it is to be noted, that tho' Almighty God, gives his Grace freely, that so no Creature should have Occasion of *boasting or glorying in his Presence*. Yet ordinarily he vouchsafes it in the Use of appointed Means; that so there may be no Umbrage for Negligence, but on the Contrary, all that excitement to Duty, which can consist with the divine Sovereignty! These Things are excellently represented in the xxxvith chap. of *Ezek.* from the xxviith to the xxxviiith verse there. Tho' the Almighty promises to confer saving Benefits, yet he tells them, that *for all these Things, he will be enquired of by them.* But it's Time to offer a Word of improvement. And

ist.

1st. From what has been said we may learn, that all those Doctrines which ascribe any Part of our Salvation, to our Endeavours, as meritorious Causes thereof, are very derogatory to the Glory of God, and the Design of his Gospel; which is to magnify the Exceeding Riches of God's Grace! *Ephes. i. Such who seek after Righteousness as it were by the Works of the Law are not like to attain it.* Justification is not to be attain'd by a Dependence upon our Endeavours, we must come to God as Beggars, and ask an Alms of *Free-Grace*, otherwise we shall be rejected.

2dly. We should examine ourselves whether we are Partakers of God's special Grace, in the Instances before mentioned, of *effectual Calling*, Faith, Justification, Conversion, Adoption; have we by these Things been brought to a high prizing of CHRIST above all others, to a Child-like Familiarity with God, to a habitual holy, humble, heavenly and loving Temper of Mind, and Course of Behaviour, if so, let us rejoyce in CHRIST JESUS in all outward Distresses, let us ever admire the Sovereign and distinguishing Grace of God; and give to God the Glory of it in Heart, Speech, and Practice.

But such of you as have not found the aforesaid Experiences, *rejoyce not for Joy, as other People, for ye have gone a whoring from God! Let your Laughter be turn'd into Mourning and your Joy into Heaviness!* Cry frequently and earnestly to God, for sovereign saving Grace, and rest in no Duties or Ordinances short of it.

Is the Grace of God free? Then the greatest Transgressors should not despair of God's Mercy, tho' your Iniquities rival the Stars for Multitude, and in their Agravations are red as Crimson and Scarlet, yet *Free Grace* can easily blot them out, as a thick Cloud, and make them white as Snow! Therefore let sensible Sinners, be encouraged to come to, and believe in the God of Grace: *For where Sin has a-bounded*

bounded, there Grace has much more abounded. The greater your Transgressions are, the greater Glory God will get to his Grace in forgiving them! The Psalmist was aware of this, and therefore plead with God, *to pardon his Iniquities because they were exceeding great:*

And methinks the Doctrine of *Free Grace* should powerfully induce us to Humility, seeing that it is God only, who has made us to differ from others, and that we have nothing but what we have receiv'd. We are his Debtors, for all we have in *Hand or Hope*. The Nature of Grace supposes the Object, upon whom it is vouchsaf'd, unworthy of it. A continued humbling Sense of this, would as much conduce to our Benefit, as Ornament.

And seeing the good God is pleas'd to heap many undeserved Kindnesses freely upon us, why should we not imitate his Grace, by conferring Benefits upon our fellow Creatures, without any regard to Dignity, or Hopes of a reward from them: By this we should glorify God and convince others that we are his Children:

In fine, let me in the Name of the gracious God my Lord and Master, earnestly beseech poor Sinners of every Order to hasten as for their Lives to that Fountain of Grace that is in CHRIST. Think not to put the Almighty in your Debt by your doings, for if Grace be not Free it is not Grace. Sinners abuse not the Grace of God by Delays, and other Impieties, or expect his inflam'd Wrath to avenge the Ingratitude! *Let the wicked Man forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his thot's, and turn unto God and he will have Mercy on him, and to our God for he will abundantly Pardon.*

I add no more at present, may the Almighty and gracious God bless his Word, that has been offer'd in his Name to our special and enduring Benefit. *Amen.*

SERMON

SERMON XVIII.

EXODUS xxxiv. 6.

And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering.

HAVING in the preceding Sermon discours'd upon *the Grace of God*. The next divine Attribute that offers itself to our present Meditations from the Text, is *the Patience and Long-suffering of God*.

And this the sacred Scriptures frequently ascribe to him, Nahum i. 3. *The Lord is slow to anger and great in Power.* Psa. ciii. 8. *The Lord is Gracious and Merciful, slow to Anger, and plentiful in Mercy.* Isa. xxx. 18. *And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be Gracious unto you.*—

In discoursing upon this divine *Attribute of Patience, or Long-suffering*, I shall

I. Speak of its *Nature*.

II. Of its *Riches*.

III. Of its *Reasons*. And

IV. Of its *Consistency with vindicative Justice*. And then proceed to the *Improvement*. I return to the

1st. Propos'd, which was to speak of the *Nature of divine Patience*. Here it may be observ'd, that tho' Patience and Long-suffering in Creatures differ really, for the former seems only to signify our inability to punish an Offender, and the latter our Unwillingness to do it, when in our Power

Power, but in God they are the same, and can be only distinguish'd, as to the Degree of Duration or Continuance. Long-suffering is only a Suspension of Wrath for a longer Time: This being the Case I shall not therefore treat of them distinctly, but proceed to observe, that the Patience of God may be thus describ'd, viz. *That it is a Branch of his Mercy whereby he long defers deserved Wrath, and moderates the Executions of it in this World towards guilty Creatures.* Here observe 1st. That the Object of God's Patience, is guilty Creatures. "An innocent Creature cannot be the Object of it, because avenging Justice has no Demand upon him, he may be the Object of Goodness, but not of Long-suffering and Forbearance: For Punishment cannot be said to be deferd' where it is not due." 2dly The Acts of Patience, are 1st. God's deferring the Execution of deferd' Wrath for a Time: And this proceeds neither from the Want of Power or Opportunity to punish Transgressors: For they are always under the Cognizance of God's Eye, and within the Reach of his Arm. He can in an Instant speak them to nothing by a Word, or strike them dead and damned at a Blow, when and where he pleases! No, his Patience is the Fruit of his Goodness, or rather as the Scripture Terms it, *a Display of his Power.* And hence he is said, *to be slow to Anger and great in Power*, Nahum i. 3. and Rom. ix. 22. God is said *to make his Power known in enduring with much Long-suffering, the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction.* And hence some describe God's Patience, to be *a Power of deferring the Execution of his Wrath.* 2dly. Another Act of Patience consists in the Moderation of Punishments when inflicted, so that they are not equal to the desert of Sin. Psal. ciii. 10. *He hath not dealt with us after our Sins nor rewarded us according to our Iniquities.* The Almighty stirs

not up all his Wrath at once, but punishes gradually. He stays his rough Wind in the Day of his East Wind, and tries Rods before he sends Scorpions. But 3dly. The Place where God exercises his Patience, is this World, which is a state of Probation or Tryal, whereas the next is a state of Rewards and Punishments. The Damned cannot be said to be the Objects of God's Patience, because they endure the Viols of God's Vengeance, in a degree proportioned to their demerit. And altho' the Devils are not expos'd to so great a Weight of Woe and Vengeance as they will be after the general Judgment; which is intimated, by their being *reserved in chains, under Darknes to the Judgment of the great Day.* Jud. 6. As well as by their Question to our Saviour, Mat. viii. 29. *Art thou come to torment us before our Time?* Yet this less degree of Punishment inflicted on them, has no where in Scripture the Denomination of *Patience*: It remains therefore that Men are the only Objects of it, and that while in this World. But

4thly. The *Time* wherein *Patience* is exercised, is generally a long Duration, tho' not always: The just God makes quick Work with some, and lets his terrible severity suddainly triumph in their ruin, as in the Case of *Korab* and his Accomplices, *Ananias* and *Saphira* and others. But for the most Part *Jehovah* suspends the falling Blow for a considerable Season, even till there be no remedy! In civil Courts of Judicature, there is usually but a little Space between the Sentence and Execution, and it is but Just it should be so. But *Jehovah* mercifully waits, and is not speedy in coming out against the Sinner. Eccles. viii. 11. *Sentence against an evil Work is not speedily executed.* The Almighty expostulates the Case and uses a variety of Methods to reclaim impenitent Transgressors, before he lets his Vengeance light upon them to destroy them. This is well represented

presented in the following Places of Scripture, Jer. ii. 5. *Thus saith the Lord, what Iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they have gone so far from me, and have walked after Vanity and become vain?* Jer. viii. 6. *I hearkned and heard, but they spake not aright, no Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying what have I done. Every one turned to his Curse, as the Horse russeth into the Battle!* I proceed to consider the Riches of divine Patience; which was the

2d. Propos'd. Now the following Particulars serve as Foils to illustrate the Greatness of God's Patience, in forbearing to execute his Vengeance upon Transgressors. And

1st. Let it be considered, that God is Infinite and unspotted in Holiness, and inflexible in his Justice, and therefore cannot but abhor Sin with an unalterable and eternal Antipathy. And

2dly. How great is the Offence committed against God by every Sin? Seeing that the Sinner hereby interpretatively, prefers Creatures, yea his Lusts before the Blessed God! And therefore as much as in him lies, labours to dethrone the Almighty. The exceeding contrariety of Sin to the untainted Purity of the divine Nature, is set forth in strong Terms, accommodated to our Manner of Conception in the following Places of Scripture, Amos ii. 13. *Behold I am press'd under you, as a Cart is press'd that is full of Sheaves.* Ezek. vi. 9. *I am broken with their wborish Heart, which hath departed from me!*

3dly. The Heighnousness of some Sins above others, serve to heighten our Conceptions of the divine Patience: All Iniquities are not equally aggravated, some are of a slighter Tincture, and some of a crimson Hue; a deep a double Dye, (Isa. i. 18.) And such are Sins against Light, Love, covenant Engagements, and Rebukes of Providence; and more especially our slighting and neglecting of the Lord.

JESUS CHRIST. Hereby the dearest Love is undervalu'd and the yearning Bowels of the most compassionate pity spurn'd against; yea the precious Blood of the adorable *Immanuel* trod under Foot, O astonishing monstrous Ingratitude! And more amazing Patience; that forbears executing deserv'd Vengeance upon such Transgressors! And

4thly. What a prodigious Number of Sins are committed every Moment, yea of the vilest Kind? Surely innumerable Evils do compass us about, *if the Tongue be a World of Iniquity*, as the Apostle *James* observes, (*Jam. iii. 6.*) *what then shall be said of all the Members together*; which are as so many Fountains of Impiety? Who then can understand his Errors? If the most Patient Man alive was to behold at once the Multitude of Evils which God beholds together with their Filthiness: Surely if it was in his Power the World would not stand many Moments! And yet the All-knowing infinitely holy God forbears bringing Judgment to the Pluinet! I say forbears to sweep obstinate ungrateful Transgressors off the Stage of Time into a deluge of endless Woe and Ruin, O astonishing Patience! Patience worthy of a God, and which none but he can exercise! Tho' Sinners as it were fly in the Face of *Jehovah*, run upon the thick Bosses of his Bucklers, bid Defiance to Omnipotence, basely trample upon his Authority and his Love, and by every impious Art try to provoke a God to Arms, as if they were stronger than he: Yet notwithstanding all this, *Jehovah* forbears to give the fatal Blow, behold and be astonish'd ye Heavens and Earth at this? And

5thly. It adds Weight to this Argument, when we consider the Almightyness of the God of Patience, how easily, speedily, and fully can he avenge all the Affronts that are cast upon his Honour, all the Invasions that are
made

made upon the Rights of Heaven? It cost him but a Word to make the Heavens and Earth exist, one Word of *Jehovah* would speak the Offender Dead, or make him cease to be! The Lord has a Sovereign Empire over the whole Universe, when he speaks all Nature trembles before him, the Thunder of his Power who can understand! *Consider this therefore ye that forget God, lest he tear you in Pieces when there shall be none to deliver. Ps. l. 22.*

6thly. Moreover the many Measures which divine Mercy uses to reclaim the Impenitent by the *Word, Spirit, Providence*, in its prosperous and adverse Aspects, may help us to admire the more at that Patience, which endures the Abuse of all. *2 Cor. v. 20. Now then we are Ambassadors for CHRIST, as tho' God did beseech you by us, we pray you in CHRIST's stead, be ye reconcil'd to God!* And

7thly. We may add to what has been said, the innumerable Benefits which the indulgent God without any Demerit oftentimes heaps upon the vilest Transgressors, *Ps. lxxiii. 12. Behold these are the ungodly who prosper in the World, they increase in Riches!* Yea how Precious and Important is the Treasure of Time which is confer'd upon all? Besides many other Benefits which the Season for this exercise would fail to innumerate! Respecting all which we may accost the impenitent Sinner in the Language of *Paul* to the *Romans xxiv. 5. Despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness and Forbearance, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance.*

8thly. The quick Dispatch that divine Justice has made with some, witness *Uzza, Nadab, Abihu, Achan, Herod*, and divers others, who perhaps all Circumstances considered have not committed greater Evils than we, is a great Illustration of God's Long-suffering towards us, *Rom. xi. 22.*

Behold

Behold the Goodness and Severity of God on them which fell Severity; but towards thee, Goodness, if thou continue in his Goodness, otherwise thou also shall't be cut off!

9thly. Once more me thinks the Length of the Time that Patience has been exercis'd towards us, is a pregnant Argument of the Greatness and Riches of it. Has not *Jehovah* restrain'd the Execution of his Wrath, and waited to be Gracious to some of us, this *Twenty, Thirty, Forty, Fifty, or Sixty Years?* While in the mean Time we have been trampling upon his awful Authority, and slighting the dear Carasses of his manifold Mercy, O amazing Patience! When the Angels sin'd, they were quickly cast down to Hell, and made Monuments of divine Vengeance, and behold we who have been Transgressors from the Womb are yet spared! Surely it had been nothing but an Act of Justice in God to have cast every Soul of us into utter Darkness, many a Year ago: And yet we are alive, and on this side the burning Lake, and have the Offers of Mercy and Salvation made to us, O the unparalleled Patience of God! O may his Long-suffering lead us to Repentance, and be Salvation to us!

But that I may farther illustrate this Argument of the *Riches of divine Patience*, it will not be a mis to add the following Displays thereof.

When our first Parents had revolted from their Duty and Allegiance to God, by Transgressing the Covenant of Works, and we in them. Might not God in Justice have made them and their Off-spring immediately and eternally Miserable, without any Hopes of a Retrieve? Yes surely! To what then can we ascribe the Delay of Justice and Expence of Goodness to them and us, but to the *divine Long-suffering?*

And

And after the fatal Shipwreck of our first Parents, when in succeeding Time the *Antidiluvian* World had sunk into such dreadful Degeneracy, that all Flesh had corrupted their Way; and the Almighty was hereby provok'd to threaten a Deluge of Judgment, as extensive as the moral Contagion that procur'd it: Yet before it was inflicted, the God of Patience allowed them *One Hundred and Twenty* Years warning, by *Noah* a preacher of Righteousnes; during which Space the Long-suffering of God waited on them. (*1 Pet.* iii. 20. *2 Pet.* ii. 5.) And had not the Church of the Jews great Experience of the Patience of God? Tho' the Power and Love of God were marvelously manifested, in delivering that People from the most oppressive Bondage in *Egypt*, as well as in preserving of them, and providing for them in their Way to *Canaan*. The whole was effected by the mighty Hand, and outstretched Arm of God, by a Series of most astonishing Miracles! Yet after all, what Infidelity, Idolatry, Murmurings and Perverseness, was that People so highly favoured guilty of, and yet were not destroy'd? Hence the Almighty is said to *suffer their Manners in the Wilderness forty Years*, *Acts* xiii. 18. And tho' their Idolatries afterwards were scandalous to the last degree, yet Patience was exercis'd, Deliverers many Times rais'd up for them, and Judgments but slowly executed, and attended with a mixture of Mercy: And even after they had bro't their crimson Impieties to the most horid Crisis, by crucifying the Son of God! A Prodigy of Wickedness, which the Sun himself refus'd to behold! An Impiety at which the conscious Earth trembled with Horror and Regret! Yet did divine Patience spare them for a considerable space of Time, till they had the Offers of Life repeatedly made to them by the primitive Preachers of the Gospel, as well as repeated Warnings of their just and approaching Ruin! It was a
matter

matter of Forty Years after, that unhappy and ungrateful Nation, had judged themselves unworthy of eternal Life, by rejecting the Apostolical Warnings and Invitations before their Metropolis was sack'd, and themselves dispers'd and almost wholly destroy'd by the Sword of *Titus Vespasian*.

But the Jewish Church and Nation, are not the only Sharers, of the rich Expence of divine Patience. The Gentiles also tho' guilty of the most infanduous Iniquities, directly contrary to Natures Light, have had large Experience thereof. And hence God is said, *in Time past to suffer all Nations to walk in their own Ways, and to give them Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling their Hearts with Food and Gladness*, Acts xiv. 16, 17. Yea and it is no inconsiderable Instance of the Long-suffering of God, that it has been extended to false Teachers, who have endeavour'd to seduce and corrupt the Church of God. These likewise have had a *Space given them to repent, tho' they repented not*, Rev. ii. 21. But to proceed,

Methinks the Methods of the divine Proceedings, even in inflicting of Judgments upon Transgressors, if closely attended to, may assist our Conceptions of the Riches of God's Patience.

Before Judgment is executed, the gracious God doth generally give by his Servants, plain and frequent Warning. And hence it is said, *that he bew'd the People of Israel by his Prophets, and slew them by the Words of his Mouth. He speaketh once, yea twice, but Man perceiveth it not, that he may withdraw Man from his purpose, and hide Pride from Man*. Job. xxxiii. 14, 17.

And when Sinners slight the divine Warnings, obstinately refusing to be reclaim'd, and so render the inflicting of Judgment necessary to vindicate the Honour of God's Government. Behold the long-suffering God uses a Gradation herein,

herein, by sending a Succession of lesser Judgments, before more awful Calamities are inflicted. And hence the Judgments of God are compar'd to the *Light that goeth forth*; that is the Morning Light, which by degrees increases to a perfect Day, the Morning Sun gradually ascends to his Meridian Height, or to the Vertex of the Horizon (*Hos. vii. 3.*) Thus the Prophet *Joel* relates a Series of divine Judgments, which were inflicted upon the People of Israel, (*Joel i. 4.*) First the *Palmer Worm*, then the *Locust*, after that the *Canker-Worm*, and then the *Caterpillar* devoured the Fruits of the Earth. And *Amos* observes likewise, that God sent first a Famine, and afterwards overthrew some of them as *Sodom and Gomorba*, (*Amos iv. 8, 11.*)

The Almighty in executing of his Judgments, doth generally moderate them, so that they are not equal to the Demerit of Sin. Of this the Prophet *Isaiab* speaks excellently, *Ila. xxvii. 7, 8. Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him, or is he slain according to the Slaughterer, of them that are slain by him? In Measure thou wilt debate with it: He stayeth his rough Wind in the Day of his East Wind.*

And here it should be with Amazement observ'd, that when the Execution of Judgment is rendered necessary, by the continued Impieties of unrelenting Transgressors, the Almighty doth this strange Work, with a kind of regret and reluctance. *Hosea. xi. 8, 9. How shall I give thee up Ephraim, how shall I deliver thee Israel, How shall I make thee as Admah, how shall I set thee as Zeboim, mine Heart is turned within me, and my Relentings are kindled together?* When our compassionate Redeemer, drew near to, and beheld the City of Jerusalem, having in his view the desolating Calamities which were to ensue, upon their ungrateful Refusal of his gracious and infinitely important Proposals,

Y y

he

he wept over it ! saying, *If thou hadst known, or as some render the Words, O that thou hadst known, in this thy Day, the Things that concern'd thy Peace, but now they are hid from thine Eyes* Luke xix. 41 But it's Time to consider the

3d. Propos'd, which was to speak of the Reasons of God's Patience. And

1st. One Reason is, God's *good and beneficent Nature*, which is more prone to Mercy than Judgment. The former is his Delight, but the latter is his strange Work. And hence it is said *Lam. iii. 33. That he afflicts not willingly, or grieves the Children of Men. Jer xxxi. 20. Is Ephraim my dear Son? Is he a pleasant Child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my Bowels are troubled for him. I will surely have Mercy upon him saith the Lord.* God's Goodness and Long-suffering are doubtless eminent Branches of his manifestative Glory: For when *Moses* desired a Sight thereof, this Name was proclaimed. *Ex. xxxiv. 6. The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness.* And these the Almighty claims as his peculiar Prerogatives, as appears by that famous Scripture, *Hos xi. 9. I will not execute the Fierceness of my Anger, for I am God and not Man.* Man is impatient and full of Repentment. It is a just Observation of Mr. Bolton, "That if any tender Hearted Man, should sit one Hour in the
"Throne of God Almighty, and look down upon the Earth,
"as God doth continually; and see what Abominations are done
"in that Hour, he would undoubtedly in the next set all the
"World on Fire." But the Lord is God and not Man, his Patience has no Parallel among all created Beings.

2dly. Another Reason of divine Forbearance, is the Manifestation of God's *Glory*. Jehovah is not only induced to Patience, by the Kindness of his Nature, but likewise by the
Glory

Glory of his Name. *Isa. xlvi. 9, 11. For my Name sake will I defer mine Anger, and for my Praise will I refrain from thee, that I cut thee not off. For mine own Sake, even for mine own Sake will I do it: For how should my Name be polluted, and I will not give my Glory to another.* An Example of this we have in *Pharaoh, Ex. ix. 16. And in very Deed for this Cause have I rais'd thee up, for to shew in thee my Power, and that my Name may be declar'd through out all the Earth.* And

3dly. The Lord exercises Long-suffering because of his Promise made to pious People, and their Offspring. *Gen. xvii. 7. And I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee in their Generations, for an everlasting Covenant to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee.*

4thly. Another Reason of God's Patience is, that some may be hereby induced to repent of their evil Ways. *Rom. ii. 4. Or despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness, Forbearance and Long-suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance.* And indeed Men are lost to all Sense of Humanity and Gratitude, if the Consideration of God's Goodness and Long-suffering, does not excite their Sorrows for their Offences against him. Memorable are the Words of the Apostle *Peter* upon this Subject. *2 Pet. iii. 9. The Lord is not slack concerning his Promise, as some Men count Slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance.*

5thly. The Almighty forbears to execute Vengeance because of the Mixture of good People with bad in this World, and from the Regard he bears to the Prayers of the Former. *Gen. xix. 21, 22. And he said unto him, see I have accepted thee concerning this Thing also, that I will not overthrow this City; for the which thou hast spoken, Haste thee escape thi-*

ther, for I cannot do any Thing till thou become thither; therefore the City was called Zoar. The Holy Seed, *i. e.* pious People, are the Substance, the Support of Places where they are. (*Isa. vi. 13.*) And hence it is said, *Isa. xix. Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small Remnant, we should have been as Sodom,---and like unto Gomorah.*

6thly. Another Reason of God's Patience, is to continue, and propagate his Church in the World. *Rev. vi. 10, 11. And they cried with a loud Voice saying, how long O Lord Holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our Blood on them that dwell on the Earth?---And it was said unto them, that they should rest, yet for a little Season, until their fellow Servants and Brethren,---should be fulfilled, i. e.* until their Number was compleated. The Church could not be continued from Age to Age, if God was speedy in the Execution of his Wrath. Many of the Elect are doubtless in the Loyns of impious Parents, who are spar'd for their Sakes. Again

7thly. Patience is exercis'd, to render Sinners who continue in their Impenitence inexcusable; and to vindicate the Justice of God in their final Ruin. (*Rom. ii. 1, 2, 4.*) The long continuance, and rich Expende of divine Patience towards impenitent Sinners, bereave them of all Apology in their own Favour! *This, this* will make them wholly speechless, before the Judgment Bar of the incarnate God! they will not be able to offer one Plea in their Defence. The

4th. Propos'd comes now to be spoke upon, namely, the consistency of divine Patience, with God's vindicative Justice, and this will appear by considering the following Particulars.

1st As there is an equal necessity of glorifying the Attributes of Patience, as of God's other Perfections, so there is no Time for this but in the present World. Neither the
Sav'd

Sav'd or Damn'd are Objects of Patience, the former need it not, and the latter are past it. Then either it must be manifested here or not at all; but there will be sufficient Room for the Terrible Displays of Justice in another World.

2dly. Seeing that the Design of avenging Justice is either to manifest God's Holiness, or to secure the Rights of his Sovereignty, then if both these can be answered, notwithstanding the Exercise of Patience, there is surely a Consistency and Harmony between them, and that this is the very Case appears thus: God's Holiness is manifested in his Threatnings against Transgressors, the Execution of which his Truth stands engaged to secure. The just *Jehovah* has said, *That he will rain upon Sinners Snares, Fire, and Brimstone, and an horrible Tempest, and this shall be the Portion of their Cup! For the Lord loveth Righteousness, Psa. xi. 6, 7.* And tho' this be a Time of Probation, yet in order to vindicate God's Holiness and Justice, there be some Executions of Wrath. Hence the Lord is said *to be known by the Judgments which he executes, and that the wicked are snared in the Work of their own Hands.*

Neither does a temporary Suspension of the full Executions of Justice, give any Occasion to Sinners to insult the divine Sovereignty; nay, to ingenious Minds, it is rather an Inducement to submit to the divine Government, seeing he is so full of Clemency. Slow Proceedings in Judgment, and Reprieves granted to Malefactors, are no Reproach; but an Honour to civil Governments; and why should the same mild Measures be reckon'd an Impeachment upon the Divine? But I hasten to the Improvement of this Subject. And 1st. We may learn from it the exceeding Preciousness of the Souls of Men. Our Lord, who is the best Judge of the Worth of Things, esteems one of them worth more *than the whole World, Mat. xvi. 29.* And this he has testify'd by

by the Price he has laid down for them, which was no less than his own most precious Blood, (1. *Pet.* i. 19.) As well as by the importunate Methods he uses in order to apply this Redemption, and particularly by the Expence of his Patience in waiting to be Gracious to poor Sinners. And why then should we not value our own Souls, and express this by suitable Solitude, and Labours to secure their Happiness? And

2dly. From the Patience of God we may learn this Lesson, that it is better for us to be at the Mercy of God than of any Creature: Tho' *Moses* was meek above all Men upon the Face of the Earth, yet the Impieties of the People of *Israel* put him in a Rage against them, so that he accosted them in the following Language at *Meriba*, *You Rebels* said he, *must I draw Water for you out of the Rock?* The Prophet *Jonah* seem'd to be more concern'd about his Credit, than about the Lives of the great City *Niniveb*; yea he was displeas'd and very Angry at the Kindness of God, in sparing that sinful Place upon their Reformation, and accosted the Almighty in very undecent Language on this Occasion: yea he resent'd the Kindness of God to that Place in such a Degree, that he chose Death rather than Life on this Account! O strange and unaccountable Conduct! (See *Jona* iv. 1. 2. 3.) But

2dly. Another Use that may be justly drawn from this Subject of divine Patience, is of Encouragement to all Sinful Souls; such should be induc'd hereby to cast away their desponding Fears, and to come to **JESUS CHRIST** with Hopes of obtaining Mercy. To this he invites them in a compassionate Manner, *Mat.* xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy Laden, and I will give you Rest*: And surely our dear Lord will be as Good as his Word. The Enemy of Souls labours to discourage awakned Sinners

in

in their Motions to CHRIST by many dreadful suggestions such as these following, *viz.* That they have committed the unpardonable Sin ; but how can that be while they bewail Sin and seek Deliverance from it ? Or by insinuating that the Season of Mercy is past, and that God is so severe that he will have no Compassion on them. But these are false Suggestions, how can the Day of Mercy be past when God is enlightning the Mind and humbling the Heart by his gracious Influences ? No ! It is then a special Season of Mercy, the Door of Hope is yet open, and the golden Scepter of Pardon and Peace is held forth by the King of Glory. God is not waiting for an Opportunity to destroy the Sinner, but for an Opportunity to exalt his glorious Grace in shewing them Salvation : Poor Sinners, ye are going to a God of Mercy, Grace and Patience, a God who glories in the Freeness of his Love ! Surely if his Patience bore with you in your obstinate Course of unrelenting Impieties, it will much more so when you are humbled under a Sense thereof : Therefore be encouraged to attend with Hope upon the Means of Grace, and to venture your guilty Souls by believing on an all-sufficient and compassionate Redeemer, who is able to save to the uttermost all that come to the Father by him, and who has himself assur'd us, that such as come he will by no Means cast out. But I proceed

3dly. To a Use of Exhortation in the following Particulars
And

1st. Dear Brethren, let us admire and adore the Patience of God towards ourselves ! And to this we may be justly excited by considering the Number, Importance and Long-continuance of the Favours of God towards us, together with the innumerable and heighnous Iniquities which we have presumptuously and ungratefully committed against
all

all the dear Obligations of divine Love! If God should mark Iniquities who could stand before him? How justly therefore, and how easily might the Almighty have made us Miserable, beyond a Remedy long before now? And yet *Jehovah's* Patience waits. Sometimes Men defer the Execution of their Anger, because they are not able to effect it: This was King *David's* Case in suspending *Joab's* Punishment. The Sons of *Zeruiah*, as he himself acknowledged, were too hard for him; they had got so great a Party of the Nation upon their Side; that it was perilous to try to bring them speedily to publick Justice: But God is Almighty in Power, and easily able at any Time, in an Instant, to subdue the most Proud and Potent of his Enemies. It may justly melt our Hearts into Admiration and Gratitude, when we think how justly every Soul of us here present might be this Moment enduring the Vengeance of eternal Fire, past all Hopes of ever obtaining Mercy; and that yet notwithstanding of all our crimson Provocations we are on this side Ruin, and have the Offers of Salvation made to us. But in the

2d. Place let us beware that we abuse not the Patience of God by taking Encouragement therefrom to persist in sinning against him. This alas is the ungrateful Use which some make of this adorable Attribute, *Ecles. viii. 11. Because Sentence against an evil Work, is not speedily executed, therefore the Heart of the Sons of Men is fully set in them to do Evil.* The Baseness of which Ingratitude and Impiety, no Tongue can express, no Mind can conceive fully: And surely the Punishment will be at last proportioned to it, except Repentance intercept the Stroke of Justice! *How shall ye escape who neglect so great Salvation? It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorah in the Day of Judgment than for you.* Do not imagine Sinners that Forbearance is Payment.

Payment. *Be not deceived, that which a Man sows that shall be also reap, he that soweth to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption.* Consider solemnly and speedily those dreadful Words of God himself, Psal. l. 21, 22. *These Things hast thou done and I kept Silent, thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self, but I will reprove thee and set them in Order before thine Eyes. Now consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in Pieces and there be none to deliver!* And how unjust, as well as ungrateful, is the Inference which some impenitent Transgressors draw from the expence of divine Patience, viz. that therefore there is no Providence which presides over human Affairs; and hence they deride all Religion! The Apostle *Peter* long since prophecy'd of this herd of hardned Mortals. (*2 Pet. iii. 4.*) But where is the Sense of this Cavil, for will not Reason it self suggest, that there should be a Time of Probation before that of Recompence?

But that I may come more closely to the Consciences of my Hearers, may I not safely assert, that all you that neglect to improve the present Season of Mercy, or to embrace the Lord JESUS CHRIST, are abusers of God's Patience! Dear Friends, consider, that in so doing ye despise the Goodness and Long-suffering of God, and likewise secure and aggravate your own Ruin. (*Rom. ii. 4.*) Hear with Trembling what God said to his antient People, *Amos iii. 3. You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth, therefore I will punish you for all your Iniquities!* I hasten to the last Use, which is of Exhortation, which is threefold: Methinks the Patience of God invites us to improve it, in Relation to God, our Neighbours, and ourselves. And 1st. We should improve it in Relation to our Behaviour towards God, in a Patient enduring of his fatherly Chastnings, which are so much to our Advantage, and so

much less than our demerit. We should likewise patiently wait for the Answer of our Prayers, as well as for the Time of our Dissolution; *for God hath not said to the seed of Jacob, that they should seek his Face in vain.* The Time of our departure is fixed, and cannot be reversed, let us therefore resolve with *Job*, to wait with Patience till our Change come.

2dly. In Relation to Men. Let us bear Injuries and Reproaches from them with Patience, without meditating Revenge, seeing the great God has so long bore with worse Treatment from us! Let us patiently wait for the Conversion of unconverted Friends and Relatives: God's Power is great, his Grace is free, some he Converts at one Time and some at another! *Jehovah* waits and why should not we with Patience and Hope.

3dly. In Relation to ourselves. O for God's sake let us improve the present Season of divine Patience! *Behold now is the accepted Time, behold now is the Day of Salvation!* Grieve the Spirit of God no more, and try his Patience no longer; for surely if ye persist, divine Patience towards you will have its Period, and then ye are undone forever. Think on these Words, *Pro. i. 24, 25, 26. Because I called and ye refused, I stretched forth my Hand and no Man regarded, therefore will I laugh at your Calamities, and mock when your fear cometh.*

SERMON XIX.

PSALM xxxi. 5.

Into thine Hand I commit my spirit : For thou hast redeemed me O Lord God of Truth.

THIS Psalm was compos'd either when David was in great Distress, or sometime afterwards in Remembrance of it, and of the Kindness and Truth of God, apparent in delivering him therefrom. The Matter of the Psalm, which consists of Prayers and Praises, of Hopes and Fears, seems to suggest what has been observ'd to be Occasion of it's Composure; but we can't certainly determine what those Troubles were to which the *Psalmist* refers herein. Some learned Men, particularly *Muis* from *David Kimchi*, whose Opinion *Mr. Pool* in his *Synopsis* favours, do not improbably Conjecture, that it was compos'd when *David* fled from *Saul*. After the *Psalmist* had, in the preceeding Verses, mention'd some Distress he was in, some disguis'd Contrivance which his Enemy's had secretly form'd to ensnare him, as well as spoken honourably of the divine Power in a Variety of metaphorical Terms, and earnestly implor'd Guidance in Perplexity, and Protection in Danger, he in confidence thereof, doth in the Words of our Text, calmly commend himself to the divine Care, being hereunto encouraged by the Consideration of what God had done for him in difficulty

Z z z

culty

culty heretofore, and believing God was engaged to do the like for him in future Time. *Into thine Hand I commit my Spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth!* So that in these Words, we have two Things, viz. An Account of the Psalmist's Act, together with the Reasons of it. And 1st. His Act was his committing his Spirit into the Hands of God. By *Spirit* we are doubtless to understand his Soul, it was in this Sense that our Lord us'd these Words upon the Cross. (*Luk. xxxiii. 46.*) By the *Hand* of God, we are to understand his Care and Custody, the metaphorical Expression of Arm, when apply'd to God in Scripture, intends his Strength, so that to be taken into the Hands of God in a Way of Mercy, signifies a Person's Being cover'd with Almighty Protection! *Committing ourselves into the Hands of God*, includés in it these three Things especially viz. 1st. A rejecting all other Dependencies. 2dly. A firm Trust in God that he can and will do all well for us. And 3dly. A voluntary Resignation of ourselves intirely to his Care and Kindness.

But

2dly: The Reasons of the *Psalmist's* Act are these, viz. 1st. The Remembrance he had of God's *Kindness* to him formerly, in delivering him out of Troubles: *For thou hast redeemed me.* And 2dly. The Consideration of the Truth of God's *Nature* and *Word*, *O Lord God of Truth*, as if he had said, thou hast promised O Lord, that thou wilt be present with thy People in Distress, and help them; and surely thou wilt be as good as thy Word, for thou art the God of Truth. The Remembrance of past Mercies and Deliverances, both Spiritual and Temporal is of great Necessity in our Christian Course, both to excite our Gratitude to God, and encourage our Trust in him. If we do not remember the *Hill-Mizar*, the *Peniels*, the *Pifgas*, the

Bokims,

Bokims that we have met with, how shall we love our Benefactors and hope in him? And without Love and Hope how can we perform the Duties required of us with Diligence? Encounter the Dangers we are environ'd with, without Courage, or sustain the Difficulties we are expos'd to, with Patience? Was not our Lord offended with his Disciples that they so soon forgot the Miracle about the Loaves? How piercing and upbraiding was the reproof of CHRIST on this Occasion? *O ye Fools and slow of Heart to believe, do ye not remember the Miracle of the Loaves?*

The Subject that I purpose to discourse upon from the Text, is, *the Truth of God.* This Attribute of Truth, is frequently ascrib'd to God in Scripture. Hence (1) He is expressly said *to be True*, Jer. x. 10. *But the Lord is the True God.* (2) It is likewise said, *that he cannot lie or repent*, 1 Sam. xv. 29. *And also the Strength of Israel will not lie or repent, for he is not a Man that he should repent.* Particularly (3) In his Words, he is True yea Truth itself. Joh. xvii. 17. *Sanctify them thro' thy Truth, thy Word is Truth.* (4) In his Works, thus *all the Ways of the Lord are said to be Mercy and Truth, unto such as keep his Covenant.* Psal. xxv. 10.

And it must needs be that God is True, if we consider the following Particulars, 1st. If God were not true, there could be nothing True, or no Truth; for how can there be a second Truth without a first? But there is such a Thing as Truth, therefore God is true! It is equally absurd to suppose, either that the Creature has any Vertue, which it has not deriv'd from God the first Cause of all Being and Goodness, or that it should derive it from one who had it not. 2dly. All falsehood and deceit springs from some Imperfection, either of Ignorance or perverse Intention. Men often mistake thro' Ignorance or Inadvertency; they think

of Things otherwise than they are, either thro' want of a competent measure of Knowledge, or thro' neglect of due Deliberation upon Things, neither of which are compatible to that God who is infinite in Wisdom, and Acts by Council,

Again Men deceive others of Purpose, thro' an evil Disposition of Nature, the Root of which is in all the Posterity of *Adam!* But God is perfectly Pure and Holy, entirely free from every corrupt Byass. And hence is that antithesis or contrariety between the divine Nature, and the Human in its degenerate and fallen State; which is mentioned Rom. iii. 4. *Yea let God be True, but every Man a Lyar; as it is written, that thou mightest be justify'd in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou judgest.* When therefore God is said to deceive the Prophet, *Ezek. xiv. 9.* It only signifies the Almighty's disappointing him by the Course of his all-governing Providence, of the fond Expectations he had from second Causes, and his suffering the Prophet to impose upon himself by wrong Conjectures. Men may be influenced by the vicious Propensities of their own Natures, or by the Instigations of Satan to deceive. But it is directly contrary to, and incompatible with the infinite untainted and inviolable purity of the divine Nature to be any Ways necessary to such abhorred Impiety. *It is impossible for God to lie,* as the Author to the *Hebrews* justly observes, (*Heb. vi. 18.*)

Men do not always adhere with constancy to their Purposes and Declarations, either, 1st. Because they were rashly and precipitantly made, without a just View of Things, and mature Deliberation upon them. Or 2dly. For want of Power to put their Designs into Execution, or 3dly. Because of some unforeseen Changes that are brought to pass by divine Providence, which put their Affairs into a different Situati-

on

on from what they were before; and from what they first had in View. But neither of these Imperfections can be ascrib'd without Blasphemy to God. As his Wisdom is unsearchable, so his Power is Infinite, and his Happiness invariable and eternal. All Futurity is open to his all penetrating Eye, and all Things possible are included within the Compass of his Almightyness. *He is of one Mind and who can turn him, and what his Soul desireth even that he doeth.* Job xxiii. 13. No change of Affairs can be produc'd besides his Purpose or without the Interposition of his sovereign Providence, and therefore he cannot be thereby necessitated to change his Purpose, or fall from his Declarations. And hence *Philo* well observes, "That all the Words of God are Oaths." i. e. most sacred and certain. And *Fulgentius* sayeth truly concerning the supream Being, viz. "That he is Truth without Fallacy, Goodness without Malice, and Happiness without Misery." *Pythagoras* being ask'd what made Men like to God, answered, *cum vera loquuntur* i. e. when they speak Things that are true.

In discoursing upon this Subject, I purpose to speak

I. Upon the *Kinds* and *Nature* of divine Truth. And

II. To answer some *Objections* against it, and then proceed to some *Improvement*. And

1st. It may be observed, that Truth in its general Nature, consists in Agreement, and is Three-fold, viz. Physical, Logical, and Moral. *Physical Truth*, consists in the Agreement, which subsists between the Appearance of a Thing and the Thing itself. This kind of Truth is by some term'd essential, and by others metaphysical.

2dly. *Logical Truth* is when we conceive of a Thing in our Minds, as it really is in it self. As the Former is oppos'd to Paint, and all false Appearances, so this is oppos'd to Error and Mistake in Judgement.

3dly.

3dly. *Moral Truth* consists in speaking as we think, this is oppos'd to lying, the Nature of which consists in going against the Mind, according to the old and true Saying, *mentire est contra mentem ire.*

Now each of these Kinds of Truth, that I have mentioned belongs to God truly and transcendently : For

1st. He has what appertains to true Godhead by his Essence without any Disguise. *John xvii. 3. This is eternal Life, to know thee the only true God, and JESUS CHRIST whom thou hast sent.* Jehovah hath a real Subsistence, and gives Being to all Creatures; whereas the false Gods of the Heathen, have nothing divine, they only carry a deceitful Appearance, or obtain it in the Minds of their Worshippers. *They are only dumb Idols which have Eyes and see not, Ears and hear not, neither speak they thro' their Throats ! They are nothing but Vanity and a Lie, They that make them are like to them, and so is every one that trusteth in them* Psal. cxv. 5, 8. And

2dly. The Mind of God exactly agrees with the Nature of Things, because he beholds all Things in himself. *Neither is there any Creature that is not manifest in his Sight, but all Things are naked and open unto the Eye of him, with whom we have to do.* Heb. iv. 13.

3dly. The Declarations of God's Word exactly agree with the Conceptions of his Mind, and Resolutions of his Will, in all the Parts thereof whether Historical, Prophetical, Promisory, Minatory, Perceptive. Hence the Word of God is said to be pure, *Pf. cxix. 140. i.e.* Its free from all Mixture of Deceit and Falshood. And hence it is likewise said to be try'd, *2 Sam. xxii. 3.1. As for God his Way is perfect the Word of the Lord is try'd, he is a Buckler to all that trust in him.* Psal. xii. 6. *The Words of the Lord are pure Words, as Silver try'd in a Furnace of Earth, purified seven-times.* And

4thly. All the Works of God exactly agree with his Purpose and

and Declaration, Deut. xxxii. 4. *He is a Rock his Work is perfect for all his Ways are Judgment, a God of Truth and without Iniquity just and right is he.* And hence the Almighty is said to be faithful, 1st. In the Works of Creation, 1 Pet. iv. 19. *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the Will of God commit the keeping of their Souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* 2dly. In the Work of Redemption, Heb. ii. 17. *Wherefore in all Things it behoved him to be made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high Priest.* 3dly. The Almighty is faithful in the Works of Grace, and hence Grace and Truth are said to come by **JESUS CHRIST**, John i. 17. 4thly. He is likewise faithful in the Works of Providence, more especially in the Preservation of his Church, Rev. xix. 11. *And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white Horse, and he that sat on him was called faithful and true, and in Righteousness he doth judge and make War.*

Now the Universal Truth of God, that has been mentioned, entirely excludes, and is directly oppos'd to every Error in Judgment, as well as to all Falshood, and lying in Speech and to all Hypocrisy and Deceit in Practice. And therefore *Solomon* justly observes, Prov. vi. 16, 17, 19. *That six Things the Lord Hates, yea that seven are an Abomination unto him!* Among which he names *a lying Tongue, and a false Witness.* Tit. i. 2 *In hope of eternal Life which God that cannot lie promised before the World began.*

But in order to open the Nature of divine Truth more fully, I think it may be thus described, viz. *That it is that Property of the divine nature whereby the Almighty constantly and inviolably adheres to his eternal Purpose both in his Word and Works.* When God is in Scripture call'd *the true God, or the only true God*, these Phrases do not signify any distinct Perfection of the divine Nature, but the whole Godhead, in Opposition to all that are call'd God's, but are not

so by nature. But when he is call'd *the God of Truth*, as in our Text, it intends a particular Attribute or Perfection of Jehovah, even such as has but now been describ'd. Which Description that it may be the better understood, let the following particulars be considered viz.

1st. That God hath from everlasting purpos'd or determin'd to permit or effect whatsoever comes to pass in Time. i. e. He has before all Time decreed, to permit the Evil that is done in Time, without which it could not come to pass, except we deny the Omnipotence of God, which is blasphemous. And he has likewise purpos'd to effect the Good, which cannot be brought to pass without his Assistance and Influence. And hence we are told *Acts xv. 18. That known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning of the World.* This Fore-knowledge necessarily supposes his Purpose, for what is not certainly determin'd, cannot be certainly foreknown. But the Purpose of God, which is no other than an immanent or eternal Act of his Will, respecting his Works of Efficiency, is more expressly spoken of, *Ephes. i. 11. In whom also we have obtained an Inheritance being Predestinated according to the Purpose of him who works all Things after the Council of his own Will.* And as the Purpose of God is eternal, in respect of its Rise and Original, so it is absolute and invariable in its Nature. The Conditions of Things in the decree, are only therein consider'd as Means determin'd to compass the End design'd, *Prov. xix. 21. There are many Devices in Man's Heart, nevertheless the Council of the Lord that shall stand.* *Job xxiii. 13. But he is in one Mind, and who can turn him, and what his Soul desireth even that he doeth.*

2dly. God hath been pleas'd to reveal some Part of his eternal Purpose in his Word. I say some Part, because there are secret Things which are known only to God.

The

The Almighty has reveal'd as much of his Purpose in his Word, as his Wisdom judg'd necessary for us to know.

Now the Revelation we have of God's Purpose in his Word, appears especially in these Things following, viz.

1st. In the Historical Part of it, that contains a true and just Relation of Matters of Fact, which have been brought to pass exactly agreeable to the eternal Plan of the divine Purpose. And

2dly. In Prophecies of Things to come, many such are contain'd in Scripture, both of a publick and personal Nature. And how gloriously does the Truth of God shine forth in the punctual accomplishment of many of them? Here I shall only mention a few, in Relation to our Lord CHRIST. *Jacob* prophesied of the Time of his Birth, viz. *That it should be after the Scepter was departed from Judah.* Gen. xlv. 10. And thus it happened; for *Herod* who sway'd the Scepter at that Time, was of an *Idumean* Extraction. The Prophet *Micah*. foretold, that the Place of his Birth should be *Bethlehem*. *Mica* v. 2. *But thou Bethlehem Ephrata, out of thee shall come forth,---that is to be the Ruler in Israel, whose Goings forth have been from of old, from Everlasting.* And thus it came to pass. *Mat.* ii. 1. *Now when JESUS was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the Days of Herod the King.* *Isaiab* prophesied that his Parent should be a Virgin, *Isa.* vii. 14. *Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his Name Immanuel.* And this the Event answered. (*Mat.* i.) *Zachariab* prophesied of the humble Circumstances of his Life, in the ixth Chapt. of his Book, and the 9th Verse. *Rejoyce greatly O Daughter of Zion, shout O Daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh unto thee, He is just and having Salvation, lowly, and riding upon an Ass, and upon a Colt the Foal of an Ass!* And do not the Evangelists assure us, that this was fulfilled to a Tittle? *Isai-*

ab graphically delineates his miraculous Works, *Isa. xxxv. 56.* *Then the Eyes of the blind shall be opened and the Ears of the Deaf shall be unstopped, then shall the lame Man leap as a Hart, and the Tongue shall sing.* And these Things we are assur'd did come to pass by all that Evidence of credible and harmonious Testimony, which the Nature of such past Facts can admit of, and it is unreasonable surely to desire more! *Daniel* foretells his Death in the ixth Chap. of his Book, and 26th Verse. *The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.* And the Psalmist *David* foretels the Manner of it so particularly, as if he had stood at the Cross and beheld it. *Pf. xxii 16,---19.* *The Assembly of the Wicked have inclos'd me, they pierced my Hands and my Feet. I may tell all my Bones, they look and stare upon me, they part my Garments among them, and cast Lots upon my Vesture.* And is not the Burial of our Lord in the Tomb of a rich Man spoken of by *Isaiab?* *Isa. liii. 9.* *And he made his Grave with the Wicked, and with the Rich in his Death.* Which was accordingly fulfilled. *Mat. xvii. 59, 60.* And does not the Psalmist prophecy of his Resurrection, of which *Jonah* was a Type? *Pf. lxviii. 18.* *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led Captivity Captive, thou hast received Gifts for Men.* Of the accomplishment of which, the Evangelist *Luke* informs us, (*Luke. xxiv. 51.*) But I proceed

3dly. The Almighty reveals his eternal Purposes in his Word, by Precepts; by these God shews to Man his Duty and the Way to obtain the divine Favour, in which his Happiness consists; and this the Almighty purposed to do from Eternity. And hence it is called the *Council of God.* *Acts xx. 27.*

4thly. The Almighty likewise reveals his Purpose in his Word by Threatnings against his Enemies. These are as fiery Barriers about his Law, to preserve it from Contempt and

and Insult! As his unspotted Holiness is delineated in the Precepts of his Law, so his dreadful Justice is display'd in the Penalties annexed to the Breach thereof, which render Jehovah most justly an Object of Fear, as the Former of Love. Now the Threatnings of God's Word, are no other than a Revelation of those Judgments, which God had determin'd from everlasting to inflict, upon finally impenitent Transgressors *Isa. xxx. ult. For Tophet is ordain'd of old; for the King it is prepar'd, he hath made it deep and large, the Pile thereof is Fire and much Wood. The Breath of the Lord like a Stream of Brimstone doth kindle it.* And

5thly. God reveals his eternal Purpose in his Word, by Promises of Spiritual and Temporal good Things to his People; which he sincerely makes, and punctually performs; and on this Account, he is more especially call'd, *the faithful God, who keepeth Covenant and Mercy with those that love him and keep his Commandments, to a Thousand Generations.* Deut. vii. 9. As the Threatnings of God excite Fear, so his Promises encourage Trust and Hope. Tho' God is able to make us happy, yet we have no Ground to expect his Goodness except it be engag'd to us by Promise: For the Almighty is under no natural Obligation, to magnify his Mercy upon us. But when he is pleas'd to engage his Truth in our Favour by promise, it renders the Blessings promised most certain; and so ministers strong Consolation to all that fear God, so that they may reasonably rejoyce in Hope of eternal Life, whatever Difficulties, and threatening Appearances seem to obstruct their attainment of it. Now the Promises of God either respect Mankind in general, or the Church in particular, or truly pious Persons in special. Some Benefits promis'd to Mankind in general are these, viz. That the World shall be preserved to the second coming of our Lord, from another Deluge by Water, the Sign of which

is

is God's Bow in the Clouds. And likewise that the stated and regular Course of Nature, in respect of Seed Time, and Harvest, Cold and Heat, Summer and Winter, Day and Night shall not cease. (*Gen. ix. 11.*) The Promises made to the Church, respect its Protection, Increase, and the divine Presence, in their Religious Assemblies. Thus the Almighty hath said, *that no Weapon form'd against Zion shall prosper, and that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her.* He hath also promised, *that to Shiloh or the Messias should be the gathering of the People.* i. e. the Gentiles. *Gen. xlix. 10.* And *that he would multiply them and they should not be small,* *Jer. xxx. 19.* And Jehovah has promis'd, *that in all Places where he records his Name, he will come to his People and bless them,* *Ex. xx. 24.* The Almighty has also made gracious Promises, suited to all the various Exigencies of his People in particular. e. g. He has promised to *guide them with his Eye and by his Council, to support them by his Power and to refresh them by his Love,* *Pf. xxxii. 8. 11. xli. 10.* *Fear thou not for I am with thee, be not dismay'd for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee by the right Hand of my Righteousness.* *II. lvii. 19.* *I create the Fruit of the Lips, Peace, Peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near sayeth, the Lord and I will heal him.* Moreover God has promised, *that these who wait upon him shall renew their Strength,* *Pf. lxxxiv. 7. Isa. xl. 31.* and finally, *obtain eternal Life.* *John x. 28.* *I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish.* Now every one of these Promises has been fulfilled, the World has been freed from a second Deluge, the successive Vicissitudes of the Year are continued, the Church preserved and propagated, and particular Believers directed, supported and reliev'd. This leads me to. A

3d. Particular, which is this, *viz.* God's adhering to his Purpose, reveal'd in his Word by his Works. I have already observ'd, that God hath determined all Things from Eternity, and that he hath revealed this Purpose or Determination in his Word, *various Ways*: I am now to shew that God performs by his Works what he hath declared in his Word: As there is a Truth which consists in a Conformity between the *Heart* and *Tongue*, which is call'd *Sincerity*: so there is a Truth which consists in an Agreement between *Words* and *Deeds*, which is call'd *Fidelity* or *Faithfulness*. The Almighty not only Purposes to do what he declares, but he adheres to and pursues his Declaration with inviolable Constancy. He does all Things that he hath spoken, and exactly as he hath spoken: He does not in the least come short of his Word in his Works. Numb. xxiii. 19! *God is not a Man that he should lye, or the Son of Man that he should repent: Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it Good?* How express and Noble is the Testimony of *Moses* upon this Head? 1 King. viii. 56. *Blessed be the Lord that he hath given rest unto his People Israel, according to all that he hath promised, there hath not fail'd one Word of all his good Promise which he promis'd by the Hand of Moses his Servant.* I have already shewn how exactly the divine Prophecies and Promises have been fulfilled: And I may here add, that *Jehovah* has often manifested and magnified his Truth in the Execution of his Threatnings. And hence he is said *to be known, i. e.* In the Glory of his Truth and Justice, *by the Judgments which he executes.* All the Instances of divine Judgment upon the old World, *Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboim, and Adma*, and upon the Children of *Israel* which we have upon Record in Scripture, are so many Confirmations of the Truth of God. I proceed to the

2d.

2d. Propos'd, which was to answer some Objections against the Truth of God. And

1st. It is objected that CHRIST is said to die for the whole World. (*Job. i. 29.*) How doth this consist with the Truth of God, seeing that elsewhere, (*viz. Rom. ix. 22.*) It is said that *some are Vessels of Wrath.*

Ans. The Word *World*, is taken either in a limited Sense, for the World of the Elect. Thus CHRIST is said to take away the Sin of the World, *John i. 29.* Or in a more large Sense, for both Elect and Reprobates. And thus 2dly. it may be observ'd, that CHRIST dyed sufficiently for all, but not intentionally and effectually, *i. e.* The Value of Christs Blood was enough for all, but its Vertue was only design'd for, and is only apply'd to those that believe. Hence God is said to be the Saviour of all Men, *effectually of those that believe.* A

2d. Object. is, that tho' God threatned our first Parents that in the Day they eat of the forbidden Fruit they should surely dye; yet this threatning was not executed, for *Adam* lived after this nine Hundred and thirty Years.

Ans. They did die the same Day in several Respects, *viz.* 1st. *Legally*, they were dead in Law, they were condemn'd by the Law they broke, to a temporal and eternal Death: And this in a forensick Sense is often call'd *Death* (*See Rom. viii. 10.*) *The Body is dead because of Sin, i. e.* It is expos'd to Death, as a Consequence of Sin, by Reason of the Sentence of the Law against Transgressors, not that it is actually dead. And 2dly our first Parents died *Spiritually* the same Day: They immediately lost the divine Image, and that Blessed Consequence of it, Communion with God. And hence they are said to *come short of his Glory, Rom. iii. 23.* And they may be said to die *naturally* the same Day, in some Sense *viz.* Not only because

cause they were under a Necessity of enduring, in after Times, the Separation of the Soul from the Body, by Vertue of the Sentence of the Law before mentioned, but also because, in all probability, the original crasis and just temperature of Humours in their Bodies being broke, there was a direct tendency in this judicial Disorder of their very Frame, to a Dissolution. A

3d. Object. is, That tho' *Niniveb* was threatned to be destroy'd in forty Days; yet the Threatning was not executed till forty Years after.

Ans. Possibly forty prophetical Days, which are Years, were intended, tho' *Jonab* understood it not, and if so the Prophecy was exactly fulfill'd: But in my Opinion the following Answer is more satisfactory, viz. That there was a Condition imply'd in, and annex'd to the Threatning which was intended to be published to the *Ninivites*; namely, that they should be destroy'd in forty Days, if they did not repent. It appears by the *Ninivites* humbling themselves that they understood the Prophet in this Sense. For if the Threatning had been absolute, the Use of Means would have been to no purpose, either by the People or the Prophet: But we see that both did use Means, he preach'd, and they humbled themselves, and therefore there was certainly a Condition annex'd to the Threatning: And thus the Objection evanishes.

Object. 4. The *Pelagians*, *Papists*, *Socinians*, *Arminians*, *Remonstrants* and *Lutherans* say, that the Doctrine of the *Calvinists*, respecting the Decrees, argues God to be Untrue and Insincere; because while they Teach, that God wills the Salvation of all, that yet notwithstanding, he in the mean Time wills and decrees the Damnation of some: And that tho' God offers the Redeemer to every one, and invites them by many Arguments to accept him; yet that he in the mean Time does not will that they should believe, and repent, and be fav'd.

Ansiv. The Calvinist's on the Contrary do solemnly Protest in the Presence of God, that they believe God to be True in every Thing, and that his Words do answer exactly to, or agree with both the Things spoken of, and his own Mind, and therefore that God always wills what he says he wills; but after that Manner that he wills, *i. e.* If he declares that he wills an *Event*, then that *Event* most certainly comes to Pass. If he declares that he wills that this or that should be our *Duty*, *i. e.* That we should do or omit this or that, then it certainly is our *Duty*, whether it be perform'd or not: To this Purpose they distinguish the Will of God into *Legislative* and *Decretive*; the former they say is that whereby he determines and wills only concerning Right and Rule, *viz.* What we ought to do or omit; but determines nothing concerning the *Event*: The latter is that whereby God wills and determines concerning the *Event* which shall be; but does not at all concern Right and Rule respecting what should be. Upon this Account they assert, that God wills many Things by his *Legislative Will* which do not come to pass, *e. g.* Thus he will'd that *Pharaoh* according to Right, should let the People of *Israel* go, *i. e.* He will'd that to be *Pharaoh's Duty*; but this he did not will decretively or according to Fact, or in Respect of the *Event*; for if so the Almighty's Purpose was frustrate in that *Pharaoh* did not let them go at the first Demand; but this is impossible, the Council of God shall stand. Now from what has been said the following *Answer* may be given to the Objection. *viz.* 1st. That God does not will the Death of a Sinner by a legislative Will, in as much as he really wills that there should be a Connection between the Conversion of the Sinner and his Salvation, and therefore he sincerely invites every one to Conversion: And to such as are converted he promises Life; tho he does not in the mean Time will

will decretively to give to all Grace and Salvation. 2dly. The *Calvinists* acknowledge that God wills all to be fav'd in the Sense of *Austin*; who by the Word *All*, understood some of all Sorts, not every Individual: As in the Ark God is said to *save all the living Creatures*; but every Bird and Beast was not fav'd, for many perish'd in the Waters: But *All*, that is, some of every Kind, were fav'd; so God will have all to be fav'd, that is some of all Nations. The Almighty wills Faith and Repentance to be the Duty of All and Singular, but he does not will decretively the Salvation of All and Singular, for then they would be fav'd: But the Scriptures assure us, that but a few are fav'd. Salvation is offer'd according to the *Calvinistical* System, only to those that believe and repent, and to them it is given; and where then is the Insincerity? If they reply and say, that such are invited to come to CHRIST, according to our Doctrine, who are decreed to Destruction?

Ans. What then? seeing the Decree does not force or influence the Will. Are not such invited to come to CHRIST according to their Scheme; whom God foreknows shall Perish? Does not certain Fore-knowledge fix the Event as much as the Decree? Let them remove this Difficulty which crosses their own Scheme, and they will answer their own Objection.

Object. 5. Some Promises made to the People of God, respecting temporal and spiritual blessings, are not perform'd; namely, such as respect Growth in Grace, Comfort, Victory over Temptation, &c.

Ans. The Lord may sometimes delay the Performance of a Promise, but he will not deny. God's Promise may lye a long Time, as Seed under Ground, but at last it will spring up. The Vision is for an appointed Time, tho' it taries, wait for it, it will come it will not tary i. e. beyond God's appointed Time. God promised to deliver Israel from the

B b b 2.

Egyptian.

Egyptian Bondage, but this Promise was Four Hundred Years in Travail, before it brought forth the determin'd Event. God promised to *Abraham* a numerous Offspring, but Twenty Years elapsed before he had a Son, and then was commanded to slay him. How dark and dreadful was this Providence! But notwithstanding of the Delays and contrary Appearances, the Promise was accomplish'd in its appointed Season!

2dly. God may change his Promise, but he will not break it: He may turn a Temporal Promise into a Spiritual. *Pf. lxxxv. 12. The Lord shall give that which is good.* Tho' this be not fulfill'd in a Temporal, yet if it be in a Spiritual Sense, the Promise is made good, yea the Almighty may be said to be herein better than his Word, when he gives that which is greater in Worth, tho' not the same in Kind, which was expected.

3dly. There are no Promises of God, but what are made good in Kind in some Instances. And this is a manifest Vindication of the divine Truth therein engag'd, seeing the Benefits promised are conferred on some. And

4thly. God never promises any Benefits in such a Manner as to infringe upon the Rights of his Sovereignty. No, all Blessings are promis'd with this Reserve, viz. That if God thinks it necessary for his Glory and their Good, he will compass their Salvation another Way. The Almighty by spiritual Desertions and Temptations, doth try the Faith and Patience of his People, as well as humble them, and make them prize CHRIST and his Comforts the more afterwards. And thus these Things, yea and their very Blunders are (contrary to their natural Tendency) over rul'd for their Good; which is more than an equivalent for the Loss of divine Joy and Comfort for a Time. And therefore there is hereby no Occasion given to reflect upon the Truth and Faithfulness of God. But

5thly.

5thly. All the Promises of God shall be accomplished in the next World to the greatest Advantage. The Joys of that glorious Paradise, will sufficiently compensate our present momentary and medicinal Sorrows and Miseries. But it's Time to proceed to the Improvement of this Subject. And

1st. We may learn from what has been said, the dangerous and dreadful Case of all impenitent Sinners in general, and more particularly of such, who are guilty (habitually) of Lying, Falshood, Equivocation, and Deceit of any Kind. As they hereby directly oppose the Nature and Law of the God of Truth, as well as contradict the Genius of his People, who are Children that will not lie; so they verge to the Temper of the Devil, the sworn Enemy of God, who was a Lyar and a Murderer from the Beginning, and abode not in the Truth, who is a Lyar and the Father of it. All such do exclude themselves from Communion with God, in this Life, and the Enjoyment of him in the next; and devote themselves to a dreadful and interminable Destruction, *Rev. ii. 1, 27. And there shall in no wise enter into it, any Thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lye. Pf. v. 6. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing, the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful Man.* God is a God of Truth, and therefore will execute his Threatnings upon the whole Tribe of Impenitents. The Threatnings are a flying Roll against Transgressors, in which is written nothing but Mourning, Lamentation and Woe. Jehovah hath said, *That he will wound the hairy Scalp, of every one that goeth on still in his Trespasses, Pf. lxxviii. 21. That he will judge Adulterers: That he beholds Mischief and Spite, to requite it with his Hand, Heb. xiii. 3. Pf. x. 14. That he will rain upon the Wicked Snares, Fire and Brimstone, and an horrible Tempest, & that this shall be the Portion of their Cup, Pf. xi. 6.* And he will surely be as good as his Word.

The

The Heavens and Earth may pass away, but not a Word that God hath spoken, shall pass without its accomplishment. Let not therefore unconverted Sinners presume or harden themselves in their Impieties, because Judgment is not speedily executed, for Delays are no Payment. Let them not vainly conclude, that the Bitterness of Death is past, because their Houses are safe from Fear, neither is the Rod of God upon them. Notwithstanding of all this, they may assure themselves that the Wicked are reserved for the Day of Destruction, they shall be brought forth to the Day of Wrath, Job xxi. 9. 30. Let any who expect Impunity in a Course of Rebellion against the great God, seriously and speedily consider that dreadful Threatning. Deut. xxix. 19. 20. And it cometh to pass, when he heareth the Words of this Curse, that he bless himself in his Heart, saying, I shall have Peace, tho' I walk in the Imagination of mine Heart, to add Drunkenness to Thirst. The Lord will not spare him, but then the Anger of the Lord and his Jealousie shall smoke against that Man, and all the Curses that are written in this Book shall ly upon him and the Lord shall blot out his Name from under Heaven. I shall only mention one other Scripture, under this Use, and it is Ps. l. 20, 21, 22. Thou sittest and speakest against thy Brother, thou slanderest thine own Mother's Son, these Things hast thou done, and I kept Silence, thou thought'st that I was altogether such an one as thy self, but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine Eyes. Now consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in Pieces, when there shall be none to deliver. But

2dly. The Truth of God speaks much Comfort to his People under all their Troubles. What tho' Jehovah hides his Face, yet let not Believers despond: For he will surely return with everlasting Loving-kindness. His Faithfulness cannot fail, *he will ever be mindful of his Covenant.* Ps. cxi. 5. The gracious God hath made many precious Promises of

of important Benefits, suited to all the various Difficulties which his People labour under in this Life, some of which have been already mentioned in this Sermon, every of which his Truth stands engaged to secure. 1 *Thes* v. 24. *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.* Heb. vi. 18. *That by two immutable Things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before us,* 1 *Sam.* xvi. 25. *And also the Strength of Israel will not lie or repent, for he is not a Man that he should repent.* And hence the Gifts of God are said to be *without Repentance*, and his Mercies are called, *the sure mercies of David.* (*Rom.* xi. 29. *Acts* xiii. 24. 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 5.) *Altho' my Cause be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all Things, and sure.* As if he had said, *Tho' I fail much in that Purity God requires, yet this is my Comfort, that God hath made an everlasting Covenant with me.* Let us therefore be exhorted to the following Duties, namely,

1st. Let us trust in God, and expect from him the Fulfilment of all his Promises to the Church in general, and to ourselves in particular, (if we be his) what tho' Clouds and Darkneſs cover her Horizon, yet the faithful God has promised *to be the Glory and Defence of Zion, and to make her a Praise in the Earth.* And what tho' ourselves are oppressed with, and sometimes led captive by our Corruptions God has promised, *to subdue our Iniquities,* *Mic.* vii. 19. And surely the Truth of God in his Promises is a sufficient Foundation for our Faith. 2 *Tim.* ii. 13. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself. He is abundant in Truth,* *Ex.* xxxiv. 6. That is, he is so far from coming short of his Word, that he will be better than his Word. "We are not, saith *Chrysostome*, to believe our "Senses so much as we are to believe the Promises, for "they may fail us, but the Promises cannot, being built "upon

“ upon the Truth of God.” And surely he that believeth not, has made God a Lyar : i e. He implicitly charges lying upon the God of Truth. 1 *John* v. 10.

2dly. Let us *commit ourselves to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator*, 1 *Pet.* iv. 19. Or as our Text expresseth it, *Let us commit our Spirit into his Hand, for he has redeemed us.* What tho’ we be encompassed with Distresses, let us trust, *that he who hath delivered, and doth deliver, that he will deliver us*, 2 *Cor.* i. 10. *That he who hath begun a good Work in us, will perform it, untill the Day of JESUS CHRIST*, *Phil.* i. 6. Let us avoiding all distressing Anxiety about future Events, calmly and firmly rest upon the Promises of a faithful God. And finally let us imitate the God of Truth, in Speech and Practice, hereby we shall be conform’d to the God of Truth, and evidence our being living Members of the Church militant, *which is the Pillar and Ground of Truth.* 1. *Tim.* iii. 15. As well as the certainty of our being at last admitted into the Church Triumphant. (*Pla.* xv.) It is for a Lamentation that many who profess Christianity, fall short of *Turks* and *Indians*, in respect of Truth and Fidelity, and so give Ground for this doleful Distick.---

Multis annis jam peractis, nulla fides est in actis.

Mel in ore, verba lactis, fel in Corde, fraus in factis.

Which may be thus English’d.

For many Years, no Faith in Covenants I’ve found ;
Tho’ Words be sweet, yet Hearts, yea Deeds with Gall
and Fraud abound.

And surely there is nothing more dishonourable to God, and detrimental to the Interests of Religion, than such Practices ; therefore let every one that nameth the Name of God depart from them.

SERMON XX.

DEUTERONOMY vi. 4.

Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,

THIS Book of *Deuteronomy* contains a Repetition of much of the History and Laws which were mentioned in the three preceeding Books, and therefore the *Greek* Interpreters, have justly given it the Name *Deuteronomy*; which signifies the second Law, or the second Edition of the Law. This Repetition *Moses* delivered a little before his Death, not only by Writing, that it might be the better preserv'd as a continual Memorial and Director in all Time coming, but also by Word of Mouth, that it might have the greater Influence upon the People's Affections for the Present. The Men of that Generation, to whom the Law was first given, were all Dead, and a new Generation being sprung up in their Place, it was necessary that it should be repeated to them by *Moses*, and especially a little before his Departure from them, that it might make the deeper Impression on them, and as they were just going to take Possession of the promis'd *Canaan*, it was but necessary they should be told upon what Terms they might expect to hold and enjoy that Land. To this End *Moses* tells them what they were to believe and do, and among other Things of principal Importance he recommends to their Attention, Assent and Consideration,

C c c.

in

in the Words of our Text, that fundamental Article of Religion, *viz.* The divine *Unity*. Here O Israel *the Lord our God is one Lord*. Here observe 1st. That the Truth recommended, is the *Unity of God*. That *Yehovah* who is our God in Covenant, is but one, one in his Essence, or Being, and the only Object of Religious Worship, one in Opposition to many God's. 1 *Cor.* viii. 4, 5, 6, *We know that an Idol is nothing in the World, and there is none other God but one: For tho' there be that are call'd God's, whether in Heaven or in Earth, as there be Gods many, and Lords many, but to us there is but one God.* It is certainly of the last Importance to be rightly fix'd, as to the Object of Worship; for if this be not such as can make us Happy, our Faith and Practice want a proper Foundation, and are therefore Vain. Altho' the *Gentiles*, by the Light of Nature, have been led to acknowledge, that the proper Object of Worship must be a God; yet how strangely have they been mistaken, confus'd and divided in their Choice of him, by their vain Imaginations? They multiply'd Deities, and sought to God's that cannot save, they ascrib'd Deity to every Thing that did them Good, *viz.* To the Sun, Moon, Stars, Rivers, Fountains, Elements, Brutes, Vegetables. They had their City Gods their household Gods, garden Gods, Gods for particular Callings, Diseases, Immergents, &c. of which *Varro* reckons *three Hundred*, and *Hesiod* no less then *thirty Thousand*. *Prudentius* speaks truly of the Practice of the *Gentile World* in this Matter, in the following Stanza.

*Quicquid Humus, Pelagus, caelum mirabile Signant:
Id dixere Deos, Colles, Freta, Flumina, Flammas.*

Which may be thus English'd,

Whatee'r was wonderful the Heaven or Earth contain'd.
That Gods they call'd, tho' Hills, or Floods, or Flames.
And

And *Juvenal* speaks much to the same Purpose in the following Lines, viz.

Porum et cepe nefas violare et frangere morfu :

O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in kertis numina ! i.e.

The Onion-God's that in their Gardens grew ;

They judg'd Prophane to eat, and pay'd a Worship to.

O happy Nations that profess'd a God-head purchas'd at so cheap a Cost. Now in Opposition to the Politheism of the *Gentiles*, or to that Multiplicity of God's, which they held. *Moses* in our Text recommends the Belief of the divine Unity, or of the Oneness of God. This Verse the *Jewish Church* took upon to be one of the choicest Portions of Scripture, they write it in their *Phylactery's*, and think themselves, not only obliged to say it at least twice a Day, but think themselves very Happy in being so obliged, having this Saying among them, *Blessed are we who every Morning and Evening say, bear O Israel the Lord our God is one Lord.* This they have learn'd of an Antient Tradition ; and indeed there is nothing in the Law which they think worthy of equal Reverence with these Words, concerning them they triumph and glory in their Book of Prayers, in the Manner before related, *Blessed are we, &c.* But rather Blessed are those who duly consider, rightly improve, and firmly believe the Truth therein recommended. And this is the

2d. Particular our Text contains. Here *Moses* not only summonses their Attention, but demands their Assent to this Foundation Truth. *Hear, i. e.* not only with the Ears of your Body, but of your Mind : As if he had said, *attend to, consider, acknowledge, believe, retain and improve the Doctrine of God's Unity as the Ground and Foundation of all Religion,*

But

3dly We have an Account of the Persons to whom the aforesaid Truth and Duty are recommended, namely *Israel*, not *Israelites* in the Plural Number, but *Israel* in the Singular, to signify that not only the *Israelites* in Common, but every individual *Israelite* in Particular, should be careful to embrace and retain the aforesaid Truth. The Word does not only intend the Carnal *Israel*, which *Moses* brought out of *Egypt* into the Wilderness, and which *Josua* introduc'd into *Canaan*, which is its most usual Acceptation in Scripture, but that spiritual *Israel* also, of which *Paul* speaks, (Rom. xi. 21, 29.) The word *Israel* respects the Church of both Testaments, to whom the Doctrine of the Unity of God is recommended as a fundamental Article. It may be likewise observ'd that the Manner of *Moses's* Recommendation is very solemn, as appears by the Note of Obsecration he uses. O *Israel*! much Concern for divine Truth, and Zeal, and Tenderness for the Peoples Well-fare, is herein intimated.

In discoursing upon this divine Perfection, viz. The Unity or Oneness of God, I would

I. Endeavour to prove the Truth of it.

II. Explain its Nature.

III. Improve it. And

1st. I am to prove the Truth of the divine Oneness. And here I may observe, that the Scriptures assert this different Ways. 1st. By saying expressly that *God is One*. Zec. xiv. 9. *In that Day shall there be one Lord, and his Name One*. Psa. lxxxiii. 18. *That Man may know that thou whose Name alone is Jehovah, art the most High over all the Earth*. Psa. lxxxvi. 10. *For thou art great and dost wonderful Things, thou art Good alone*. And 2dly By asserting that there is no God besides him. Deut. iv. 35. *Unto thee it was shew'd that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God, and there is*

110112

none else besides him. Isa. iv. 2. *I am the Lord, that is my Name, and my Glory will I not give to another, neither my Praise to graven Images.* Isa. xlv. 8. *Is there a God besides me? There is no God, I know not any.* Isa. xlv. 5. *I am the Lord and there is none else, there is no God besides me.* And the 21st Verse, *There is no God else besides me, a just God and a Saviour, there is none besides me.*

Many of the *Ancient Fathers* have written largely in Confirmation of this Important Truth against the Gentile Idolatries, particularly, *Ignatius, Justin, Tertullian, Cyprian, Nazianzen, Basil, Austin, Damascen* yea some of the wisest of the Gentile Sages, have given their suffrage to the Doctrine of the divine Unity. *Socrates* for ascerting this lost his Life by the Fury of the *Athenians!* And *Plato* in one of his Letters to *Dionysius*, sayeth thus, "*Hinc inquit disces, scribam ego serio. necne. cum serio, ordior Epistulam, ab uno Deo, cum secus a pluribus.*" *i. e.* By this (sayeth he) "You may know whether I write seriously or not, when I write seriously, I begin my Epistle from one God; when otherwise, from many." Likewise *Sophocles* hath these Words, "*Unus revera Deus est, qui celum, fabricavit et terram—at nos mortales verisutia decepti, statuimus deorum imagines—et his sacrificia, et vanos conventus tribuendo, hoc modo nos pios esse reputamus.* *i. e.* Truly there is one God who hath made Heaven and Earth; but we poor Mortals being deceiv'd by the Craft of some, appoint Images of the Gods, and by offering sacrifices and vain Conventions to those, we reckon ourselves pious." Both *Lactantius* and *Cicero* acknowledged that their Gods were but Men, who formerly lived in in the World: They give an Account of their Birth and Parentage, as well as of the Places where they lived, and Time when they died; and inform us, how some of them obtain'd the Honour they suppos'd they were advanced to

to after Death, viz. As the Reward of Vertue, or in Commemoration of the Good, that they had done to the World in their Life, either by the Invention of profitable Arts, Successes in Wars, or some other kind of Service to their Country. It is true, among the Romans, some had the Honour of an *Apotheosis* or being reckon'd among the Number of the Gods, at the Request of their surviving Friends. And this was done after the Time of *Julius Cæsar* by the Decree of the Senate, who at the same Time likewise appointed the Rites of Worship that should be paid to them. And indeed some of the Emperors of Rome were carried to that pitch of Vanity and Arogance, that they obliged the Senate to deify them while they were alive. *Aristotle* discovers his Belief of one supream Deity, by several Passages in divers Parts of his Works, to the following Effect.

He asserts, "That there is a God, who is the first Cause or Beginning of all Things, and that he was from Eternity, or in the Beginning, and that Time took its Rise from him, and that he is the Fountain of Life, and the best of Beings. That he is Self-sufficient, the chief Good, and stands in no need of, or can receive any Advantage from any, and that by him all Things consist."

Several of the Gentile Philosophers discover their Belief of the divine Unity, by asserting, "That there was one supream God, superior to all others, whom they call the Father of the Gods and of Men. Him they call the Beginning, the End, and Author of all Things, who was before, and is above all Things." *Moræus*, brings Quotations of this Kind, from the Writings of *Plotinus*, *Proclus*, *Phorbery*, *Plutarch* and others; from all which it appears that the wiser Sort among the Pagans, acknowledged the Unity of the supream Being. And therefore that what they spoke or did in Opposition hereto, was only from a fordid compliance

pliance with the prevailing Custom of their respective Countries, to prevent Aspersions on their Characters, or Danger to their Persons. It is probable that they paid only an inferior Kind of religious-Worship to their Gods, like to what the Papists give to their Saints. It is true, herein they were Idolaters; but this they were induced to, in order to escape popular Odium. I am not here labouring to extenuate the Pagan Idolatry; but only to prove that a Number of the more Judicious of them, were led by the Light of natural Reason to acknowledge the Unity of God.

Now that natural Reason demonstrates this fundamental Article of Religion, namely, the divine *Unity*, will more fully appear, by the following Considerations, viz.

1st. Reason teaches us, that in the Subordination of Things, which we behold in the World, we must proceed to some first Cause, which is of it self, and absolutely the first, before which Nothing could exist, and with which Nothing could exist of the same Nature: For then it would not be first. All Number begins in a Unity, and to say there are two first Beings, is a Contradiction in the very Nature of Things. The Multitude of second Beings proves that there is a first Being, otherwise they could not exist: For they can't give Being to themselves: Where there is no first, there is no Order, and where there is no Order, there is no Goodness, except Confusion be so called, which is absur'd; and where there is no Goodness, there is nothing: For *Being* and *Goodness* are convertible Terms. Now that Being which is first is chief in respect of Dignity, and therefore he only is God, for Equality and Priority, are inconsistent to the same Subject. The very Idea of a God, implies a Supremacy in all possible Excellency.

That there is but one Being, who is without Beginning, and gave Being to all others, appears thus. If there were

more

more Gods, they must derive their Being from him, and then they are a Part of his Creation, and consequently not Gods: For God and the Creature are infinitely oppos'd to each other. Well then seeing there is but one Self-existing, independent Being, there can be but one God.

2dly. Reason proclaims that God is infinite in all Perfections and that because he is not limited by a prior Cause, he must therefore possess all Being and Goodness, either formally or eminently. Now the very Idea of God's Infinity not only speaks his own Perfection to be boundless, but likewise that he bounds and limits the Perfections of all others. And thus being limited they cannot be infinite and to the Possessors thereof cannot be God.

And as infinite Perfection implies in it all Perfection, so it cannot be divided among many, for then the Parts would be less than the whole, and so not infinite: Upon this Supposition there would be no God at all, because infinite Excellency is necessarily implied in the Idea of a God.

There is but one infinite Being and therefore but one God. *Jer. xxiii. 24. Do not I fill Heaven and Earth sayeth the Lord.* If there be one infinite Being filling all Places at once, how can there be any Room for another Infinite to subsist?

3dly. Reason demonstrates, that the first Being is Almighty in Power, and therefore there is no other God, that can hinder or withstand his Operations. If they can, then he is not Omnipotent, and so not God? If they cannot then they are not Omnipotent and so not God? If there were two Omnipotents, then we may reasonably suppose that there would be a contest between them, that which one would do, the other Power being equal, would oppose, and so all Things would be brought into Confusion. But that constant and uniform Order which we behold in the Government of the World, is a sufficient Confutation of this, and

and Proof of the contrary, viz. That there is but one God. If there were more God's than one, all of them must be said to be able to do all Things, and then the same individual Power which is exerted by one must be exerted by all, which is absurd and in the Nature of Things impossible.

4thly. Reason likewise teaches, that if there be more Gods than one, then either they must be all equal to one another or unequal, if equal then none of them can be the chief Good, because another is as good as he, and so none of them can be God; because to be the chief Good is an essential Attribute of God, which is by this suppos'd equality destroy'd. If they are unequal then the Inferior cannot be God, because he is imperfect and dependant. Supremacy is doubtless an unalienable Prerogative of God, he is over all God blessed forever.

5thly: Absolute Sovereignty, and universal Dominion are essential to a God, he being the Author and Original of all other Beings, has by consequence a Right to give Laws to all, but is subject to no controule himself, because he is Self-existent and independent. Now if there were more God's than one, then every one could not have absolute Sovereignty and universal Dominion: They might command and forbid opposite Things, and so controule the Power of each other. The same Thing might therefore become both Sin and Duty, in respect of the Subjects, because commanded by one and forbid by the other, and thus there could be no certain Rule of Right, every Thing would be confus'd.

6thly. We may further observe, that all the divine Attributes prove God to be one. If none be God but he that hath all those Attributes which Scripture and Reason assign to God, then there can be but one. Altho' there be some

D.d d d

faint

faint Emblem of some of God's Attributes in Creatures, as particularly of his Holiness and Goodness, &c. yet Creatures have them not absolutely or in the highest Degree, they may be Good, Holy, but cannot be Holiness and Goodness; and thus the Attributes which are call'd communicable, can in their own Nature, properly and absolutely, belong but to one. And as to God's incommunicable Attributes, such as his immensity, &c. it is impossible they should be multiply'd, if there be two Immensity's, they must necessarily confine each other, and so neither be immense. Once more 7thly. Seeing that God is the Creator of all, it is but just and right that he should be the End of all, of him and thro' him, and therefore to him are all Things. As the first Being must needs be the Best, and in this Sense deserves to be the last End of all, so he has a just Claim of Right to it, having produced all by his Power, and preserved and supported all by his Goodness; and therefore the Creature is under a natural and indispenfable Obligation to pay this Debt of Homage to his Creator, Preserver and Benefactor, namely, to love him with supream Respect, and to make his Glory his last End in all his Actions, whether Natural, Civil or Religious, all which is utterly inconsistent with a multiplicity of Gods: For we can give our highest Love but to one, and make his Honour our highest Mark, which is the Natural Result of the Former.

In the mean Time it ought to be maintain'd, that these Things following do not oppose the Unity of God, viz.

1st. A plurality of *Names*, seeing they signify no more but one God. Nor

2dly. A plurality of *Attributes*, seeing they do but represent the infinite Perfection of the divine Nature, which is but one in it self, in a Way accommodated to our weak and inadequate Conceptions, Nor

3dly

3dly. A Trinity of Persons, seeing that among the three Persons there is but one Essence, and three Modes of subsisting; from which Results not three Gods, but *Three*, who are one God. This leads me to the

2d. Propos'd, which was to explain the *Nature of the divine Oneness*. And here it may be observ'd that the Almighty is one.

1st. Not by a *Unity of Subject and Accident*, namely such as belongs to all created Spirits, Angels and the Souls of Men. Nor

2dly. By a *Unity of compounded Parts*, in which Sense the Soul and Body constitute one Man. Nor

3dly. By a *Unity of Species*, which admits more Individuals of the same Name and Nature.

But positively God is one by a *singular Unity of Nature*, which excludes all *Composition* of every Kind: He is so one as to be undivided in himself, and indivisible into more of the same Name and Nature, and therefore the Unity of God is not an *Arithmetical Unity* which is the Beginning of Number, but it is an *essential and transcendent Unity*, whereby God is one in his Nature: And hence *Basil* sayeth truly, "*Non unum inquit Deum numero sed Natura confitemur. i. e. We confess not a God one in Number, but in Nature.*" And undoubtedly *Oneness* is ascrib'd to God, in Opposition to the false God's of the *Pagans*, as has been before observ'd, as well as in Contradistinction to all titular God's.

King's are call'd God's, because their Royal Scepter is an Emblem of his Power and Authority; and Judges are likewise so call'd, because they are set in God's Place to do Justice; but they are dying God's. *Psa. lxxxii. 5. 7. I said ye are Gods; but ye shall dye like Men.* It is in this Sense that the Apostle observes, that *there are God's many and*

Lord's many; but to us sayeth he, *there is but one Lord.* 1 Cor. viii. 5. 6. But that the Unity of the divine Nature may be the better apprehended, let it be farther observ'd.

1st. That the various Perfections of the Deity are not in him, as so many Ingredients which constitute his Being together; for then each would have but a partial Perfection, and there would be something in God less than God, which is absurd. Nor,

2dly. Are the divine Perfections different from each other in him, as the Parts and Properties of Creatures are, *e. g.* Wisdom in Men is really different from Justice. But the supream Being hath no Parts, and his Perfections are not so distinguish'd as the qualities of Creatures; for if so, there would be as many distinct infinite Beings in God, as there are Attributes. Nor

3dly. Are any of the divine Perfections accidental to him. No, they are all his very Being. That is said to be accidental, which a Substance can subsist without. But to suppose the Almighty bereav'd of any one of his Attributes, is to suppose him Imperfect, and so no God. Therefore

4thly. The divine Perfections are represented as many and distinct, because of the different Objects which the divine Perfection fixes upon, and the different *Effects* it produces in Creatures, as well as in condescension to their weak and finite Minds, which can conceive of the divine Nature, but as it were by Parts. But notwithstanding, it is evident from both Scripture and Reason, that the divine Nature is Simple and Uncompounded, and that whatever is in God is God. We should therefore be careful that while we compare the divine Perfections with the faint Emblems thereof that be in Creatures, to assist our Conceptions of them, that we do
in

in the mean Time separate from them every Thing that argues imperfection.

The Improvement of this Subject remains. And

1st. The Consideration of the Unity of the supream Being may justly excite in us an Abhorrence of all Idolatry, whether of a more crass or subtile Kind; for by both the divine Unity is deny'd. The Polytheism of the *Gentiles* is but a specious Sort of Atheism; they that Worship more than one God, do in Effect worship no God at all; because they give him not that supream undivided Respect which is his due. 2 King xvii. 33. 34. *They feared the Lord, and served their own God's, after the Manner of their Nations.---They fear not the Lord.* How detestable therefore is the Idolatry of the *Papists*, who reverence with a Religious Worship, Saints and Angels, yea Images and Relicts? What Reason have we to bless God while we live, that we are deliver'd from that *Egyptian* Bondage? And should not the Unity of God incline us to detest all spiritual Idolatry, which consists in giving our Hearts to, trusting in, and serving of divers Lusts and Pleasures, viz. The Lust of the Eye, the Lust of Flesh, and the Pride of Life. Some make a God of Pleasure, 2 Tim. iii. 4. *Lovers of Pleasures more than Lovers of God.* Most certainly, whatever we love more than God, we make a God: Others there be that make Money their God, they make Gold their Hope, and say to the fine Gold, *thou art my Confidence*, Job. xxxi. 24. Others make a God of their Belly. Philip iii. 19. *Whose God is their Belly.* *Clemens Alexandrinus* writes of a Fish "That bath its Heart in its Beily." This Fish is a proper Emblem of Epicures, for their Heart may be said to be in their Belly; they chiefly mind their Gratification of their sensual Appetite. This is the Evil which God forbids in the first Command; and which, in some Respect,

seems

seems to exceed in Baseness all the Rest which are forbid by the other Precepts : Whatever we put in the Room of God, we may expect will prove a Devil to us.

2dly. If there be but one God, their can be but one Religion, that is true in the World : And hence the *Apostle* observes, Ephes. iv. 5. That *there is one Faith, one Lord, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and thro' all, and in you all.* If there were many God's, there might be many Religions, every God. would be worship'd in his own Way : But it is unreasonable to suppose that that God, who is one in his Being, should appoint several Religions whereby he would be worshiped. The Reason of the Heathens different Rites, was their adoring divers God's, whom they supposed they must Worship in a different Manner : Tho' there be many Ways to Hell, there is but one Road to Heaven, and that is the Path of Faith and Holiness, without which no Man shall enjoy God. It is as Dangerous to set up a Religion, fundamentally False, as to set up a false God ; for indeed the one supposes the other.. But

3dly. We should be excited to enquire, whether this one God be ours in a Covenant Way? Without which we can reasonably take no Comfort in meditating upon this, or any other of his Attributes. Now this we may know by the following Particulars, *viz.*

1st. If we fear this one habitually more than all ; because he is infinitely Greater and Mightier than all. (*Mal.* i. 6.)

2dly. If we desire him habitually more than all ; because he is infinitely better than all besides him (*Pf.* lxxiii. 25.)

3dly. If we generally delight in him more than in all besides

besides him, because his loving Kindness exceeds all other Enjoyments, yea even the Sweets of Life itself. (*Psa. iv. 6. 7.*)

4thly. If we trust and hope in him more than all (generally;) because he excells all in Wisdom and Faithfulness, (*Joshua. xxiii. 14.*)

5thly. If we from Love generally obey him before all; because he is infinitely higher than all. The Sovereign Lord, the everlasting King, who sways the Scepter over the whole Universe, (*Acts iv. 19.*)

6thly. If we bewail the Absence of this one God more than all other Losses. *Pf. xlii. 5. Why art thou cast down O my Soul, why art thou disquieted within me?*

7thly. If increase of Conformity to him in Mind and Life be the principal Object of our Desire, Care and Labour. *Philipi. iii. 13. 14. I press forwards towards the Mark!* If upon enquiry we find in ourselves the aforesaid Characters, truly we have great Reason to *rejoyce*, whatever outward Distresses we endure; because in having one God for our Portion, we have more then all besides him, infinitely more! His Wisdom is Unsearchable, his Power Infinite, and his Goodness Incomprehensible! As his Wisdom can easily devise a Way for his People's Deliverance in their most Perplexing Immergency's, so his Power is able to effect it, Maugre all Opposition of Hell and Earth! And his Goodness as well as Promise engages his Wisdom and Power in his Peoples behalf. Add to this, that his Immutability secures their Safety upon an unalterable Foundation! Surely then to use the *Psalmist's* Language, *Blessed are the People who are in such a Case; yea blessed is that People, whose God is the Lord!* Well then when our Minds are divided and distress'd with a Variety of Fears and Cares, arising from a View of the Wars, Debates, and Confusions in the State and Church, as well as in Families and Neighbourhoods,
let

let us bewail Sin, which has introduced all this Confusion into the World, by breaking that Blessed Unity which once subsisted between God and us, and thence enſu'd a Breach between Man and Man, between Man and himſelf. And having lamented Sin, the Source of Diſcord, let us give our whole Heart to one God, who is the Fountain of Sweetneſs, Concord and Unity, and humbly rejoyce in him as our All! And earneſtly aſk of him, that according to the Tenor of his gracious Covenant, he would be pleas'd to give to his People every where one Heart, that they may be one as *Jehovah* is one, and his Name one. (*Ezek.* xi. 19. *Zecha.* xiv. 9.)

But how doleful is the Caſe of all ſuch who want the aforeſaid Characters; as they are without God ſo they are without *Hope, Poor, Blind, Miſerable* and *Naked*, (*Ephes.* ii. 12. *Rev.* iii. 17.) without true Comfort, and without Defence; in the Fullneſs of their Sufficiency they are in Want; yea all the Perfections of God are engag'd againſt them. (*Job* ix. 4.) As thoſe that have God for their Portion are Happy in him, in Want of all other Things, ſo thoſe that want this Portion are Miſerable in the Poſſeſſion of all beſides him.

Again from the Doctrine of God's *Unity* we may learn how Wicked the Practice of ſuch is, who when they have loſt Goods ſeek to Wizards and familiar Spirits how they may get their Goods again, this is expreſly condemn'd by the Law of God. (*Deut.* viii. xi.) There ſhall not be found any that conſults with familiar Spirits. 2 Kings. i. 6. *Thus ſaith the Lord, is it not becauſe there is not a God in Iſrael, that thou ſendeſt to enquire of Baal-zebub, the God of Eckron.* Such who go to the Devil for Council, renounce the true God, and their baptiſmal Dedication to him!

Is.

fragrant Ointment pour'd on *Aaron's Head!* *This Unity* was what our Lord himself pray'd for, John xvii. 21. *That they all may be One.* Upon which Words *Athanasius* glosseth thus, "Even as (says he) *the Father and the Son are One* " *in Essence, so we by some imperfect resemblance are made One* " *while we behold him. One among ourselves, by mutual* " *concord of Mind and unity of Spirit."* The Apostle Paul urgeth this Unity by various arguments, Ephes. iv. 4, 5, 6. *Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* We are all *one mystical Body*, and every one of us Members of it, among which what is more advantageous than Harmony? There *is one Spirit* by whose Assistance we are baptis'd *into one Body*, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. There is *one Hope of our Calling*, viz. eternal Glory and Happiness, Heb. xii. 22, 23. *One Lord JESUS, one Faith in him, one Baptism, one God and Father of all.* Let us therefore carefully avoid all schismatical Doctrines and Practices, which are so exceeding prejudicial to Religion. To this End let us Labour to be of a humble, charitable and forgiving Temper, *Charity hopes all Things, it suffers long, is kind, and is not easily provok'd.* Let us earnestly pray to the great God, that he would heal the Breaches of Zion, which are wide as the Sea, and cause his People to be one as he is one. *Amen. Amen.*

SERMON.

SERMON XXI.

JEREMIAH X. 10.

But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King: At his Wrath the Earth shall tremble and the Nations shall not be able to abide his Indignation!

IT is probable that the Prophecy contain'd in this Chapter, was delivered after the first Babylonish Captivity, because it has a double Reference; the first Part respects those that were carry'd Captive; and the latter Part respects those that remain'd in the Land of *Palestine*.

The Prophet in the Beginning of this Chapter, first Adresses those who were carry'd Captive into the Idolatrous Country of the Caldeans, and seriously cautions them against the Infection of it, verse 1, 2. *Thus sayeth the Lord, learn not the Way of the Heathen.* In the following Verses the Prophet exposes the Vanity of the Pagan Idolatry, by shewing that such sort of Gods were but the Work of Men's Hands, and had neither Life nor Motion, he therefore advises them in the 7th verse, *to cleave to the God of Israel, against all Temptation to the Contrary.* This Advice he enforces in the Words of our Text, by representing some of his Perfections, in Opposition to the Idols of the Heathen, *But the Lord is the true God.* The Gods of the Pagans are vanity and a lye, counterfeit and imposture; but *Jehovah* is truly and really God, as well as the God of Truth, a God who

E e e 2.

cannot.

cannot lie or deceive. *He is the living God.* The *Pagan Idols* are dumb dead Things, that have neither Life, Breath or Motion: But *Jehovah* is the living God, i. e. as *Calvin* justly explains, "*He himself is endowed with Life, and is to others the Fountain of Life.*" *Pjal.* xxxvi. 9. *It is in him we live, and move and have our Being.* *Act.* xvii. 28. God is Life it self, has Life in himself, and is the Original of all that Life which Creatures enjoy. *And an everlasting King.* He has a Right to rule, and has exercis'd Dominion from everlasting, and will to everlasting; whereas the Idols of the *Heathens* are but of Yesterday, and will soon cease to be.-----*At his Wrath the Earth shall tremble, and the Nations shall not be able to abide his Indignation.* The *Prophet* had observ'd in the 5th Verse of this Chapter, that the *Pagan Idols* could do neither Evil or Good, they are poor impotent sorry Shams, and Trifles of no Moment, unworthy of either Love or Fear! But on the Contrary the Wrath of *Jehovah* is dreadful, at this the Earth trembles, his Angry frown makes the Worlds Foundations shake and the Pillars of Heaven tremble, and the Nations, were all their Strength united, are as unable to resist his Almighty Indignation, as they are to endure it! *Jehovah* is the God of Nature, the Fountain of Being and Power and therefore all Nature is at his Dispose and Controle, his Empire is Universal, Absolute, Eternal; *The Lord shall reign forever, thy God O Zion to all Generations!*

The Subject I purpose to speak upon from this Text is *the Life of God, he is the living God.* In discoursing upon which I design

I. *To prove the Life of God.* And

II. *To explain its Nature.*

And then proceed to the *Improvement.* And

1st. I am to *prove that God lives*. To this End it may be observ'd, that the sacred Scriptures frequently ascribe Life to God, and assure us, that he is the Author of Life to all that possess it: And hence he is call'd *the living God*. (*Isa. xxxvii. 17. Dan. vi 34. Psa. lxxxiv. 2. Mat. xvi. 16.*) And in many other Places which it is needless to mention. The Almighty is likewise said to be *Life it self*. (*Col. iii. 4. 1 John v. 20.* And *the Fountain of Life*, *Jer. ii. 13. Ps. xxxvi. 10.*) In him we are said to *live, move, and have our Being*. (*Act. xvii. 28.*) The Oath which the Fathers us'd, was *the Lord liveth*, (*Jer. v. 2.*) And *Jehovah* himself swears by nothing, but by his Life and Holiness: This Oath is us'd fourteen Times in the Prophecy of *Ezekiel*.

Moreover Life is not only attributed to God *essentially*, but *personally* to each of the sacred Three, to *God the Father*, *John v. 26. For as the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself.* To God the Son, *Joh. xiv. 19. Because I live ye shall live also.* Hence he is call'd *the Prince of Life*, and that not only because he has Life in himself, by the Father as Mediator, but is also our Life, and possesses the Power of an endless Life (*Joh. i. 4. Col. iii. 4. Heb. vii. 16.*) Hence it is said of him, *Rev. i. 17, 18. that he is the first and the last; that he liveth and was dead, and behold he is alive forevermore; and that he hath the Keys of Hell and Death.* Tho' his human Nature suffered Death to purchase Life for his People, yet his divine Nature cannot dye, but lives forever. Life is also attributed to *God the Holy Ghost* *2. Cor. iii. 3.* And hence he is call'd *the Spirit of Life*, *Rom. viii. 2.*

Reason likewise assures us of this Truth, *that God lives*, by the following Considerations.

1st. It appears from the Effects of Life. *God understands, wills, loves*, therefore he truly lives: These are the Effects

Effects of Life, and Effects demonstrate the Being and Nature of their Cause; therefore *Aristotle* justly and frequently concludes from this, “*That because God understands all Things, he therefore lives a Blessed Life.*”

2dly. Those Things live, which move, and stir themselves. Now God doth all Things of himself, he is the First, and most perfect Cause of all, he is most Active by his Essence, yea a simple Act, he knows, discerns, wills, works, altogether of himself, and therefore must needs live.

3dly. Life is a certain Perfection, which involves no Imperfection in it. Thus those Things that live are reckon'd more perfect than such as do not, and therefore it cannot with any Shadow of Reason be deny'd to a Being, that is infinitely Perfect of, and in himself as *Jehovah* is.

4thly. God is the Fountain of Life to all living Creatures. (*Psa.* xxxvi. 10.) And this he could not be if he had not Life himself; for what one has not he cannot give. Here observe 1st. That God is the *Author* of the *Life* of *Nature*; and hence he is said to *breath into Man's Nostrils the Breath of Life.* (*Gen.* ii. 7.) And in him we are said to *live and move.* (*Act.* xvii. 28.) And 2dly *Jehovah* is the *Author* of the *Life* of *Grace.* *Ephes.* ix. 10. *Not of Works, lest any Man should boast: For we are his Workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good Works,---* 3dly. The Almighty is likewise the *Author* of the *Life* of *Glory.* *Rom.* vi. 23. *For the Wages of Sin is Death, but the gift of God is eternal Life thro' JESUS CHRIST our Lord.* Again

5thly. If God did not live, all the rest of his Attributes, and he himself, would be Vain, and would not differ from the Idols of the *Gentiles, who have Eyes and see not, Ears and hear not*; and no wonder for they are dead. What would avail all the rest of God's Perfections

without

without Life, seeing that without that, they cannot Act? I proceed to the

2d. Propos'd, which was to explain *the Nature of the divine Life*; which may be thus describ'd, *viz. That it is an essential Property of the divine Nature, whereby he is able to perform an infinite Variety of Action to a certain known and valuable End, with Council and Complacency.* Ephes. i. 11. *Who worketh all Things after the Council of his own Will.* That the aforesaid Description may be the better understood, let the following Particulars be considered, *viz.*

1st. That the *Life of God* is his Nature, Being or very Essence; and therefore he is call'd *Life*, as was observ'd and prov'd before: Whereas Creatures are only *living*, their Life is but a certain Faculty of their Being, and therefore different from it; but the *Life of God* co-inceeds with his Essence.

2dly. The divine Life consists in a Power of Action with Complacency: By a Power of Action we intend to signify an Ability in God to produce more Effects without himself than he doth, and not that the Almighty is at any Time Inactive. No, the Almighty is in continual Action, otherwise he would suffer a Change which is impossible; and therefore divines generally and justly observe, that *the Almighty is a simple Act.* This will farther appear by considering that those Things are said to live, who act of themselves without being acted, or mov'd either by second Causes, (in this sense Life belongs to Creatures) or without any prior moving Cause at all, and so God himself Lives: The Life of Creatures springs from some Composition, *e. g.* *Natural Life* from the Union of the Soul with the Body, which being broke all Power of natural Action ceases: *Spiritual Life* from the Union of the Soul to original Righteousness

teousness, which being broken all Power of working Spiritually ceases. Rom. viii. 8. *Those that are in the Flesh cannot please God.* And eternal Life springs from a perfect Union with God, as the chief Good; which being broken the Soul cannot enjoy God, or rejoyce in him.

Moreover there is a fourfold Life in Creatures, viz. Vegetative, Sensitive, Rational, and Mixt. 1st. A *Vegetative Life* is that whereby Things are able to do that which is requisite for acquiring and conserving the full Strength of their Nature, and the Propagation of their Kind; this is the Life of Herbs. 2dly. A *sensitive Life* is that Faculty whereby Creatures are enabled to discern Things that are hurtful to them, and Things that are good for them, and to shun the one and seek the other; this is the Life of Beasts: These are imperfect Kinds of Life which the meanest Beings enjoy, and therefore cannot be ascribed to God. But 3dly. There is a more noble kind of Life call'd *Rational*, by which the Possessor of it is enabled to act with Understanding and reasonable Complacency. And 4thly there is a *Mixt Life* which results from the two first Kinds of Life only; and this belongs to brute Animals, or from all the Three and Exists in Men.

Now we must not conceive in God any such imperfect Thing as *Growth* or *Sense*, for he is a simple, spiritual, immaterial and perfect Being. The most perfect Kind of Life must therefore be ascrib'd to him, viz. *Rational*, whereby the Being of God is conceiv'd by us, as active Simply of itself; when in our Ideas of God we adjoin *Reason* and *Action*, we have a just Notion of his Life.

It may be here farther observ'd, that a Man hath four Kinds of Faculties in the Exercise of which he liveth, and Life in him is an Ability to exercise them: He hath an *Understanding*, *Will*, *Affections*, and a *Power to move and work outwardly*

ly; all these the Almighty ascribes to himself in his Word.
But

3dly. Another Particular, considerable in the aforesaid Description of the Life of God, was this, viz. *His acting to some known and valuable End*, this is but a necessary Consequent of acting rationally; an intelligent Agent must have some End in View, and such an End as is worthy of his Choice. Now the End that God proposes both Scripture and Reason inform us, is his own Glory, or the Manifestation of his divine Excellency. And hence *Solomon* observes, *Pro. xvi. 4. That he made all Things for himself.* This is certainly the most noble End, because it most nearly relates the best of Beings; and therefore it must be suppos'd to be the End which the Almighty has chiefly in View in all his Actions, seeing he ever acts with unerring Council.

But tho' there be some Analogy between the Life of God and that of intelligent Beings, as has been observ'd, yet they differ in many Things very widely; as will appear by considering the following Properties of the divine Life, and comparing them with the Properties of the Lives of Creatures. Now the Divine Life is:

1st. *Essential*, viz. His Nature or Being; as has been observ'd before, whereas the Life of Creatures is but a separable Property, of their Beings, And

2dly. The Life of God is *Necessary*, this results unavoidably from the former Property, if the Being of God exists necessarily of it self; as it certainly does, as the Name *Jehovah* signifies, and truly without this he could not be God; and if the divine Life is the same with it, (as has been observ'd) then it must be *Necessary* also; and hence the Almighty is said to have Life in himself: Whereas all Creatures have but a borrow'd precarious and dependant Life communicated to them by God who is the Source of Life.

3dly. The Life of God is *Perfect*, he has the full and perfect Possession of an interminable Life at once, whereas the Life of Creatures is imperfect, growing by the Addition of Days, Months and Years, our Life glides away in a continual Flux and Succession of Moments; but the divine Life is an *everlasting NOW*, without any Succession in Duration.

4thly. The Life of God is *Infinite*, without Beginning or End, hence he is said *only to have Immortality*. (1 Tim. vi. 16.) The Immutability of the divine Nature, as well as his Self-existence, shew the impossibility of his suffering a Change by Death. But on the contrary, the Life of all Creatures had a Beginning, and in respect of the most of them, it will have an End. I proceed to the Improvement of this Subject, And

1st the Subject that has been discours'd upon, offers Matter of Reproof to all such who behave towards God, as if he were a dumb Idol, that neither saw, heard or understood, or could reward or avenge what is done in the World, and who therefore do not love, or fear, or worship him, as if he could neither do them *Good or Hurt*, Zeph. i. 12. And in their Straits they are so full of Distrust and Dejection as if they believ'd there was no God in Heaven who liv'd and saw their Miseries, and was able to send them Succours suited to them! What can such Persons expect who thus make an Idol of God? But that by the Executions of his Wrath, he will make them know to their dreadful Cost, *that he is the Lord*. Ezek. xxxv. 9. But to proceed

2dly. Let us examine ourselves, by proposing the following Questions, viz.

1st. Do we content ourselves with having a Name to live when we are dead? If so our Case is dreadful! Or

2dly.

2dly. Hath the living God quickned us, when we were dead in *Trespases and Sins*? *Eph. ii. 4, 5.*

3dly. Does the suppos'd spiritual Life in us, produce Sense, Breath, Motion, Warmth? Are we at Times sorrowfully sensible of the inward Disorders of our Souls? Does our Unbelief and other Corruptions afflict us? And do we know what the Absence of God means, as well as his Presence, by our own Experience; do we breath after God in the General above all others? (*Pf. lxxiii. 25.*) Is it our chief Care and Study for the most Part to grow in Grace? And does our principal Zeal and Warmth generally run in a religious Channel?

4thly. Do we generally labour to serve the living God in a living Way? i. e. Not only with rais'd Affections, but approaching to him thro' CHRIST the new and living Way, *the Way, the Truth and the Life*? *Heb. x. 20.*

5thly. Have we sorrow'd for the great Evil of *forsaking the living God, the Fountain of living Waters, and running to broken Cisterns*? *Jer. ii. 13.* And do we watch over our Unbelief, *that we depart no more from him*? *Heb. iii. 12.*

6thly. Is God the Foundation of our Hope and Trust, and nothing else besides him? (*1 Tim. vi. 17.*)

To such as can answer in the Affirmative to the aforesaid Questions; (the first excepted) this Subject ministers Comfort in every Distress, being perswaded that our Redeemer lives, and that he is the Strength of our Life, particularly (1st.) in the *Difficulties* of a *Natural Life*, if Sicknes threatens an End of it, if Poverty removes the Supports of Life, if Enemies seek it, and lay Snares to destroy it, if the Fear of Death and Horror of Putrifaction and Pain perplex us? What yields a sweeter Support, in those and such like Cases, than to think that our God and Redeemer lives, yea that he is Life it self, and the Fountain thereof: As he

has given Life, so he can preserve it in the midst of all Dangers, and against the Force of all Enemies, yea he can restore it when lost, *for he is the Resurrection and the Life!* Again,

2dly. In the *Difficulties of the spiritual Life*, when we find ourselves cold and dead, unfit for, and unable to perform the Duties of Religion, how supporting and sweet is it to think *that as the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself, that we might have Life in him.* 1 John iv. 9. *Yea that he is our Life.* Col. iii. 4. And

3dly. In the *Difficulties of Eternal Life*: When the Fear of Death and the Body of Death pain us, so that we are oblig'd to sigh and say, *who shall deliver us?* Men and Brethren what shall we do to inherit eternal Life? In this Case how sweet is it to think that God lives, and is the great Source of Life; and likewise that the Redeemer lives, and is our Life? Yea that to this End he was given by his Father, that *we should not perish but have eternal Life* (To this Purpose was his Death, that *he might purchase Life for us*) And also that the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Life who quickens? (*Job. vi. 63.*)

4thly. The Consideration of the infinite or immortal Life of God, may justly humble us who carry our Breath, our Life, in our Nostrils, and are liable to such a manifold Death, *viz.* Temporal, Spiritual and Eternal, who may be speedily depriv'd of Life by the meanest Insects, the most inconsiderable Incidents, as both Scripture and History informs us, and who have brought ourselves into this mortal State by Sin! 2 Sam. xiv. 14. *For we must needs die, and are as Water spilt on the Ground, which cannot be gathered up again.* Psal. cxliv. 3, 4. *Lord what is Man that thou takest Knowledge of him. Man is like to Vanity, his Days are as a Shadow that passeth away.* Our Life is like a Flower of

of

of the Grats, which flourish in the Morning, but in the Evening is cut down and withereth, Pſal. xc. 5. 6. *What is our Life, ſaith the Apoſtle James, but a Vapour which appears for a little time, and then vaniſheth away. Man that is born of a Woman, ſays Job, is of few Days and full of Trouble, he cometh forth like a Flower and is cut down, he fleeth alſo as a Shadow and continueth not. As Bernard obſerves, "In theſe Words is deſcrib'd the ſhortneſs, certainty, frailty and manifold Adverſity of our Life."* How much therefore may we be humbled, when we compare our Life with the Life of God? What are we but Duſt and Aſhes? And if our Life be ſo ſhort and uncertain, how vain muſt all the Enjoyments of Life be? Seeing they cannot be better to us than that on which they depend! O therefore let us be wean'd from the dying Things of Time and Breath after Immortality! Let us earneſtly ſeek it in the immortal God, that when our Heart and Fleſh fails, he may be the Strength of our Heart, and our Portion for Ever!

5thly. The Conſideration of the Life of God ſhould excite us to glorify him in Imitation of the heavenly Hoſt. Rev. iv. 9. 10. *When thoſe Beaſts gave Glory and Honour and Thanks to him, that ſat on the Throne, who liveth for ever and ever. The Four and Twenty Elders fall down before him that ſat on the Throne, and worſhip him that liveth for ever and ever, and caſt their Crowns before the Throne.* I ſay we ſhould glorify God, not only becauſe he has Life, which is a Primary Perfection of Mankind, but by the Help of which all their Faculties are actuated, and without which they would be Vain: Thus the Life of God actuates all his other Attributes, &c. But becauſe he is Life it ſelf, yea ſuch a Life as is Independent, Infinite, eternal Immutable, and the Author of all that Life which every

every Creature enjoys : It's on these Accounts that God doth so often glory of his Life, as well as swear by it, and thereby distinguish himself from false God's who are but dead Idols.

And seeing that Jehovah is the original of our natural and spiritual Life, and is to be so of our eternal likewise; to purchase which he gave his only begotten Son to Death, let us ever retain a grateful Sense of this in our Minds, and celebrate the Praises of God for it in Speech and Action!

Finally, The Consideration of *the Life of God*, should incline us to live to him ! Which consists principally in the following Particulars, *viz.* 1st. In *directing* all our *Actions*, whether Natural, Civil or Religious, *to his Glory*, as our highest Mark. 1 Cor. x. 31. *Whether therefore ye Eat or Drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* 2dly. In *conforming* our *Actions* according to his revealed Will. 1 Pet. iv. 2. *That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the Flesh, to the Lusts of Men, but to the Will of God.* 3dly. It consists in *living by the Power of God*, i. e. when we being sensible of our inability to do what is pleasing to God, depend upon his Assistance and Influence. (*Gal ii. 19. 20.*) Now the *Life of God* affords a manifold Argument of living to him. For 1st. Our God lives, and in his Life consists his chief Perfection, and ours in Imitation of it. 2dly. He is the Author of our Life, and therefore it is but reasonable it should be referred to him. 3dly. Our Redeemer has Life in himself, is our Life, *yea has died that we might live ; not to ourselves but to him that has dyed for us.* 2 Cor v. 15. 4thly. The *Holy Spirit* is a Spirit of Life, who quickens poor dead and stupid Sinners, by Virtue of his Office. (*Joh. vi. 63.*) O! therefore while we do live, let us live to the living God, and labour to be fervent and and lively in his Service ; in this Way we may expect, in due

due Time, to 'be translated thro' divine Grace, into a State of immortal Life and Glory. And such as are under the Power of spiritual Death, which you may know by your being without spiritual Sense, Breath and Motion, I exhort in the Language of *Paul* to the *Ephesians*, chap. v. 14. *Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the Dead and Christ shall give you Light! What meanest thou O Sleeper! Arise call upon thy God if so be that he will pity you that you perish not!* While you are thus spiritually Dead, you can have neither Communion with the living God here, nor enjoy him hereafter, but are under his Curse and Wrath. The Law you have broken condemns you, Gal. iii. 10. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* The Gospel also which you believe not likewise rejects you! Mark xvi. 12. Heaven is shut up against you, and Hell is open to receive you! Your Services must needs be loathsome because they are Dead! Poor, poor Sinners! ye are every Moment in Danger of everlasting Misery; and how soon ye may be engulf'd in it ye know not! And will ye be easie and unconcern'd in such a state of extream and inexpressible Danger? God forbid! O think frequently and solemnly of your doleful Case and cry fervently and unweariedly to the living God for spiritual Life, without which you must eternally feel the Power of the second Death.

Poor Sinners! Are not the plain Signs of Spiritual Death upon you? For is not your Eyes close shut? You have no affecting apprehension of your Disease and Danger, nor of the Remedy a gracious God has provided for perishing Souls!

You hear not, to any purpose, the dreadful Thunders of the Divine Law, nor the gentler Wispers of the Gospel of Grace and Salvation! And as you have Eyes and see
not

not, Ears and hear not the Things that belong to your Peace, so you have Hearts and feel not! when the Heralds, the Harbingers of God denounce aloud the dreadful Curses of *Jehovah* against you from *Ebal's* Mount! When we unvail the Dismal Vault of Hell, and set it before you in all it's flaming Terrors, yawning Wide to devour you! When we represent the Vengeance of Omnipotence hanging over your Guilty Heads, as a gloomy Cloud, Pregnant with woe and Ruin, every Moment ready to break upon you in a formidable resistless Torrent, and drown you in Destruction! When we take the Sword of God and point it at your Hearts, alas ye do not feel the Thrust, or grieve over your Misery! When we bend the legal Bow and shoot at your Bosoms, the Arrows rebound as if they struck on a Wall of Marble, and make no abiding Impression!

And when we speak in softer Strains of the humble Charms of divine Grace and Love, and pronounce Blessings upon all believing Penitents from the Summit of *Gereshim*! Alas ye feel it not, but are as insensible as Stones, as dead Corps! As the former did not alarm your Fear, so neither does this incite your Love! When we labour to open the inexpressible Beauties of *JESUS*, of Holiness, of Paradise, and set them in their proper Light, alas ye are not affected! The Condescension of the Son of God in assuming our Nature, under its present ruinous Circumstances, his appearing in the Form of a Servant, *who was God over all blessed for ever*, his becoming poor, that we might be made rich, in a Word his being expos'd to all the Instances of Hardship, Ignominy and Contempt in Life, and at last to a most painful and shameful Death, is enough to affect any who have the least Spark of Life! But what less than Almightyness can effectually affect the Dead?

And

And are there not some among you, who find yourselves without Taste and Savour of Spiritual Things, and content yourselves with a spiritless Form or Round of religious Duty, without any Growth in Grace, you think you have got as much as will do for Heaven, and are therefore satisfied? O! this is a plain Sign, that you are stark blind, and stone dead.

Awake poor Sinners! in the Name of God out of your damnable Sleep, before your Case be past all Remedy, there is no Hopes of your Conversion and Salvation, while ye remain in this Sleep and Death; ye must be awakned or damned, it is the Lost that CHRIST is only come to seek and save. *The Whole need no Physician, but the Sick.* If you ask what you shall do to get awakened into this Life? I answer, first try by Examination to get a thorough Knowledge of your dead and damnable State: For if you fail in this, you are never like to be deeply affected with the Miseries of your Condition: Ye should likewise think often with the utmost Seriousness, upon *Death, Judgment, and Hell-Fire*, in all the Forms of Terror, in which Scripture and Reason do represent them! Attend diligently upon the Word *Faithfully* dispens'd; for this is a principal Mean of divine Appointment of bringing the Dead to Life. By the Foolishness of Preaching God, saves those that believe. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Cry frequently and vehemently to God for the awakening Influencies of his Holy Spirit, and beware of quenching them by *Sloth, presumptuous Hopes, or sining against Light.* Ye ungodly Sinners of every Age and Order, I charge you in the Name of the living God, and adjure you by his Authority, to awake, else you must be burnt for ever in the Flames of Hell! Don't think that your dead Devotions, unperform'd Resolutions, ineffectual Affections,

or external Priviledges, *viz.* Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, will stand you instead when arraign'd before the burning Bar of the dreadful God! For neither Circumcision or Uncircumcision, avails any Thing but the New-Creature. You that are in the Flesh cannot please God by any Thing you do: *A corrupt Tree, as our Lord observes, cannot bring forth good Fruit.*

Awake poor Sinners! for the Guilt of all your Sins lies like Mountains of Lead upon your wretched Souls! And consider I beseech you, that all ye have been doing since ye were born, is in some respect Sin, in a greater or lesser Degree; ye have been going astray from the Womb like wild Asses Colts, and every Imagination of the Tho'ts of your Hearts have been only Evil continually; ye have been sinning against Light and Love, against Law and Gospel, against Mercies and Judgments: Thus you may see that your Sins rival the Stars for Multitude, and are red as Crimson in their Agravations; and you may assure yourselves, that God's Justice will oblige him to Proportion your Pains accordingly, O then! How Inexpressible and Exquisite must your eternal Tortures be, if ye continue in this impenitent Security. Poor Sinners! Me thinks the Songs, the Shouts, the harmonious Hosannahs of all the Hosts of Heaven invite you to *awake*, without which ye cannot be admitted into their honourable and happy Society, and join in their delightful Anthems with greatful Accents, besides the dolorous Groans and hideous Scrieks of damned Men, and damned Angels, in the flaming Furnace of Tophet, may justly alarm you out of your accursed Stupor: For after a few Moments, ye must roar with them, except ye repent! Nothing but the abus'd Patience of God and the slender Thread of your Life, keep you from plunging down into that flaming Lake, that burning Main! And for what you know

know the Patience of God may expire towards you before the next Mornings Light, and then you are undone! undone! undone forever! O if the Thread of your Life breaks while you remain in this dead State, you are gone past all Hopes forever, Dead and Damned at once, yea Damned to all Eternity! And how many Accidents are you environ'd with? Are not many carry'd off speedily and unexpectedly? And why may not this be your Case? I beseech you Friends by all the Happinets of Heaven, by all the Torments of Hell, for the Sake of God the Father, Son and Spirit, by all the Regard you owe to your Deathless Souls, your Reason, your Conscience, as well as the Ambassadors of CHRIST among you; that ye would *awake*. I beseech you as a Messenger of the great God, as on my bended Knees, by the Groans, Tears, and Wounds of CHRIST, that you would *Awake*. Yea I charge you by all the Curses of the Law, and Blessings of the Gospel, that ye would *Awake*. My Friends, you are witnesses against yourselves, that I have set Death and Life before you, O choose Life that ye may live! *Let the wicked Man forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and turn to God and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon!* O Sirs! consider these Things, as ye will answer it at the Tribunal of CHRIST at the last Day.

SERMON.

SERMON XXII.

I. JOHN v. 7.

For there are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and These three are One.

THE Doctrine of the Trinity, is undoubtedly of the highest Importance in Christianity: For the whole Scheme of Redemption is built upon this fundamental Point, namely; That God the Father did from all Eternity purpose to send his only begotten Son into the World to assume human Nature, that therein he might satisfy divine Justice, by his Suffering and Obedience. That the Son of God in the fulness of Time, did as Mediator, obey his Father's Injunctions, in enduring that Weight of Wrath, which was due for the Sins of the Elect World, and that it is the Office of the Holy Spirit to make effectual Application of the Purchase of CHRIST to them. Now if the Distinction of Persons in the Trinity be remov'd, these Things cannot be consistently supported: For it is absurd to suppose, that the same Person should send himself, and satisfy himself, &c. And thus the whole Fabrick of Christianity in respect of its grand Peculiarities would sink, its Foundation being destroy'd, and the Religion of Nature take Place of reveal'd.

But tho' the Doctrine of the Trinity, be of the last Importance in the Christian System, yet it is incomprehensible!

Neither

Neither should this be wondred at, seeing there are divers Things in Nature, which we cannot fully conceive of or explain, such as the Reason of the Growth, and different Colours, as well Shapes of Vegetables, and of the various instincts of brute Animals. Not to mention the Nature of our own Souls, their Union with our Bodies, and Way of acting upon them. If Things that are of a finite Nature do thus poze and nonpluss our weak Understandings, is it strange that the infinite Perfections of the divine Nature should transcend the Comprehension of a finite Mind? The Distance being so vast between the Object, and our Faculties.

Neither is it unreasonable to believe, what we have no equal or adequate Ideas of, else we must believe in none of the divine Attributes: For every of those surpass the highest Flight, the utmost Verge of a Creatures Thought. e. g. Altho' natural Reason assures us, that there is a God, and that Self-existence is necessarily included among the Number of his unalienable Perfections, yet how imperfect is the Idea we form of it? We are likewise assured by the clearest Dictates of unbiass'd Reason, that God is immense without Extention, and eternal without Succession in Duration. But what positive Image can our Minds form of such Things? Are not our Thoughts swallowed up and lost in Obscurity when we try to grasp such sublime and incomprehensible Objects? We may be therefore truly said to believe more concerning God, than we do or can comprehend; otherwise indeed, we do not believe the Being of a God at all: For whatever our Understandings grasp, cannot, but like it self, be finite, and whatever is finite is not God. That there are certain Perfections in God, both Scripture and Reason inform us, but how these are in God, we cannot fully conceive or express! No doubt Faith supposes some Idea or Knowledge of the Object,

ject, but this Knowledge admits of various Degrees; sometimes it reaches no farther than the Proof of the Existence of Things, together with some negative Ideas or Apprehension of what they are not; and sometimes it extends to the Manner of their Existence, and therefore it is so far from being absurd, that it is necessary, for the Reason aforesaid, to believe that there is something in God, which we cannot grasp.

Seeing then the Doctrine of the Trinity, is so important and intricate. It was well observ'd by *Austine* of old respecting it; "That in nothing Men are apt to err more easily and dangerously." (*In nihilo facilius, et periculosius erratur*) But how contrary to this, is the unreasonable Notion of some Moderns, who plead for the innocency of Errors of the grossest Kind, at least of those that are sincere Enquirers after Truth, who are notwithstanding far from it? As tho' their Endeavours would entitle them to Happiness, without the Knowledge of Fundamentals.

"But surely, it is not the Sincerity of our Enquiries after important Truths, but the Success thereof, that is to be regarded in this, as well as other Means that are us'd to obtain so valuable an End, we may as well suppose, that sincere Endeavours to obtain many of those Graces that accompany Salvation, such as Faith, Love to God, and Evangelical Obedience, will supply or atone for the Want of them, as assert that our unsuccessful Enquiries after the great Doctrines of Religion will excuse our Ignorance thereof, especially when we consider that Blindness of Mind, as well as hardness of Heart, is included among those spiritual Judgments, which are the Consequence of our fallen State. And also that God displays the Sovereignty of his Grace, as much in leading the Soul into all necessary Truth, as he does in any other Things that re-

"late

“ late to Salvation. However it is not our Business to determine, the final States of Men, but rather to pray that the Ignorant and Erronious may be brought to the acknowledgment of the Truth.”

In the mean Time we may truly say, that Errors in Doctrine, (especially when they touch the Foundation of Religion) are very perilous, as well as Errors in Practice. And hence we read of damnable Heresies. But how far Error in Opinion may consist with a gracious State, we cannot precisely and peremptorily determine. It is therefore extremely necessary, to attend with the utmost Care and Caution to what the sacred Scriptures relate concerning the Trinity, and to beware of giving a lawless Loose to our own Imaginations: For it is better, as one well observes “ To be Ignorant of the Depths of it, than not to retain the Limits of Truth concerning it. *Melius est nescire Centrum, quam non tenere circumum.*”

Now the Text I have chosen to discourse upon, gives us an excellent Description of the important Point under our present Consideration in three Particulars; for 1st. Here we have a Trinity of Persons asserted, mention is made of *Three*, and a personal Action ascrib'd to them, namely, that of *bearing Witness*; *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven*. Now the Matter of this Witness or Testimony is, that JESUS is the Son of God, and the Messiah promis'd, as appears from the 1st. 5th. and 9th. Verses of this Chapter, the *Manner* rather than the *Place* of the Testimony, is signify'd by those Words, *in Heaven*. The Sacred Three have and do bear Witness in a majestick and glorious Way to the aforesaid Truth: Thus the Father testify'd of the Man JESUS, by an immediate Voice from Heaven, at his Baptism, *this is my beloved Son hear ye him*, the eternal Word own'd it's personal Union with the assum'd human Nature, on the Mount

- Mount of Transfiguration, by that divine Glory wherewith it was there cloth'd. Joh. i. 14. *And we beheld his Glory, the Glory, as of the only Begotten of the Father full of Grace and Truth.* And the Holy Spirit likewise witnessed by descending visibly upon him like a Dove at his Baptism. And 2dly. The Names of the sacred Three are express'd, viz. the Father, Word, and Spirit. The first Person of the Trinity is call'd Father, to signify his eternal Generation of the Son. The second Person is call'd the Word in our Text, and in other Places of Scripture. (*See John. i. 1. 1 John i. 1.*) To express not only his Office in the Revelation of his Fathers Will to us, (*Mat. xi. 27.*) but also his ineffable Generation, as a Word is begotten in our Thoughts and is the express Image of them. The Third Person of the Trinity is call'd *Ghost* or Spirit to signify his Personal Property, which is to proceed from the Father and the Son, the Manner of which seems to be shadow'd forth by breathing; for as much as the Word Spirit is deriv'd of a Verb, which signifies to breath. (*pneuma a pneo spiro*) Now the Blessed Spirit is call'd *Holy*, to signify what is his peculiar Office in the divine *OEconomy*, respecting the Salvation of the Elect which is to make them Holy by his efficacious Influences.

But before I proceed to discourse farther upon this Text, I think it necessary to offer something concerning its divine Original. It is true several learned Men acknowledge, that it is not found in divers ancient Manuscripts, and Versions drawn from them. But what then, it is found in many others, as *Beza* observes, *Jerom* asserts in his Letter to *Eusebius*, That it was contain'd in all the Greek Copies of his Time, and complains that it was omitted thro the Negligence of the Latin Interpreters. Now it is certain that *Jerom* was one of the most learned of the Fathers, in respect of the Languages and Church History. What tho' this Text

was

was omitted in Writings of the Fathers of the fourth Century, it might be wanting in the Copies they consulted, and be in others notwithstanding: But methinks it is enough to satisfy us in this Point, that it is not only mention'd frequently by the Writers of succeeding Ages, but also by some of the third Century, particularly by *Cyprian* and *Tertulian*. *Cyprian* wrote before the Birth of *Arius*, in the third Century, and endur'd Martyrdom in the Year 260: And it is certain that he had not such an allegorical or mystical Turn of Mind, as *Origen* and some others, and therefore his Testimony is the more to be depended upon. In his Epistle concerning the Unity of the Church he hath these Words, viz. *The Lord sayeth, that I, and the Father are one; and again it is written, concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and these Three are one. (dicit Dominus, ego et Pater unum Sumus, et itrum de patre et filio. et spiritu sancto Scriptum est, et hi tres unum sunt.)* Now the most antient Manuscript extant in the World, which some say is at *Alexandria*, is not suppos'd by any to reach so far back as the third Century. It is likewise thought by some learned Men, that *Tertulian* in his Book against *Praxeas*, refers to this Text in these Words. *which Three are one. (qui tres unum sunt)* To what has been said, I may add, that Mr. *Pool* observes in his *Synopsis*, that *Athanasius* "in his first Book to *Theophilus* and *Idacius* who flourish'd in the Year 308 under *Theodosius*, produc'd this Place of "Scripture against the *Arians*." This Verse might be omitted in some Manuscripts thro' the Carelessness of the Transcriber, but could not be added without an evil Design; which it is unreasonable to suppose in this Case, because it could not be answered by such an Addition, seeing the Trinity is elsewhere fully asserted, as I shall afterwards prove: It is therefore much more probable, that the *Arians* have

H. h. h.

corrupted.

corrupted this Place of Scripture, than the Orthodox, seeing that it so directly oversets their Heresy; whereas the opposite Doctrine is sufficiently confirm'd by other Places; and both *Ambrose (de fide)* and *Socrates* in his ecclesiastical History, do witness, that the *Arians* were Guilty of this Kind of Fraud; neither was it difficult for them to effect it, when some of their Number, namely, *Constantius* and *Valens*, possess'd the imperial Throne and banish'd the Orthodox; and in the mean Time fix'd *Arian* Bishops almost over the whole Christian World. I might add, if it was necessary, that the Genuineness of this Text might be defended from it's Connection with the preceding Verses, and the Scope of the Place. But it's Time that I should proceed to propose a Method of discoursing upon the Subject our Text contains, which shall be as follows, *viz.*

I. I shall offer some Considerations serving to prove and explain *a Trinity in the Godhead.*

II. I shall labour to prove, by divers Arguments, *their Unity therein, or that each of the sacred Three is truly and properly God.*

III. Answer the most *important Objections.*

And then proceed to the Improvement of the whole.

That there be Three in the Godhead the Scripture teaches so often as it makes mention of more who are God, and this is done in all those Places wherein the Almighty speaks of himself in the plural Number. (See *Gen. i. 26. and iii. 22. and xi. 7.*) *Let us make Man, &c.* Neither is the Cavil of the modern Jews, respecting those Places of Scripture, of any Validity, *viz.* That God speaks to the Angels, or to the Heaven or Earth, or Elements, and calls them to a Partnership in the Creation, or that he speaks of himself alone after the Manner of great Men: But how Ridiculous is it to suppose that Angels, or any other Creature,

Creature, should be call'd to any Fellowship in Creation, which is a Work of Almighty Power, or that infinite Wisdom should be nonplus'd, and need Council of Creatures! Neither does the Stile of the Modern great ones suit the Scriptures, or Custom of the eastern Nations; it was too late receiv'd by the western World to determine this Point! It may be further observ'd, that the aforesaid Phrase does not exactly agree with the Custom of the Moderns; for they say not we Kings of *England*, or we *George's*, but we *George the King*.

Besides those Places of Scripture whereby *Jehovah* is distinguish'd from *Jehovah*, do proclaim a Plurality of Persons in the God-head (See *Gen.* xix. 24. *Ex.* xxxiv. 5. 2. *Sam.* xii. 24. 25.) Surely *Jehovah* is not distinguish'd from *Jehovah* by his Essence, seeing there is but one God; (*Deut.* vi. 4.) or by Accidents, for such do not belong to the Almighty, and therefore the Distinction must be personal. A Trinity of Persons is likewise signifi'd in those Places of Scripture, where the Name of God is divers Times repeated in the same Sentence, which it would be Prophane to suppose was Tautological. (See *Deut.* vi. 4. *Exo.* iii. 15. *Isa.* vi. 3.) *Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts*; but in the New-Testament this Truth is more expressly asserted, *Mat.* iii. 16. 17. *And JESUS when he was Baptiz'd, went up straitway out of the Water, (or as the original Word Apo, is elsewhere justly render'd by the same Interpreters from the Water) and lo the Heavens were open'd unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a Dove and lighting upon him; and lo a Voice from Heaven, saying this is my belov'd Son in whom I am well pleas'd.* This Place is so exprets to the Point, that it was a common saying among the Antient Fathers, viz. *Go to Jordan and you will see the Trinity*, *Mat.* xxviii. 19. *Go therefore teach all Nati-*

ons in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Surely we should not be baptiz'd in the Name of one who is not God. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. *The Grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all Amen.* Here three distinct Blessings are desir'd for the *Corinthians*, from the sacred Three in the God-head, namely, *Love* from the Father, *Grace* from the Son, and *Communion* from the Holy-Ghost. Now that those sacred Three are distinct Persons, appears by the following Considerations, The Word *Hypostasis*, signifies as much as Subsistence or Person, and this is expressly apply'd to the Father, of which the Son is said *to be the express Image*, Heb. i. 3. And what can this intend but that he is a Person also? Now by a Parity of Reason the same must be likewise said of the Holy Ghost: But seeing the Father's personality is not disputed, it will be only necessary to add somewhat concerning the Personality of the Son and Holy-Ghost. To this End it may be observ'd, that personal Characters are ascrib'd to the second Person of the Trinity: Hence he is call'd a *Son*, which denotes a distinct Person from the Father. He is likewise said *to be sent into the World by his Father*; which cannot, without the greatest Impropriety, be apply'd to a mere Relation or Quality: He is likewise call'd a *Surety* &c. And three Offices are ascrib'd to him as such, by each of which he is call'd. It may be also farther observ'd that some of the aforesaid Characters are never ascrib'd to any of the other Persons of the Trinity; besides the Second, the Father and Holy Spirit, are never call'd the Son, are never said to be made flesh, or to become Sureties for perishing Transgressors: Not to add that the personal Characters, *He, Thy, Thou*, are apply'd to the Son. Ps. cx. 7. *He shall drink of the Brook in the Way.* Verse 3. *Thy People shall*

shall be willing in the Day of thy Power. V. 4. Thou art a Priest forever, after the Order of Melchizedeck.

But to proceed, it appears likewise, that the Holy Ghost is a divine Person from the personal Properties ascrib'd to him in Scripture, thus he is said *to act by sovereign Pleasure. Act. xv. 18. it seem'd good to the Holy Ghost and to us.* He is also said *to constitute Officers in the Church of God. Act. xx. 28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the Flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.* He is likewise said *to instruct them. Mark xiii. 11. To send them. Act. xiii, 4. To dwell in them. I Cor. vi. 19.* See that famous Place of Scripture, *Job. viii. 16. 17. 18.* What tho' in the poetical Parts of Scripture sometimes personal Characters are ascrib'd to Things which are not Persons. It will not follow that many Hundreds of Places respecting the Trinity, where no lofty Expression is us'd, should be taken without any Necessity, without any Notice from the Context in the same Sense. Surely fundamentals in Religion are plainly express'd, and not perpetually immur'd and veil'd in Tropes and Figures, and so rendered inaccessible to a vulgar Understanding, otherwise we should be left to the greatest Uncertainty in the most important and momentous Points, notwithstanding of the Revelation given us, which can hardly consist with the Divine Goodness. If personal Characters, when apply'd to Men and Angels, are taken in a proper Sense, why should they not when apply'd to the sacred Three, who tho' they have not distinct Beings, yet have an Understanding and Will, and therefore are capable of Personality, and indeed to take the aforesaid Places of Scripture, and all the rest that relate to the Personallity of the Son and Holy Ghost in a figurative Sense, manifestly tends to overthrow the Personallity of the Father, which is prov'd by the same Method's.

But

But to make the Way more plain, for what may be afterwards offered, it may be here observ'd, that by the Word *Trinity*, we mean no more, than that the divine Essence, which is one, is common to three Persons, namely, *the Father, Son, and Spirit*, who are distinguish'd by three Manners of subsisting. Altho' the Word *Trinity* is not expressly mentioned in Scripture, yet what is thereby signified, is agreeable thereto, as appears from what has been, and what may be (God willing) farther offered, and therefore its proper that the Term be retain'd, until a better be found to supply the Room thereof. By Essence we understand what the Scriptures term the Nature of God, (*Pbuis*) *Gal. vi. 8.* the Form of God (*Morphe*) *Phil. ii.* the Godhead (*Theotes*) *Colos. ii. 9.* In short the divine Essence is that whereby God, is God: For that whereby any Thing is what it is, is call'd its Essence. The Word Person or Subsistence (which is the same) is a scriptural Term, *Heb. i. 3.* Our Text affirms that there are *Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.* Then there are three Somethings in the Godhead, but what are they, not three distinct Substances, or Essences, otherwise there would be unavoidably three Gods, which is blasphemous to imagine; not three Accidents, for these belong not to God, because of his Simplicity and Immutability, not three Relations, for these cannot act or bear witness. What then can they be but Persons? If any don't like this scriptural Name, let them produce a better if they can.

The Word Person, some describe to be "a rational incommunicable Substance." And others, "an individual Subsistence of a rational Being." A Beast is an individual, but without Reason, a Soul hath Reason, but is not an individual; and therefore neither of these can be a Person. Now every manner of Being makes a distinct Person in God, because his Essence being indivisible must be in every of

of them. An ingenious Writer represents a Person in the Trinity thus. viz. "That it is a spiritual infinite Agent, which must not be considered as abstracted from, but as truly subsisting in the divine Nature, and as mutually, eternally, and inseparably related to the other co-essential Persons in the Godhead, from whom he is sufficiently and only distinguish'd by some Personal, and as such incommunicable Properties." As this Description guards against the Heresy of *Sabellius* on the one Hand, who imagined a divine Person to be but a Quality or Accident. So it equally militates against the *Heretic* of the *Tritheists* who dream that the Persons of the Trinity are three absolute Beings that exist separately, & thus a Medium is opened, between two dangerous Extrems. It is necessary to retain the Word *Person* respecting the Trinity, in order to ward off the *Sabellian* Error, which is, that the Distinction among the sacred Three is only nominal, and that there is but one Person; who because of his different Operations, was sometimes called *Father*, sometimes *Son*, and sometimes *Holy-Ghost*. Yet in the mean Time, it must be observ'd, that there is a wide Difference, between human and divine Persons, in the following Respects, namely

1st. Human Persons proceed from each other in Time, but whatever outward Order there be among the sacred Three, yet there can be no Firstness or Priority of Nature, Time or Dignity among them, they must be all co-equal and co-eternal, otherwise they could not be God.

2dly. Human Persons have their own proper Beings distinctly from each other, and from every other Creature, but the Persons of the Trinity have all one and the same Being or Essence. The Godhead of the *Father*, *Son* and *Holy-Ghost*, is the very same, otherwise there would be three Gods. Tho' one human Person is of the same Species with another,

or has a Nature like the rest of his own Order, yet it is not the same individual Nature which another possesses, otherwise the Faculties and Exercise thereof would be the very same in two Persons, which is certainly false. But in respect of the Godhead, tho' each Person be distinct from the other, yet each possesses the very same individual divine Nature, otherwise each could not be said to be truly and really God.

3dly. Human Persons are separated from each other, one might be, tho' the other should never exist: Created Beings are deriv'd precarious and dependant; whereas on the contrary, the Persons of the Trinity have an In-being in one another, *John xiv. 10. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* And undoubtedly they have a necessary Existence, and independent Personality, otherwise each of them could not be infinitely perfect, and so not God.

I shall here beg leave to mention Mr. *Flavel's* Description of a Person of the Trinity, which I think is as safe and intelligible, as any that I have met with, which is this, viz: "That it is the Godhead distinguish'd by personal Properties, each Person having his distinct personal Properties." (*Heb. i. 3.*) To explain which let the following Particulars be consider'd. namely

1st. That all the sacred Three possess the same Godhead, and hence they are said to be *One* in our Text; and elsewhere, that *they are in each other*, as has been but now mentioned, they have a Communion in the same Essence: Forasmuch as the divine Essence is Infinite, it can be communicated to more than one, and hence they must needs have Communion in the same essential Attributes, such as Omniscience, Almightyness, Eternity, Self-existence. Whatever personal Self-existence does peculiarly belong to the *Father*

Father, (*John v. 26.*) Yet an essential Self-Existence, must belong to all the sacred Three, that is, the Son and Spirit must be of themselves, as well as the Father, otherwise they could not be God, and from this Communion in Essence and Attributes, necessarily results a Communion in religious Worship, which equally belongs to all. (*John v. 23.*)

2dly. The Godhead is distinguish'd, not divided, the divine Essence being simple and infinite, is therefore indivisible into more of the same Kind, but tho' it cannot be divided, yet it may be distinguish'd by personal Properties.

Now the Personal Property of the Father, is to beget the Son, *Pf. ii. 7. I will declare the Decree, the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son this Day have I begotten thee,* *Eph. i. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings, in Heavenly Places in CHRIST.* Begetting is not an Essential Act, otherwise it would be common to all but we do not find that it is common to all, the Son is never said in Scripture to beget the Father, or the Holy Ghost the Son; and therefore the Act is Personal, on this Account altho' the Father cannot be called properly the Fountain of the Deity, yet he is by some call'd the Original of the Persons.

That the Generation of the Son was eternal, is evident from the following Places of Scripture, *Ephes. iii. 14, 15. For this Cause I bow my Knees unto the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named,* *Prov. viii. 22, 24. The Lord possessed me in the Beginning of his Way, before his Works of Old. I was set up from Everlasting.—Or ever the Earth was, when there was no Depths I was brought forth, while as yet he had not made the Earth.* *Mic. v. 2. Whose Goings forth have been from of Old, even from Everlasting.* See also *Pf. ii. 7. The*

I i i

eternal

eternal Generation of the Son is confirm'd by the Titles given to him in Scripture, thus he is call'd absolutely the *Son of God* (*Mat. xvi. 16.*) *A Son begotten by God* (*Acts iv. 25, 26.*) *His own Son.* (*Rom. viii. 32.*) *The first begotten Son.* (*Heb. i. vi.*) *The only begotten Son* (*John i. 14.*) This eternal Generation some Godly and learned Divines say, "consists in the Communication of the same Essence." *John v. 26.* And others, "in the Communication of Personality." Or in other Words, "That the Person of the Father, begat the Person of the Son from Everlasting, ineffably, but undividedly." Altho' it is exceeding necessary inviolably to maintain the eternal Generation of the Son, because it is asserted by Scripture and Antiquity, and the Denial of it seems to have a bad Tendency to weaken our Belief of the Doctrine of the Trinity, by opposing the personal Properties of the Father and Son, which are the principal Ground of the Distinction between those divine Persons. Yet we must confess with *Justin*, and a Cloud of other Witnesses, that the Manner thereof is incomprehensible, and inexpressible. And hence the Antient Fathers were wont to say concerning it, "That it was incomprehensible, without the Vicissitude of Time, without Separation, and without Change or Passion, either in the Father or Son." *Prov. viii. 22, 23. Mic. v. 2. Colof. i. 17. John i. 1. & xiv. 10, 11.* Which they express'd in the following Words, *acataleptoos, achronooos, achoristoos, apathooos.*

Now the Second Person of the Trinity, is only the Son of God, on the Account of his eternal Generation, altho' his Sonship be manifested by his Incarnation, *Rom. i.* And hence he is call'd *the Brightness of his Fathers Glory, and express Image of his Person*, *Heb. i. 3. Colof. i. 15.* He is surely the Son of the Father, in a Sense different from any meer Creature in Heaven or Earth, otherwise he could not be

be

be call'd *the only begotten Son of God, and equal to God.* Phil. ii. 6. And therefore it must be by eternal Generation: He had the Character of a Son before he assum'd human Nature. (*John iii. 16.*) And therefore that Assumption could not be the Cause of his Sonship, to suppose that the Incarnation of our Lord, is the Cause of his Sonship, is to destroy the Paternal Relation of the first Person to him: For thus the third Person might be call'd his Father as well as the First; and as to the seeming Absurdities that are objected, it may be in general replied, that those take Place only in natural Generations, not supernatural.

But to proceed, the personal Property of the Son, is to be *begotten by the Father*, Prov. viii. 24, 25. John i. 14. *We beheld his Glory, the Glory, as of the only begotten of the Father.* Heb. i. 5. *For unto which of the Angels said he at any Time, thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee.* As *active Generation* is the Manner of the Fathers subsisting, so *passive Generation* is the Manner of the Son's.

Again, the personal Property of the Holy Ghost is, to *proceed from the Father and the Son*, John xiv. 26. *But the Comforter which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all Things.* And chap. xv. 16. *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.*

And thus it appears that the sacred Three are distinguish'd by their personal Properties; and by the Order of subsisting, and acting consequent thereupon.

The personal Properties shew that they are so distinguish'd, that one cannot be the other. The Father cannot be the Son, or the Son the Father, *Yet he that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father also.* John xiv. 9. As to the Order of their subsisting, the Father is the first Person, who subsists entirely of himself, the Son the second Person, begotten by

Father, the Spirit is the Third, who proceeds from both the Father and Son. This Order should not be inverted, tho' in the mean Time we must not conceive that there is any real Priority, as to *Nature, Time, or Dignity* but of order only, in respect of their Original. The Father consider'd as such, is first in order before his Son, but the Manner of the Generation of the Son, and Proceſſion of the Holy Ghost, is to us, as has been before observ'd, incomprehensible! Hence is that of the Prophet, *Iſa. liii 8. Who ſhall declare his Generation.*

Again the Persons of the Trinity are distinguish'd, as was before hinted, by their Order of acting, which is agreeable to that of their subsisting, the Father worketh of himself, by the Son and Holy Ghost, the Son from the Father, by the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit from the Father and Son, by himself, *John xvi. 13. Howbeit when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. John v. 19. Then answered Jesus and said unto him, verily verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do, for what Things soever he doth, these also doth he likewise.* Undoubtedly the Power of working is only one, and therefore common to all the Three, but the Order and Object of working is different; and hence the first Work, namely Creation, is ascrib'd to the First Person; and the second Work, viz. Redemption to the Second; and the Third Work, namely, Sanctification to the third Person of the Trinity. This by many Divines is termed the OEconomy of the Persons of the Godhead; which may be thus describ'd, viz. *That it is such an Order of acting, as directly tends to manifest the personal Glory of the Father Son and Spirit.*

Tho' all the Works of God, are ascrib'd to every Person of the Trinity, because all the divine Attributes equally belong

long to them, and therefore every Work must be equally produc'd by them. Yet seeing there are distinct Persons in the Godhead, it is but reasonable that their personal Glory should be peculiarly Manifested. Now this the sacred Scripture Points to, by that different Order of acting, which it ascribes to the sacred Three. Hence the Work of our Salvation in respect of its *Projection*, is first assign'd to the Father, in regard of its *Purchase* to the Son, and in respect of its *Application* to the Holy Ghost.

It is of the last necessity that under this Head, we carefully avoid *Sabellianism* on the one Hand, which allows of no Distinction among the Persons of the Trinity, but what is merely nominal, and asserts that one and the same Person because of his different Operations, is sometimes called Father, sometimes Son, and sometimes Holy Spirit, and on the other, that we with equal Care avoid the *Tritheism* of *Valentinus*, who deem'd that there were Three eternal Spirits, unequal to each other, and different in Essence, and so by consequence that there were three Gods: Some to avoid the Heresy of *Sabellius*, have held that the Persons of the Trinity differ from each other *really*, but that seeming to verge to Tritheism, others to avoid that extream, have held that they only differ *modally*, as one manner from another, but some thinking that the modal Distinction, is too superficial and that it verges to *Sabellianism* do observe, that the Distinction is *real-Modal*, this seems to guard best against both Extreams. But if those scholastick Distinctions do not satisfy, it will be enough to say, that the Persons of the Trinity differ as Three, or that they are so distinguished, by personal Properties, that the one cannot be the other.

Here I shall beg leave to cite the Words of famous Mr. *How*, in his Discourse upon the Trinity, pag. 540 which run thus, " Since therefore there is a Necessity apprehended, of acknowledging three such Somewhats in the God-
" head

“ head; both because the Word of God, who best under-
 “ stands his own Nature, doth speak of three in it, so plain-
 “ ly, that without notorious Violence, it cannot be under-
 “ stood otherwise, and because it affirms some Things of
 “ one, or other of them, which it affirms not of the rest,
 “ it will therefore be necessary to admit a true Distinction
 “ between them, otherwise they can't be three, and safe to
 “ say, there is so much, as is requisite to found the distinct
 “ Affirmations which we find in God's Word concerning
 “ this or that apart from the other, otherwise we shall in
 “ Effect deny what God affirms; and modest to confess,
 “ that how great the Distinction is, with precise and parti-
 “ cular Limitation, we do not know, nor dare we enquire
 “ or determine; only that as it cannot be less then is suf-
 “ ficient to sustain such distinct Predicates or Attributi-
 “ ons, so it cannot be so great, as to intrench upon the Uni-
 “ ty of the Godhead.” Thus far he:

It may be here added; that the Persons of the Trinity are distinguish'd from the Essence, as one from Three, or as that which is communicable from that which is incommunicable. I proceed to the

2d. Propos'd, which was to prove *the Unity of the sacred Three, in the Godhead. And these Three are One, One God equal in Power and Glory.* There is no need of spending Time in attempting to prove the Godhead of the Father, seeing it is questioned by none but Atheists. I shall therefore proceed to prove the Godhead of the Son; which appears from this; that all the Peculiarities of Divinity are ascrib'd to him, as is evident from the following Induction of Particulars, viz.

1st. *The Names of God* are ascrib'd to him: Thus he is call'd *God*. Heb. i. 8. *But unto the Son he sayeth, thy Throne O God is for ever and ever, likewise the mighty God.* (Isa. ix. 6.) *The True God.* (1 Job, v. 20.) *God Blessed forever.*

Rem.

(Rom. ix. 5.) *The Lord of Glory.* (1 Cor. ii. 8.) *Lord of Lords, and King of Kings.* (Rev. xvii. 14.) The Name *Jehovah* appears to be the peculiar Name of God. Ps. lxxxiii.

18. *That thou whose Name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the Earth.* Exo. iii. 14 *Thus shalt thou say to the Children of Israel, I AM (or Jehovah) hath sent me unto you; this is my Memorial unto all Generations.* Now

that the Name *Jehovah* is ascrib'd to the second Person of the Trinity, appears from the following Places of Scripture, viz. (Numb. xxi. 5. 6. 7.) There the People, after the awful Judgment of the fiery Serpents was sent among them, confess'd that they had sin'd against the Lord, or *Jehovah*. Now this Passage we find expressly apply'd to CHRIST by the Apostle in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*.

1 Epist. x. 9. *Neither let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of the Serpents,* Isa. xl. 3. *The Voice of him that cryeth in the Wilderness, prepare the Way of the Lord, or Jehovah, make strait in the Desert a high Way for our God.* (See this apply'd to Christ, Mat. iii. 3. 11.)

Another notable Place of Scripture to the same Purpose is, Isa. vi. 1. 2. *Mine Eyes have seen the King the Lord, or Jehovah:* This is likewise apply'd to CHRIST, Job. xii. 40.

41. Our Lord likewise assumes the Name *Jehovah*, as appears by his telling the *Jews* thus, *before Abraham was, I AM;* many other Proofs might be brought, but what have been mention'd, if duly consider'd, may, I hope, suffice.

But

2dly. The *Attributes of God* are ascrib'd to CHRIST, as particularly,

(1.) *Omniscency,* John. xxi. 17. *Lord thou knowest all Things.* And elsewhere it is said, that *he knew from the Beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.* John. vi. 64. and John ii. 24. 25. It is said,

JESUS

JESUS did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all Men, and needed not that any should testify of Man, for he knew what was in Man. Besides, Rev. ii. 23. He is said to search the Reins and Heart. Such Knowledge as this, is surely beyond the Reach of Men and Angels.

(2.) Omnipotency is ascrib'd to CHRIST, Rev. i. 8. *I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and Ending, sayeth the Lord, which is, which was, which is to come, the Almighty.* Philip. iii. 21. *Whereby he is able to subdue all Things to himself:* And hence he is call'd the mighty God, and said to uphold all Things by his Power. (Is. xi. 6. Heb. i. 3.)

(3.) Eternity is ascrib'd to CHRIST: And hence he is call'd the Everlasting Father. (Is. ix. 6.) And said to live for ever and ever. (Rev. x. 6.) And that his goings forth have been from of Old, from Everlasting. (Mic. v. 2.)

(4.) Omnipresence is likewise ascrib'd to CHRIST. Mat. xviii. 20. *Where two or three are gather'd together in my Name there am I in the midst of them;* this is a manifest Evidence of the God-head of our Lord; for surely a Creature cannot be in two Places at once. To imagine that the aforesaid Place of Scripture intends only the Presence of our Lords Authority, is to suppose a Tautology in the Words which is absurd; for to be gather'd together in his Name, signifies his Authority: surely it is but reasonable to take this Place of Scripture, in the same Sense with that Parallel one, Exo. xx. 24. *In all Places where I record my Name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.* See likewise Matt. xxviii. ult. *Lo. I am with you always unto the End of the World.*

(5.) Independency is ascrib'd to CHRIST. Rev. i. 8. 17. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and Ending sayeth the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come.* Independency is likewise imply'd in the name *Jehovah*, which is given to CHRIST; as has been prov'd before.

(6.)

(6.) *Equality with God* is likewise ascrib'd to Christ : And hence it is said, *that he was in the form of God, and thought it no Robbery to be equal with God.* Philip. ii. 5. 6. 7. For this Reason he is justly call'd *the Fellow of God.* Zec. xiii. 7. And all that the Father hath are said to be his. (*Job. xvi. xv.*)

(7.) *Immutability in Essence* is ascrib'd to our Lord. Ps. cii, 27, 28. *But thou art the same and thy Years shall have no End, the Children of thy Servants shall continue, and their Seed shall be establish'd before thee.* Compar'd with Heb. i. 12. *As a Vesture thou shalt fold them up, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy Years shall not fail.* And in a Word there is no Attribute belongs to the Father, but what is also ascrib'd to the Son. Again

3dly the *Works of God* are ascrib'd to CHRIST, particularly,

(1.) The *Work of Creation*, Joh. i. 3. *All Things were made by him, and without him was not any Thing made that was made.* Col. i. 16. *For by him were all Things created that are in Heaven and that are in Earth, visible and invisible.* Now Creation is certainly a Work which requires Almighty Strength, a Work which none but a God can perform.

(2.) The *Work of Providence* is attributed to our Lord : And hence it is said, *that by him all Things consist, and are upheld by the Word of his Power.* (Col. i. 17. and Heb. i. 3.) These words of our Lord to the Jews *John v. 17.* are applicable to the same Purpose, *viz, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

(3.) *Miraculous Works* are ascrib'd to CHRIST, *John. v. 21.* *For as the Father raiseth up the Dead, and quickneth them, even so the Son quickneth whom he will.* An Instance of this we have *John xi. 43, 44.* Where we are told that our Lord com-

manded *Lazarus to come forth*, after he had been four Days dead, and that this was immediately obey'd, *the dead came forth, bound Hand and Foot, with grave Cloths*. Our Lord likewise rais'd himself from the Dead. (*John x. 18.*) Many other Instances might be produc'd, but I must not persist.

(4.) *Works of Grace* are in like Manner attributed to the Lord JESUS; such as,

(1.) *Election*, *John xiii. 18, I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen.*

(2.) *Justification*, *Isa. liii. 11. By his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many. Mat. ix. 6. But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to forgive Sins.*

(3.) *Regeneration*, *Ephes. ii. 1. And you hath he quickned who were dead in Trespasses and Sins.* And hence CHRIST is said to be the *Author and Finisher of Faith*.

(4.) *Salvation*, *Mat. i. 21. And shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his People from their Sins.* Hence he is call'd *the Captain of our Salvation*; and we are told that *in his Name alone Happiness is to be had, Act. iv. 12.* To what has been said under this Head, we may add our Lords *Mission of the Holy-Spirit*, and *Institution of sacred Ordinances*, *Joh. xvi. 7. If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you. Mat. xxviii. 18. 19. All Power is given unto me in Heaven and Earth. Go therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy-Ghost.*

4thly. The *Worship due to God only* is ascrib'd to CHRIST: And hence Men are enjoy'd to *honour the Son even as they honour the Father*, *Joh. v. 22. 23.* Particularly

(1.) We are enjoy'd to *adore him*, *Heb. i. 6. And when he bringeth in the first Begotten into the World, he sayeth,*
and

and let all the Angels of God worship him. (1 Cor. i. 12.) Call'd to be Saints with all that in every Place, call upon the Name of JESUS CHRIST our Lord, both theirs and ours.

(2.) We are bid to *trust* in him and *obey* him, John xiv. 1. *Let not your Heart be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me.* Rom. x. 11. *For the Scripture sayeth Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed.* Hf. ii. 12. *Kiss the Son lest he be Angry, and ye perish from the Way.*

(3.) We are to be *baptis'd* in his Name, as well as in the Name of the Father. *Mat. xviii. 19.*

Again I add, that our Lord did assert his Godhead in divers Conferences with the *Jews*. (*See John v. 16. to the 19th. Verse.*) The *Jews* sought to slay him, because he made himself equal with God. Now our Lord does not in Answer hereto endeavour to clear himself of that Charge; which surely he would have done had he not been God, otherwise he would be Guilty of the greatest Impiety. When the People of *Lystra* attempted to worship *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *they rent their Cloaths, and ran among them, crying out Sirs, why do ye these Things? We also are Men of like Passions with you,* *Act. xiv. 14. 15.* But our Saviour instead of rejecting the Charge, notwithstanding of some Passages that respect his human Nature, asserts his Divinity, by shewing that *he quickned whom he pleas'd, as well as the Father*; likewise that *all Judgment was committed to him*, and that *all Men should honour him as they honour the Father*; that *he had Life in himself, and should raise the Dead at the last Day.* At another Time, *Job. viii. 53. to 58.* After the *Jews* had enquir'd, *art thou greater than our Father Abraham?---* He reply'd, *your Father Abraham rejoic'd to see my Day, and he saw it and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, thou art not yet fifty Years Old, and hast*

thou seen Abraham : To this our Lord answered, *before Abraham was, I AM !* At this Time the *Jews* were enrag'd, and took up Stones to throw at him, supposing that he had spoken Blasphemy, in preferring himself to *Abraham*, and making himself equal to God. It is certain that being ston'd to Death, was a Penalty denounc'd by the judicial Law against Blasphemers ; the aforesaid Sentence of our Lord, seems to be Parallel with that of the Prophet, respecting the the Eternity of God, *viz. Isa. xliiii. 13. Yea before the Day was, I AM he.*

Another very memorable Conference we have, *Mat. ix.* from the 2d. to the 6th. Verse. Our Lord declar'd to one sick of the Palsy, that *his Sins were forgiven him* ; on which Occasion the *Scribes* murmured, and charged him with *Blasphemy*. *JESUS* knowing their Thoughts reply'd, *wherefore think ye Evil in your Hearts? For whether is it easier to say, thy Sins be forgiven thee, or to say arise and walk ; but that ye may know the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to forgive Sins, he sayeth to the Person Sick of the Palsy, take up thy Bed, and go into thine House.* Proving by this Miracle his Divinity ; which they oppos'd, and consequently his Power to forgive Sins.

Tho' Miracles do not argue the Divinity of the Person that Works them from any visible Circumstance contain'd in them ; yet they effectually prove it, in Case this be the Thing contested, and an explicite Appeal be made to the divine Power to confirm it by Miracles.

Our Lord had at the aforesaid Conference as good an Opportunity, and as loud a Call as could be desir'd to disclaim all Pretence to Divinity, if the Case was really so ; but instead of this he asserts and proves his Godhead, maugre the *Jewish* Rage, which Practice could not consist with Integrity if he were not God.

And

And now I shall proceed to offer a few practical Reflections, and so conclude at present. And 1st. What has been said informs us of the following Particulars, *viz.* 1st. Of the true *Order* and *Manner* of worshipping God, and that is in the Son and by the Spirit, Joh. xvi. 23. *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you. Ephes. vi. 18. Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit.* Surely it is by the Son, we should come to the Father in our Supplications, and hence CHRIST is call'd *the Way*, John xix. 6. And we are said to *have Boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of JESUS by a new or living Way, which he hath consecrated for us, that is to say his Flesh, Heb. x. 19, 20.* Those are therefore to be suspected as Guilty of the Heresy of *Sabellius*, who do not according to the Scriptures, ordinarily come to the Father by the Son in their Prayers, but usually address the Son, as tho' he were the Father, and do not give to each of the sacred Three, their distinct personal Glory in their Acts of Devotion; but so frequently address the Son, as if there were no other Person but he in the Trinity.

2dly, How *Happy* is the *State* of all regenerate Persons who have this three—one *God*, in all his Glory and Excellency for their sure Portion here, (*Jer. xxxi. 33.*) and shall be continually delighted, with beholding the distinct Benefits receiv'd from each of the sacred Three hereafter. *Rev. i. 5. And from JESUS CHRIST, the Faithful Witness unto him that lov'd us, and washed us from our Sins in his Blood.* And does it not increase their Felicity, that the Charter of the Holy Scripture, by which the aforefaid Portion is made over, is confirm'd by the united Testimony of the sacred Trinity from Heaven, as our Text informs us, *There are Three that bear record in Heaven, and these Three are One.*

3dly.

3dly. How much should our *Souls be affected* by thinking on the Fathers Love, in giving his Son to be a Propitiation for our Sins. Herein is Love, indeed without Peer or Paralel, (*Jobn* iv. 10.) in that a Son was given for worthless Rebels, to Shame, Misery and Death it self, of the most hideous Kind! A Son not by Creation as the Angels, nor by Adoption as Believers, but by eternal Generation. His *own, beloved, dear, only begotten Son, in whom he was well pleas'd.* (*Rom.* viii. 32. *Mat.* iii. 17. *Col.* i. 13. *Job.* i. 14. 18.) And that to prevent the eternal Perishing of poor Sinners. (*Job.* iii. 16.)

And what shall we say of the Kindness of the Son of God, in stooping so low to save guilty Worms from eternal Woe and Ruin; tho' he had the Form of God, yet he willingly assum'd the Form of a Servant; that we might be made the Sons of God. He that had the Heavens for his Throne, was contented with a Manger for his Cradle; tho' he was Rich he became Poor, that we thro' his Poverty might be made Rich; was crown'd with Thorns; endur'd the Death of the Cross, and was laid in the Bosom of the Grave; that we might be crown'd with immortal Glory, deliver'd from the second Death, and embrac'd in the Bosom of *Abraham*, the Bosom of God.

And how much should we be affected, likewise with the Kindness of the Holy Spirit in enlightning our Minds, renewing and comforting our Hearts by his divine Influences, without which we could have no special Benefit by the Death of CHRIST, no Communion with God here, or Enjoyment of him in a future World.

But to proceed, me thinks the Consideration of the Divinity of the Son of God, is one of the most pregnant and powerful Incentives possible to Admiration, Love, Humility, and Obedience: How sublime the Theme? How surprising,

prizing the Thought that the eternal Father should give his co-equal Son, the darling of his Soul, out of the Embraces of his Bosom, to bleed a Victim on the accursed Tree, to purchase Peace, Pardon and Life for worthless Rebels! O the amazing Heights, the interminable Depths of this stupendous dear Affection! This is Love infinitely surpassing the narrow Bounds of human Thought or Language. Love that none but a God is equal to! And how Strange, is it that the blessed God should become incarnate, the Antient of Days become an Infant of Time, the Majesty of Heaven stoop to assume the Infirmities of Humanity! O my Brethren! did not rest himself become weary to give the weary Rest? And the Fountain of Consolation become a *Man of Sorrows*, to bring his People to unceasing Joys and Triumphs!

When we contemplate upon the Dignity of the Person of the Son of God, together with the Depth and Design of his Abasement, what can more powerfully constrain us to Humility and Affection, both to God and Man! For therein we may behold the great God descending from his Throne, to teach us those amiable Vertues by his own Example, as well as the Excellency of universal Obedience to the divine Law. The Godhead of CHRIST beautifies all the Instances of his Abasement with the most transcendent Charms, unrival'd Ornaments, and amiable Attractives! This is the Object of our Adoration and religious Reverence; this fires our Affections, and is the Foundation of our Hopes; this strikes the Springs of our Ingenuity and Gratitude, and raises our admiring Thoughts into Extasy and Ravishment! While we with Attention view the inutterable, unparallel'd, and incomprehensible Prodigy of divine Affection in the Mediation of the Son of God! But if with the *Socinians* and *Arians* we deny his proper Deity

Deity, our Admiration ceases, our Love Languishes, and our Devotion dies for the Gift of a meer Creature : And his Sufferings are inconsiderable Things, not worthy to be once mention'd, in Comparison of the Gift, and Condescension of a God ! The Object of our Worship is removed ; the Ground of our Hopes unhing'd, and the whole Scene of the Gospel destroy'd at a Stroke. Dreadful Thought !

Let us therefore be entreated equally to love, honour, and obey each Person of the sacred Trinity. Let *all Men honour the Son, as they honour the Father, John. v. 23.* Our Lord as Man obey'd his Father, and how much more should we. (*Job. iv. 34.*) Let us also *kiss the Son, lest he be Angry, and we perish from the Way ; and seeing the Spirit of God hath made us. Job. xxxiii. 4.* Why should not he be ador'd by us.

But the Time being elaps'd I must conclude, in the mean while ascribing all Glory to the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity; the Three in One, and One in Three ; the Father, Word and Spirit, let Men and Angels say *Amen.*

SERMON

SERMON XXIII.

I JOHN v. 7.

For there are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these Three are One.

THE Doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity, is purely an Object of Faith. The Line of Reason is too short to fathom this Mystery, and therefore where Reason cannot wade, there Faith must swim, but tho' this sublime Foundation Doctrine, be above Reason, yet it is not contrary to it. This I think the learned Mr. *How*, has made evident in his Discourse upon the Possibility of a Trinity in the Godhead. In my last Discourse upon the Doctrine of the Trinity, you may remember that I propos'd the following Method, viz.

I. I was to offer some Considerations serving to confirm and explain it.

II. I was to prove by divers Arguments, the Unity of the sacred Three, or that each of them is truly and really God. And

III. I propos'd to answer the most important Objections, and then proceed to the Improvement of the Whole.

The first general Head was discuss'd, and under the Second, I offered what Arguments I judg'd sufficient to prove the Godhead of the Son. It remains now that I prove the Godhead of the *Holy Ghost*.

This I think is evident not only from his Being number'd with divine Persons, as one with them as our Text asserts; but also from this Consideration, that all the Peculiarities of Divinity are ascrib'd to him, as well as to the Father and Son, which will be manifest by the following Induction of Particulars, namely

1st. *Divine Names* are ascrib'd to him, thus he is expressly called *God*, *Act* v. 3, 4. *Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan fill'd thine Heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, thou hast not lied unto Men, but unto God.* He is likewise called *Lord*: Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is Liberty, here it may be observ'd, that the *Seventy Interpreters* generally render the Name *Jehovah* by that of *Lord* (*Kurios*) he is also called *Jehovah* as appears by comparing *Isa.* vi. 8, 9. *Also I heard the Voice of the Lord saying, and who will go for us, then said I, here am I, send me, and he said go and tell this People hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not.* Now it is plain, that it is the Lord or *Jehovah* that speaks in this Place of Scripture, but this we find expressly apply'd to the Holy Ghost *Acts.* xxviii. 25, 26. *well spake the Holy Ghost, by Esaias the Prophet unto our Fathers, saying, go unto this People, and say, bearing ye shall bear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive.* The same Truth appears by comparing *Ex.* xvii. 7. *And he called the Name of the Place Massah and Meribah because they tempted the Lord, or Jehovah, this we find apply'd to the Holy Ghost, Heb.* iii. 7, 8. *Wherefore as the Holy Ghost sayeth--harden not your Hearts, as in the Provocation in the Day of Temptation in the Wilderness, when your Fathers tempted me, prov'd me and saw my Works.* More Proofs of the Name *Jehovah* ascrib'd to the Holy Ghost, we have in the following Places of Scripture, viz. *Jer.* xxxi. 31. compar'd with *Heb.* x. 15, 16. *Levit.* xvi. 2 compar'd with *Heb.* ix.

2dly. *The Attributes of God* are ascrib'd to the Holy Ghost, namely

1st. *Omniscency*, or all Knowledge 1 Cor. ii. 10. *The Spirit searcheth all Things, yea the deep Things of God.* The Word *searcheth*, denotes the Exquisite-ness of his divine Knowledge Ps. cxxix. 23, 24.

2dly. *Almightiness* and independent Power, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 6, 11. *Now there are diversity of Gifts, but the same Spirit, but it is the same God which worketh all in all, but all these worketh, that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every one severally as he will.* Compare Luk. xi. 20. with Mat. xii. 28. *But if I with the Finger of God cast out Devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come among you, but if I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you.*

3dly. *Eternity* is likewise ascrib'd to the Holy Ghost, Heb. ix. 14. *CHRIST thro' the eternal Spirit, offered himself, without Spot to God.* Again

4thly. *Immensity* is also ascrib'd to him, Psal. cxxxix. 7, 10. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy Presence. If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there, If I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there, If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermost Parts of the Sea, even there shall thy Hand lead me, and thy Right Hand shall hold me.*

3dly. *Divine Operations* are ascrib'd to the Holy Spirit, such as,

1st. *Creation*, Gen. i. 2. *The Spirit of God mov'd upon the Face of the Waters.* By the Spirit of God, cannot be meant the Air or Wind, as some suppose: For that was not created till the second Day, when God made the Firmament, the aforesaid Place of Scripture is explain'd and illustrated, by Job. xxxiii. 4. *The Spirit of God hath made me.*

2dly. *Miraculous Works* are ascrib'd to the Holy Ghost, particularly the raising of the dead, *Rom. viii. 11.* *But if the Spirit of him that raised up JESUS from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up CHRIST from the dead shall also quicken your mortal Bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you,* likewise the Gift of *healing, Tongues, and Prophecies,* is attributed to the Holy Spirit, *1 Cor. xii. to the 11.* *Now there are diversity of Gifts, but the same Spirit, differences of Administration, but the same Lord,---diversitys of Operations, but the same God which worketh all in all.*

3dly. The *Unction* of our Lord by the Holy Ghost is another Argument of his Divinity, compar'd *Isai. lxi 1.* with *Luk. iv. 18.* *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good Tydings unto the Meek.* The *Unction* of our Lord, alludes to a *Uriage* which obtain'd under the Jewish *OEconomy*, namely, of anointing Kings, Prophets and Priests with *Oyl*, to signify their Authority and *Fitness*, to execute their several Offices, and therefore it plainly signifies that our Lord was authoriz'd, and qualified to perform the mediatorial Work, by the Holy Ghost, which is no inconsiderable Argument of his Deity.

4thly. The supernatural Works of *Conviction, Conversion, Sanctification, and Consolation* are likewise ascrib'd to the Holy Ghost, *John xvi. 8, 9.* *And when he is come he will reprove the World of Sin,* *John iii. 5.* *Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* On the Account of sanctifying Influence, he is call'd *the Holy Spirit,* and in respect of his comforting Influence, *the Comforter.*

5thly. The Holy Spirit did likewise Commission Persons for the Ministry, and in a sovereign Way order as to the Places where they are to exercise it. Which is an unalienable Prerogative of the Crown of Heaven, and therefore an incontestible

incontestible Evidence of his Deity. See *Act. xiii. 2.* *The Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the Work whereunto I have called them, Acts xvi. 6, 7.* They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost, to preach the Word in *Asia, they essayed to go into Bithinia, but the Spirit suffired them not.*

4thly The Holy Ghost is the *Object of religious Worship,* and hence Believers are said *to be his Temples, 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.* Because they are devoted to his Worship, *and baptiz'd in his Name, Mat. xxviii. 19.* We are excited to worship him, *Pf. xcv. 6.* compar'd with *Heb. iii. 7, 9.* And there is a Sin peculiarly against the Holy Ghost, which is unpardonable, *Mat. xii. 31, 32.* Now it is certain that religious Worship is due only to God, *Mat. iv. 10. For it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* I proceed to the

3d. *Propos'd* which was to Answer some *Objections.* 1st. The *Antitrinitarians* Object against the Godhead of our Lord JESUS thus, namely " *That the Son is said to be less than the Father, John xiv. 28. and subject to him, 1 Cor. 15. 28.*"

Answ. He is elsewhere said *to be equal to God, to be in the Form of God, Phil. ii. 6.* And hence *equal Honour with the Father* is ascrib'd to him, (*John v. 23.*) From whence we may easily infer, that the Son is less than the Father, and yet equal to him in different Respects: He is equal to God the Father in regard of his Essence, and less than him, not only in respect of his human Nature, but likewise in regard of his mediatorial Office. By becoming the Sinners Surety, he deriv'd their Guilt upon him, and so became Subject to the Father as a Debtor: He is likewise represented in Scripture as a Servant of God, on Account of his Mediation; because he undertook it according to his Fathers Order, and is to be consider'd in
the

the whole of this as acting in Pursuance thereof, and Subserviency thereto: To which some add, "That he may be said to be less than the Father, in respect of the Relation of Sonship, by which, in human Affairs, the Son is said to be less than the Father, altho', as to the Being of Humanity, he be equal to him; yea, in Regard of Gifts, Wisdom, Goodness, &c. above him."

Object. 2. "The Lord JESUS is frequently call'd Man, and the Son of Man in Scripture."

Answer. It is true, but the Design thereof, is not to exclude his Godhead, which has been already prov'd, but to signify its real inseparable and personal Union to the human Nature: And hence it is said John i. 14. That *the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only begotten Son of God.* And we are told 1 Tim. iii. 16. That *God was manifest in the Flesh.* And elsewhere that *God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, Gal. iv. 4.*

Object. 3. "The Son calls the Father his God."

Answer. It is true he doth so, but only on the Account of his human Nature.

Object. 4. "The Father is only said to be our God, (1 Cor. viii. 6.) and therefore the Son is not."

Answer. As the Text which calls the Lord JESUS *our only Lord*, does not exclude the Father, so neither does this, which is parallel to it, exclude the Son: The Scope of the Place mention'd in the Objection, is only to exclude false Gods from a claim to Deity, and sovereign Dominion.

Object. 5. "The Father is call'd *the only true God.*" Joh. xvii. 3.

Answer. The Son is elsewhere call'd *the true God.* 1 Joh. v. 20. *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is True, and*

we

we are in him that is True, even in his Son JESUS CHRIST, & this is the true God and eternal Life. Now if he be the true God he can be but one; neither is the Father alone exclusive of the Son, call'd the one true God, in the forecited Scripture, but the Son is join'd, that they may know thee the only true God; to which is added, and whom thou hast sent JESUS CHRIST, namely to be the one true God.

Object. 6. " CHRIST himself has said, that he is God as Magistrates are Gods, Job. x. 35. namely by Reason of Office, not of Essence.

Ans. CHRIST had said in the 30th verse of the same Chapter, I and the Father are one: And hence the Jews charg'd him with Blasphemy; because by this he declar'd himself to be God. Our Lord answers from the Lesser to the Greater to this Effect, namely, If Magistrates on Account of their Office are call'd Gods, how much more am I really so, who am sent by my Father, who do his Works, and am in him, and he in me. Job. x. 37, 38.

Object. 7. " The Son is a made Lord, Heb. i. 4. Being made so much better than the Angels, as he hath obtain'd a more excellent Name than they. See likewise to the same Purpose, Heb. iii. 2. Who was faithful to him that appointed him; and therefore CHRIST is made God."

Ans. To be Lord, and to be God, are not Terms of the same Import; there are many Lords, who in the mean Time are not God's. Here it should be noted that a twofold Dominion belongs to CHRIST, viz. Essential and Mediatorial; the First belongs to him as God, and the Second as Mediator: In the first Respect he cannot be made a Lord, and therefore its only in Regard of the Second that our Saviour is so call'd. As Mediator he is made Head over all Things to his Church, which does not at all inter-

tere

fere with his Godhead, or essential Government. (See *Eph.* i. 22, *Eph.* iv. 15. *Col.* i. 18.)

Object. 8. Against the Argument for CHRIST's Deity, drawn from his being the Object of Religious Worship, it is alledg'd, "That if God commands us to worship a Creature, we must obey him, and that he hath commanded us to worship the Son, *Heb.* i. 6. He sayeth "let all the Angels of God worship him."

Ans. The Objection is grounded upon an impossible Supposition. God can no more command us to worship a Creature, than he can forbid us to worship himself; for hereby he should give his Glory to another, which cannot be; this farther appears thus, *viz.* "Addoration is a saying to a Person, who is the Object thereof, *Thou hast divine Perfections*, and to say this to a Creature is contrary to Truth, and therefore cannot be commanded by God: And if we consider Worship, as it is our addressing ourselves to him, whom we worship in such a Way as becomes a God. He cannot give us a Warrant so to do, for that would be to divest himself of his Glory; and it would also disappoint our Expectations, by putting us on trusting one that cannot save."

Object. 9. Some say that "Honours, truly Divine, may be given to the Son, as the Fathers Representative, which will terminate in the Father as an Ambassador, who is considered as sustaining the Character of the Prince that sends him is honour'd, as personating him whom he represents."

Ans. Whatever Difference is shewn to an Ambassador, there is a Distinction made in the Expression thereof between him and his Master, signifying, that he is but a Subject, and if the Case was otherwise, the Prince would be justly offended; neither is there any Foundation in the sacred Oracles to assert, that, religious Worship is twofold, namely,

Supream

Supream and *Subordinate*, and that the Latter does not terminate in the immediate Object thereof, but in another whom this represents: When our Lord informs us; that *he acted in his Fathers Name, sought his Glory, and refer'd all the Honour shewn him thereto.* These Forms of Expressions only signify, that as Man and Mediator, he is inferior to his Father; and acts as such by a delegated Authority from him. (*Isa.* xlii. 1.) But the Mediator consider'd as to his divine Nature, is co-equal and co-eternal with his Father; as has been prov'd before.

Object. 10. "CHRIST refus'd to have one of the divine Perfections ascrib'd to him. *Mat.* xix. 17. *Why callest thou me Good; there is none good but one, that is God.*

Ans. Some do not improbably understand the Places of Scripture mention'd in the Objection, as a Method which our Lord us'd to convince the young Man of the Erroniousness of the Doctrines of the *Pharisees*, of which Sect he was: It is as if our Lord had spoke to the following Effect, "Seeing you will not own me to be God, why callest thou me *Good*? For there is none originally, essentially and absolutely Good but he: Either first acknowledge me to be a divine Person, or else do not ascribe divine Honour to me; for then by Consequence thou mightest as well ascribe them to any meer Creature."

It may be farther observ'd, that what our Lord says respecting the Oneness of God in the forecited Place of Scripture, should be understood in the same Sense with those Places which deny a Plurality of Gods. The Terms *one, only*, do not except the Son from the same Godhead with the Father, as appears from the following Places of Scripture. *Mat.* xi. 27. *No One knoweth the Son but the Father, nor anyone the Father save the Son.* It would be absurd

to infer from the aforesaid Place of Scripture, that neither the Son or the Father know themselves.

Mr. *Pool* observes in his *Synopsis* that there is another reading of the aforesaid Text of great Antiquity, namely this, “*Why does thou ask me concerning Good, and observes, that Beza and Grotius read it thus, as well as the vulgar latin Version, and three most antient and correct Copies, together with the Hebrew Version of Mathews Gospel, with which Origen, Chrystom and Austin agree in many Things.*” But if we take the Words agreeable to the Copies now in Use, they do not import any absolute Rejection of the Character of Good, for this our Lord elsewhere ascribes to himself. *Job. x. 14, 15, 28. I am the good Shepherd, I lay down my Life for the Sheep; and give unto them eternal Life.*

I shall now proceed to answer some Objections against the Godhead of the Holy-Ghost. And

1st. “It is objected that he prays for the coming of CHRIST to Judgment. (*Rev. xxii. 17.*)

Ans. Most certainly the Holy-Spirit prays efficiently in Believers, he excites Desires in them after CHRIST’s second coming; but he prays not formally in himself: Or there is perhaps a Figure call’d *Hendiadis* in the Place of Scripture mention’d in the Objection, wneroby but one Thing is signify’d by those two Words, *Spirit* and *Bride*, namely the spiritual Bride, or Bride having spiritual Dispositions.

Object. 2. “The *Spirit* is represented as the Gift of God, (*Luk. xi. 13.*) and therefore he is not the Giver.”

Ans. The Consequence does not hold Good universal-ly, as appears thus. A Person may give himself to another, as God in the Covenant of Grace gives himself to his own, when by a gracious Act of his Will he becomes their God, Shield, and exceeding great Reward, *Gen. xv. 1.* Be-
sides

sides it may be likewise observ'd, that in several Places of Scripture the Gifts, and Graces of the Holy-Ghost, and especially the extraordinary Gifts are thus term'd. See *Acts* x. 44, 45. *The Holy-Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word.* *Act.* xix. 2. *We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.* *John* vii. 39. *The Holy-Ghost was not given, because JESUS was not yet glorify'd.*

Object. 3. "The Holy-Ghost is said to be sent, *John* xvi. 7. And therefore he serves, and so is not God."

Answer. The Consequence of serving does not follow from the Premises universally, neither can it be true in the present Case, that he should serve to whom all the divine Attributes belong. All those Places of Scripture, which seem to represent the Holy-Ghost as inferior to the Father and Son, may be understood as signifying a Subserviency of the Works of the Spirit, which are metanomically term'd *himself*, to the Works of the Father and Son, which imports no Inferiority of Persons.

Object. 4. "It is alledg'd that the Holy-Spirit changes Place, and so is not God, *Luk.* iii. 21, 22. *The Holy Ghost descended like a dove upon him.*---

Answer. The Blessed Spirit changes not Place really, but symbolically, as God the Father doth. *Gen.* xviii. 21. *I will go down.* The outward Symbols or Tokens of God's Presence, may move from Place to Place; but his Being is Omnipresent, and is infinitely beyond the Bounds of the Creation.

Object. 5. "It is alledg'd that the Holy-Spirit hath a Will distinct from the Will of God, because he is said to interceed for the Saints, according to the Will of God. (*Rom.* viii. 27.)"

Answer. The Manner of the Spirits interceeding, is represented in the preceding Verse which is this, *He stirs up*

in God's People by his efficiency, Groanings that cannot be uttered. The Words *cata, theon*, or according to God, seem only to import, that the Spirit helps pious People to pray as it becomes, or in that Manner God requires. Here is no Difference asserted between Gods Will and his, in which the Force of the Objection lies.

Object. 6. " It is said of the Holy-Spirit, *John. xvi. 13.* " 14. *That he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.---For he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you.*"

Ans. The aforesaid Text does not argue that the Spirit has all the Ideas of Things impress'd on his Mind, which he communicates, as Creatures have; for this would contradict what is elsewhere said concerning him, *viz. That he knoweth the deep Things of God*: But probably it intends this, that the Holy Spirit would communicate no other Doctrines, than what Christ had before reveal'd in the Gospel; besides the aforesaid Phrases seem to signify that the Order of the Holy-Spirits acting, is agreeable to the Order of his subsisting, namely, that as he proceeds from the Father and the Son, so he acts from them, but without any Imperfection or Dependance in respect of his Essence, Existence, or Action.

But I may add, that it is objected against the Doctrine of the Trinity in general, namely, " That it is contrary to Reason, and therefore ought not to be believ'd."

Ans. That it is above Reason we confess, but that it is contrary to it we deny. Now a Doctrine may be truly said, to be contrary to Reason, when it contradicts some of the first Principles of reasoning, which are self Evident, and universally acknowledged, such as that a Thing can be, and not be at the same Time, that the whole is greater than a Part, &c. A Doctrine cannot be truly call'd Unreasonable, merely

merely because it opposes unjust Deductions from first Principles; but we know not that the Article of the Trinity contradicts any of those first Principles before mentioned, or others Parallel to them.

It is alledg'd that this is an Instance of Contradiction which some suggest, namely, "That while we assert that *there is but one God*; in the mean Time we say, that "*there are three Persons in the Godhead, and that each of these is God.*"

Ans. But herein there is no Contradiction, because we say not that the sacred Three are distinct Gods; the Distinction respects their Personality, and not their Godhead: And when we say there are three Almightyes we mean not that these Perfections are distinct, but the very same in them all. Neither is the Consequence valid from human to divine Personality, *i. e.* because human Persons are distinct Beings, that therefore the Divine must be so. If indeed the divine Personality were finite, like that of the Creature, then it might be reasonably requir'd that a finite Mind should account for it; but since it is not so, it must therefore be incomprehensible, and thus our not being able to Grasp it should be no Bar to our Belief of it. Surely seeing Almighty God knows best the Manner of his own Existence, it is but reasonable we should believe the Account which he has given of it, in that Revelation which bears the Characters of a divine Original.

But I proceed to the Improvement of this Subject.
And

1st What has been said serves to inform us, of the unhappy Case of all *Antitrinitarians*, whether *Jews, Turks, Arians*, or *Socinians*, when our Lord had prov'd his co-equality with his Father, (*John v.*) by shewing that he was one with him, and did the same Works. He there-
fore

fore justly infers, that *he that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father.* See v. 23. The same Truth is elsewhere asserted. (1 *Joh.* ii. 23.) Hence *Paul* concludes the *Gentiles* who were without *CHRIST* to be *Atheists.* (*Ephes.* ii. 12.) And is not he an *Atheist* who denys religious Worship to him who is the true God. (*Rom.* i. 21.) And on the other Hand is he not an *Idolater* who offers religious Worship to one whom he believes not to be God. What Hope can we have of the Remission of Sins, without Satisfaction be made for Sin, equal to its Demerit, which must be Infinite; because Sin is objectively so, being committed against a Being of infinite Perfection? Now is it not utterly impossible for a meer Creature, who is necessarily finite, to perform this infinite Task. To suppose Sin may be pardon'd without equal Satisfaction, is to confront the rectoral Justice of God as well as his Truth, which stands engag'd to issue the Threats of the first Covenant upon the Transgressors thereof, either upon themselves personally, or upon a Surety in their Room and Place: And without Pardon what can ensue but utter and irreparable Ruin? And what Ground have we to expect the Regeneration of Men who are dead in Sins and Trespases, without the Intervention of the Almighty Energy of the Holy-Spirit? And can this be exerted by one who is not God? And pray what is Religion without well grounded Hopes of the Remission of Sins, and Regeneration, but Presumption, Formality, and Desperation? From all which it evidently appears, that the denial of the Godhead of the Son and Holy-Spirit, as well as of the Father, saps the very Foundations of the Christian Religion, and exceedingly endangers the Salvation of Mens Souls.

Mr. *Vincent* in his judicious Explanation, of *The Assemblyes shorter Catechism*, pag. 33. in answer to this Question, namely,

namely, *What should we judge of them that deny that there are three distinct Persons in the Godhead?* Sayeth,

Anfw. " We ought to judge them to be Blasphemers, because they speak against the ever glorious God, who hath set forth himself, in this Distinction in the Holy Scriptures. 2dly. To be damnable Hereticks! This Doctrine of the Distinction of Persons, in the Unity of Essence being a fundamental Truth denied of old by the Sabellians, Arians, Photinians, and of late by the Socinians, who were against the Godhead of Christ the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, amongst whom the Quakers are also to be numbred, who deny this Distinction."

2dly. The Doctrine of the Trinity shews the Sufficiency of the Almighty to secure the Happiness of fallen Creatures, while each Person assumes his peculiar Task to this End. The First decrees it, the Second purchases it, and the Third applies and confers it. It is true indeed that every saving Benefit we receive, is common to all the sacred Three, and therefore we find the same Benefits expressly ascrib'd to them all complexly, and to each respectively, (*Rev. i. 4. 5. John vi. 45. Mat. xxiii. 10. John xiv. 26.*) Every Benefit belongs to each Person of the sacred Trinity, after his own peculiar Manner, namely, to the Father by *Original Authority*, and hence they are assign'd to his good Pleasure, (*Mat. xi. 25, 26.*) To the Son they belong of *Right* and of *Merit*, inasmuch as he has purchased them by his Blood, *that of his Fulness we might receive Grace for Grace*, (*John i. 16.*) To the Holy Ghost they belong, by the *immediate Efficacy of Application*. *Rom. viii. 11.*

3dly. The Doctrine of the Trinity should invite us to the following Duties, namely,

1st. To endeavour after a distinct *Knowledge* of this important Point, without which we cannot worship God aright;

aright. Religious Worship is certainly due to all the sacred Three, as appears from what has been already said before; and unless we know this, how can we perform it, and how can we expect *Fellowship with the Father, and with the Son JESUS CHRIST; and the Communion of the Holy Ghost*, (1 John i. 3. 1-Cor. xiii.) except we know that there be such Persons? What can be of more Moment to us, than to be strengthened in our Persuasion of the divine Original of the Holy Scriptures? And to this End is not our Knowledge of *the Three that bear Record in Heaven* peculiarly serviceable? Surely to know the only true God and JESUS CHRIST whom he hath sent is Life eternal John xviii. 3. And if any Man have not the Spirit of CHRIST, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9.

2dly. We should glorify the sacred Trinity in Imitation of the seraphick Doxology, *Isa. vi. 3. Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the Heavens and Earth are full of the Majesty of his Glory.* Because therein shines forth the unspeakable Happiness of the supream Being, apparent in the endear'd Fellowship; mutual Knowledge and Complacence of the sacred Three, (*Prov. viii. 30. Mat. iii. 17.*) Therein is likewise conspicuous the infinite Perfection of Jehovah: For thus the Attributes of Three Persons unite in one Essence common to all; and are we not hereby taught, how the Father, Son and Spirit do mutually glorify each other, (*John xvii. 4, 5, 22.*)

But the Consideration of the Part which each Person of the sacred Trinity performs in compassing of our Salvation, should especially invite our grateful Hosanna's, together with that of the divine Goodness in revealing this Mystery to us, which has been hid from Ages. (*2 Cor. vii. 10.*)

3dly. Let us seek with all earnestness, Communion with the sacred Trinity, seeing that this is an attainable and most

most important Privilege; (2 Cor. i. 4.) in this is our chief Excellency, our greatest Happiness and Security. (1 John ii. 2.) And hence the Priest of old was requir'd to bless the People, after the Trinity was distinctly mentioned, (Num. vi. 23, 24, 25.) No Comfort on Earth is equal to that of Fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit. Now to obtain this Communion, we must forsake Sin, which alienates us from God, and by a living Faith accept the Redeemer, that being thereby united to him, we may thro' him obtain Communion with the Father, and Holy Spirit. *He will pray the Father for us, and he will give us another Comforter, that he may abide with us forever, even the Spirit of Truth,* (John xiv. 16, 17.) And having obtain'd Communion let us perform.

4thly. The Offices we owe to the sacred Trinity, such as *Worship* and *Obedience*, being baptiz'd in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, let us keep our Covenant Engagements. We should expect every salutary Blessing from all the Persons of the Trinity, seeing they all by Council and Office, equally conspire to promote our Happiness. (Num. vi. 24, 27.) Having observ'd the Order of conferring every Benefit, which is from the Father by the Son & Spirit. (Ephes. ii. 18.) In the mean Time we should ask the Benefit peculiar to each Person, according to the divine OEconomy, particularly of him, namely, *Love* from the *Father*, *Grace* from the *Son*, and *Communion* from the *Spirit*. And on the other Hand, let us faithfully render that oeconomic Duty we owe to each Person, namely, to the *Father* *Reverence*, to the *Son* *Faith* and *Love*, and to the *Holy Spirit*, *Obedience*. And in all our Prayers and Praises, let us after the Example of the primitive Church make distinct mention of all the Persons of the Trinity; that so their personal Glory may be suitably manifested by us.

N n n

Finally.

Finally that blessed Unity and Love, which subsists among the sacred Three, invite our Imitation, *let us therefore keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, because hereby we shall in our Measure, in some Sort resemble the sacred Trinity. *John xvii. 21. That they all may be One, as thou Father art in me and I in thee*; in this our greatest Glory consists, *John xvii. And the Glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are.* Without Endeavours after Union to, and loving Communion with such whom, from their Principles and Practice, we have Reason to think are the Saints of God, how can we expect Communion with the sacred Trinity, or to be one in them. In a Word, the Beauty, Strength, Increase and Comfort of religious Societies, depend upon their *Union and Love*, hereby they evidence to the World that they *are Disciples of CHRIST indeed*, let us be therefore Followers of God as dear Children, and walk in Love, as CHRIST also hath loved us, and given himself for us, an Offering and a Sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling Savour. Now to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the sacred and venerable Three One, who bear Witness from Heaven, to the divine Original of that Religion we profess, be all Glory ascrib'd by Men and Angels, throughout all Eternity. *Amen and Amen.*

7 NO 57
ERRATA.

PAve 7 line 8 read Weight. Ibid l. 18 read cupido. p. 24 l. 27 read are. p. 52 l. 1 read Passages. p. 65 l. 5 read untainted. p. 71 l. 26 read Scripture. Ibid l. 27 read Attributes. p. 72 l. 7 read show. p. 98 l. 1 read excellently. Ibid l. 13 read Tynpanum. Ibid. l. 31 read does. p. 161 l. 4 read either. p. 169 l. 1 add, in material Beings. p. 176 l. 19 read Salvations. p. 184 l. 14 *acle* w. p. 225 l. 23 read this. p. 232 l. 31 read Shines. p. 241 l. 19 read the Tumult. p. 247 read meet. p. 269 l. 15 read whether. p. 328 l. 28 read that it is. p. 340 l. 13 read Instruments. Ibid l. 17 read because of these Things. p. 348 l. 24 read Defiance. p. 356 l. 32 read Attribute. p. 365 l. 2 read Benefactor. p. 370 l. 8 read decreed. p. 388 l. 28 read Men. p. 389 l. 30 *dele* in. p. 397 l. 7 read Polytheism. p. 426 l. 1 read Oeconomy. p. 452 l. 12 read compare. l. 32 read were. p. 455 l. 23 a mid. *Some lesser Errata have been of purpose omitted, which its hoped the judicious Reader will Correct.*

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N I.

I COR. x. 31. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* (pag. 3)

S E R M O N II.

The same Text. (pag. 29)

S E R M O N III.

2 TIM. iii. 16, 17. *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, That the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Good Works.* (pag. 61)

S E R M O N IV.

PSALM xiv. 1. *The Fool hath said in his Heart there is no God.* (pag. 86)

S E R M O N V.

EXOD. iii. 13, 14. *And Moses said unto God, behold, when I come unto the Children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your Fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, what is his Name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: And he said, thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.* (pag. 107)

S E R M O N VI.

EXOD. iii. 14. *And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: And he said, thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.* (pag. 125)

S E R M O N VII.

JOHN iv. 24. *God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.* (pag. 149) The

The CONTENTS.

S E R M O N VIII.

PSALM. cxlv. 3. *Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, and his Greatness is unsearchable.* (pag. 165)

S E R M O N IX.

ROM. xi. 33, 34. *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. For who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor.* (pag. 182)

S E R M O N X.

ROM. x. 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.* (pag. 199)

S E R M O N XI.

GEN. xvii. 1. *And when Abram was Ninety Years old and Nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.* (pag. 213)

S E R M O N XII.

JEREM. xxxii. 17. *Oh Lord God, behold, thou hast made the Heavens and the Earth by thy great Power, and stretched out Arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.* (pag. 235)

S E R M O N XIII.

LEVIT. xix. 2. *Speak unto all the Congregation of the Children of Israel and say unto them, ye shall be Holy: For I the Lord your God am Holy.* (pag. 251)

S E R M O N XIV.

DEUT. xxxii. 4. *He is the Rock, his Work is Perfect: For all his Ways are Judgment: A God of Truth, and without Iniquity, just and right is he.* (pag. 270)

The CONTENTS.

S E R M O N XV.

HOSEA. iii. 5. *And shall fear the Lord, and his Gooanejs, in the latter Days* (pag. 292)

S E R M O N XVI.

EXOD. xxxiv. 6. *And the Lord pass'd by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and gracious, Long-suffering.* (pag. 311)

S E R M O N XVII.

The same Text. (pag. 327)

S E R M O N XVIII.

The same Text. (pag. 344)

S E R M O N XIX.

PSALM xxxi. 5. *Into thine Hand I commit my Spirit : For thou hast redeemed me O Lord God of Truth.* (pag. 363)

S E R M O N XX.

DEUT. vi. 4. *Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.* (pag. 385)

S E R M O N XXI.

JEREM. x. 10. *But the Lord is the true God, and an everlasting King : At his Wrath the Earth shall tremble, and the Nations shall not be able to abide his Indignation !* (pag. 403)

S E R M O N XXII.

1: JOHN v. 7. *For there are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One.* (pag. 420)

S E R M O N XXIII.

The same Text. (pag. 449)

1 NO 55



