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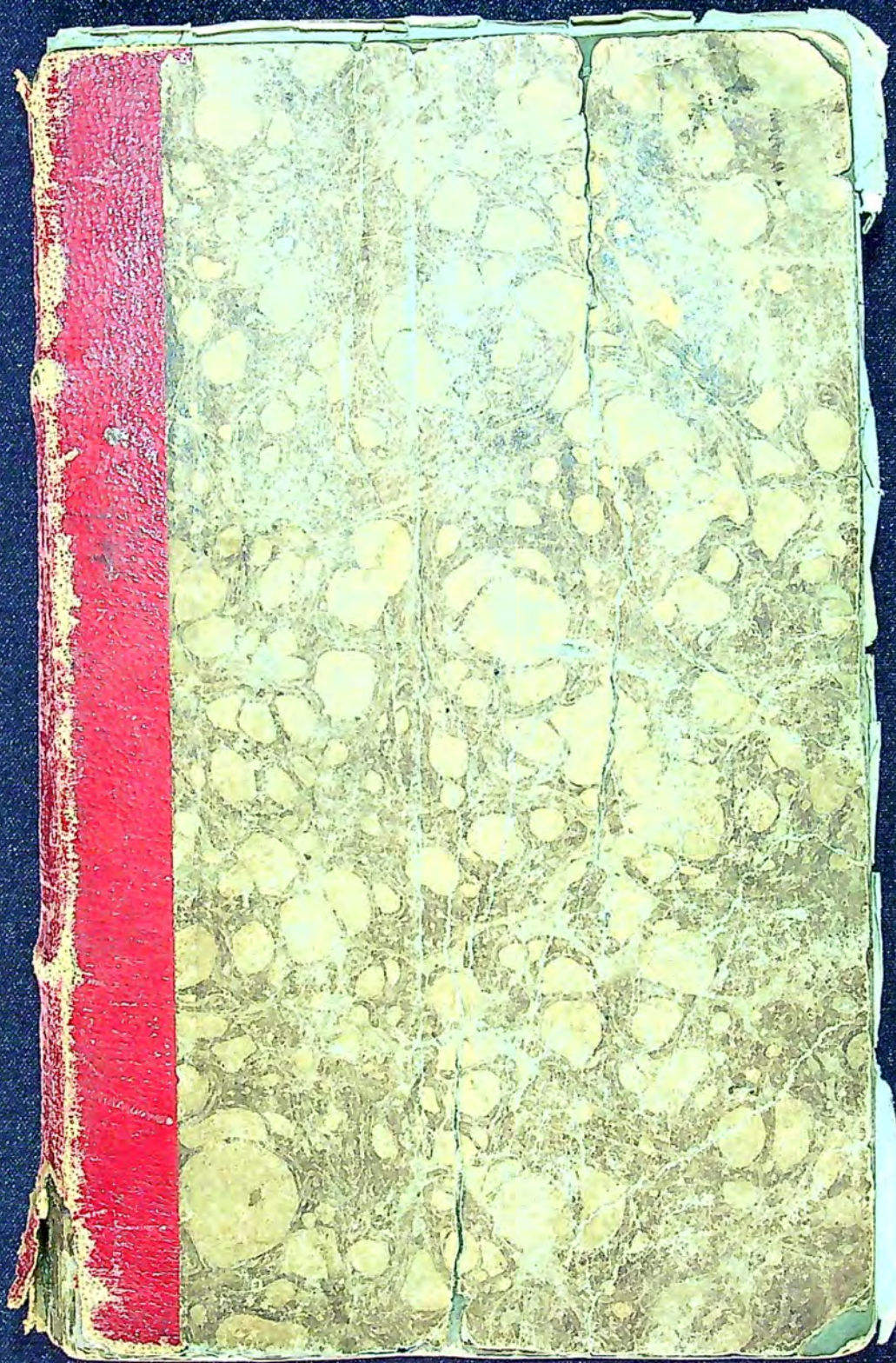


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Sermons on natural & revealed Religion
Avoch October 27th 1760.

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None live in this tumultuous State of Change,
Where Every morning some new trouble Springs:
but woe & inquietude disturb his Feet,
and gloomy Thoughts disturb his anxious Breast,
Angelic Comfort and happy Spirits are,
Above the Malice of perplexing Care:
But that is a Blessing too sublime, too high
tho' who bend beneath Mortality.
If in the Body there was but one Part,
Subject to Pain, and sensible of Smart;
but one Passion could torment the Mind,
that part, that Passion, buoyate would find.
But since Infirmitie in both Abounds,
Since sorrow both so many ways can wound;
Tis not so great a wonder that we grieve
Sometimes as 'tis a Miracle we live.
The happiest Man that ever breathed on Earth,
With all the glories of Estate of Birth;
Has yet some anxious Care to let him know
His grandeur is above the Reach of Woe;
To be from all Things that's divouct, free
& not consistent with Humility.
Youth, Wit and Beauty, are such charming Things,
That which, if affluence spread her gaudy Wings,
We think the person who enjoys so much,
No care can move, & no affliction touch.

Yet could we but come heret Method find,
To view the Dark recesses of the Mind:
We there might see the hidden seeds of Life
Which in Embryo knitting into Life:
Has some fierce Lust, or Bristle, or Passion fill'd
Which labouring, strive with prolific Ills,
Side Embrace Revenge, distrust nice soul
And all Right reason God-like powers controul:
But if we must not be allowed to stray,
Tho' all without appears serene and gay,
A rankious Venom on the vitals prey,
And poisons all the comforts of his Days,
Eternal Damn, and Divid'd success
Sometimes contribute to our Happiness,
But that which makes it genuine Desires
Is a good Conscience and a soul Resign'd.
Then to whatever end Aspirations vent,
To try our Virtue, or for Punishment:
We bear it calmly, tho' a ponderous Woe
We still address the Hand that gives the blow.
In Misfortune this Advantage lies
They make us humble, and they make us Wives:
Who that can acquire such Virtues, gains
Ample recompence for all his pains.
A soft Careless of a prosperous State
Prove Favours of the soul Abate
And to Luxurious Ease our facile Days
A gloomy Vapour round the Spirits raise.

Thus

And thus into a Sleep, we dooming lie,
And find our Ruin in Security,
Unless some sorrow comes to our Relief,
And breaks the Enchantment by a timely grief.
But as we are allowed to cheer our Sight,
In blackest Days, some Glimmering of Light:
In the most Dejected hours we may
The secret pleasure have to weep and pray,
And these Requests, the speediest Passage find
To Heaven, which flows from an afflicted Mind:
And while to him we open our Distress,
Pure Pains grows lighter, and our Sorrows less,
And if with due Submission we endure,
The Hand that gave the Wound, will give the Cure.
Finest Musick of the Grove we owe
Mourning Philomel's harmonious Woe:
While her grief in charming Notes express,
Thorny Bramble pricks her tender Breast:
A warbling Melody she spends the Night,
And gives at once Compassion and Delight.
Tho' he had e'er so happy an Event,
And he that made it, did that Choice Repent:
To weaken our Judgement, & so shorten our Sight
Cannot Level our own Wishes Right
And if sometimes we make a wise Advance
Our selves we little owe, but much to Chance.

10

that when Providence for secret ends,
moving persons & things in affliction times.
embrace it best, it should be so,
and not depending on Immortal goods.
For he that will his Confidence remove,
from boundless Wisdom, & Eternal Love,
to place it on himself, or human Aid,
will meet the issue his Labour & Trade.
That in the keenest agonies of Grief,
tend to a Cordial, that will give Relief.
Grief is not always angry, when his Strife
is for the better those, whom most he loves.
if will humble with them,
and the Anguish, or Rewards the Pain.

Sermon I.st On the Being of God. 1.

Rom. 1. 19. Because if we may be known of God, is manifest in you, for he hath shewed it unto them

It is of the greatest Moment in Religion, to have the clearest Knowledge & firmest persuasion of those Truths, which are most essential & excellent. No building can stand firm, or be raised high, whose foundations are not deeply laid, & strong, there is no Faith more weak & inconstant, no Religion more in Danger of falling to the Ground, than that which is taken up upon Trust, & has no clear Evidence to support it. — And whereas the Being of God, the Existence of a first, eternal & independent Cause is the prime & fundamental principle of all Religion; it highly concerns all of us, to be well assured of this momentous & prime Article of Faith, & to consider what Evidence we have for the Truth of it. — And this is the rather that we live in so profane & sceptical an Age as to call in Question the most universally received principles both of Reason & Religion. The bold favails of perverse & unreasonable Men are such as, oblige us to prove & defend those principles which can hardly be made plainer than they are of themselves, even that there is a God by whom all things were made. I shall therefore endeavour to prove the Being of God from this Text I have now read. Because that which may be known of God &c — These are the words of the Ap. Paul spoken by him to the Gentile World, concerning whom he doth here say, that by the Light of Nature they might have so far attained to the knowledge of their Being & perfections of the true & living God, as to be venerable he was an Object worthy of their highest Esteem & Honour, & of the most devout

The Being of God.

devout Worship & Obedience, for tho' they had not a written & clear Revelation of the amiable Nature of God & of his acceptable Will, yet he had not left himself without a Witness among them, he had given them many clear Notices of his eternal power & God-head, so that the gross Ignorance, the idolatrous Worship, the abominable Practices of these Heathen Nations were by no means excusable, they held the Truth in Unrighteousness, they were guilty of acting contrary to the Light they enjoyed, because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them.

The Apol. doth not here mean that they enjoyed all that Light or Knowledge which is duly imparted by them, that certainly taught them every thing concerning God & his Will which is necessary to recover & save lost Sinners, for this is above the Reach of the Light of Nature. But his Meaning is, that the Heathens might have learned from their own Consciences within them & from the Works of God without them, so much of the Knowledge of the Being, Nature & Law of God as might have quitted them against that unreasoning Idolatry & profane Practices which abounded amongst them.

And that we may see what Means of Knowledge they had, let us enquire into the Evidences of the Being of God & take a View of those Arguments w^{ch} establish his Existence.

I. And that I may engage your Attention allow me first to take Notice of the Importance of this Subject & the Necessity of setting it in a clear Light.

(1) The Being of God is the prime Article of our holy Faith, the chief Foundation of all Religion, in vain should we exercise Devotion, & render Worship & Admiration, if there were no Being of supreme Glory & Excellence, but there can be no Excellency & Glory where there is no Existence. Job. 41. 2. But without Faith, it is impossible to please God, for he y^t cometh to G^d, must believe that he is, & y^t he is a Husband of y^m that diligently seek him.

(2) Tho' we are all ready to acknowledge y^t there is a God

On the Being of God.

yet very few can abide the Reasons & Evidences of their Faith of God's Being, and what if we should meet with a bold Atheist of w^{ch} there are but too many in our Day, would he not readily ask us, where is your God? And what Reason have you to believe his Being? But much should we blush to be ashamed, if we could say no more for a fundamental Article of our Religion, than that our Parents or Ministers taught us so. Would such an Answer be a convincing Argument, or stop the Mouth of an Atheist, or should any reasonable Man rest satisfied with it, & seek no farther Evidence. Surely in a Day wherein Infidelity & Blasphemy do appear wth open Face it becomes us to enquire into, and settle the Foundations of our Faith.

(3) We ought to do so for our own Sakes & the Comfort of our own Minds, that we may the more easily bear down & conquer the Root of Atheism in our own Hearts, which too often springs up in secret & wishes our sinful Suggestions against the Being & Authority of God. Psal. 14. 1. The Fool hath said in his Heart, there is no God. Ps. 10. 4. The wicked thro' the pride of his Countenance will not seek after God. God is not in all their Thoughts. The gracious Soul delights in God, places all his Confidence & trusts all his Happiness in him, values his Favours above all things, & enjoys him his exceeding Joy, & therefore the clearer Evidences he attains to, of the Truth of his Being, his Meditations of God are the more sweet, & his Soul is filled with the more ravishing Tranceports of Joy, for he can read the Name of his God written on every thing he sees or enjoys: so that if we sincerely love God, we shall know & feel that all our Labour & pain, in considering the Evidences of the Being of God shall be attended with abundant profit & pleasure.

HAVING now set before you the Importance of this Subject, I proceed to the proofs & Evidences that there is a God, that is, that there is a self-existent necessary & eternal Being, by whom all other Beings have been made, upon whom they constantly depend, & by whose power & Agency, they are governed & directed. & this evidently appears from the following Arguments.

1. My first Argument, is from the Works of Creation which demonstrate the Being of God, by their Existence & his eminent Perfections by their Beauty, their Variety, their Harmony & Usefulness. Who could erect up the mighty Pillars of Heaven, or lay the deep Foundations of the Earth? Who could spread abroad the Firmament, or stretch out the sustainer of it? Who could form the bright & glorious Luminaries of Heaven, but sign them their proper Stations & Motions. Surely none but the Supreme & self-existent Being who contrived all these by his infinite Skill, effected them by his Omnipotent Power & continues to govern them by his unsearchable Wisdom. 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 & Godhead, so that they are without Excuse? Let us here more strictly examine, & consider the Strength of this Argument. We find by the Experience of our selves that some things exist, for all the things we feel or see are not mere Phantoms & nothings, we also know their Continuance, when most of these things had no actual Being, & its evident they could not give a Being to themselves, for nothing can act before it exists, and therefore we must look back for the Cause of their Being, & at last we must in tracing these Causes, ascend to a first Cause, eternal in his Existence, infinite in his Power, & independent in his Operations, & this Supreme Cause is God.

2. In vain do some of the ancient Philosophers assert the World to have been eternal; if it was so, why are the parts of it so changeable & corruptible? Who can conceive an eternal Succession of time or Generation of Creatures. Were there from all Eternity no memorable Actions done, or could be recorded. Had Men been from Eternity, would they not sooner have discovered the Art of writing? Why were not the most useful Arts sooner invented? Besides, its more than probable that in an infinite Duration, this frame of things would long since have been dissolved, had there been no superior Being, no wise intelligent principle to repair, govern & prevent those innumerable Disorders, which in so long a space

must probably have happened. Much more absurd is the Opinion of others, who tell us that the small parts of eternal Matter being always in Motion in infinite parts of the infinite space, & Encounters, without any Order, & without the Direction of any superior Cause or Hand, did by a lucky Chance, jumble into their regular and beautiful Frame, the Earth being of first very fruitful, brought forth Man, Beasts and Plants. Strange! that the large Volume of the World should be thus formed by Chance? & that this mighty Chance has now lost all its power & never forms so much as a small House, by tossing together so many Stones, pieces of Timber, Iron and Glass. But no Account of the Original of things can be more ridiculous, nor supposition more monstrous & unreasonable, by yet they who embrace this Opinion pretend to be the great Wits of this World, the only Masters of Reason, Men of so great Caution, that they will admit nothing without a clear Demonstration for it, every Character in 22 Verse of this Book professing themselves to be wise, they become fools. Let us leave this Argument for the Being of God, let us consider not only the things that have been made, but let us also enquire into their Nature, their Variety, their Beauty, Harmony & Usefulness; this will raise in us wonderful & adoring Thoughts of the Power & Creativity, of the Wisdom & Goodness, of the Glory & Perfection of their infinite eternal Father. Psal. 111. 2. The Works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. Look down to this lower World; see how the Earth is embroidered with Flowers and Plants in their proper Season, how it brings forth abundantly provision for the vast Variety of Creatures where with it is stored. Doth not every Pile of Grass & every little Seed, proclaim the Being & Praises of its Creator? Take a near View of the smallest Insect, of the Frame and Members of a Gnat or Fly, what curious Contrivance! what

What nice Mechanism! what surprising proportion of parts! You may always observe this Difference between the Works of Art and Nature, the more nicely we search into the Works of Art, the more Pleasures we discover, but the more curiously we pry into the Works of Nature, new Orders of Skill and Wisdom shall be discerned. Let us raise our Eyes from Earth to Heaven, even the visible Heavens, behold that beautiful Canopy & vast Compass of the Firmament befringed with the Heavenly Bodies, view that glorious Luminary strewn with his Planets rolling round him, if the fixed Stars, perhaps so many as her Sun with their particular Systems survey the immense Magnitude of their Bodies, the nice proportion of y^e Distances, the exact Harmony of their Courses, the uninterrupted Constancy of their Motions, their vast Influence how, & for aught we know, to each other, who so is wise & understands these Things, must see the clearest prints of the Fingers of an Artist infinitely wise & good. Had the Sun been nearer the Earth, it had been parched with Heat, and long since consumed to ashes, or had he had been placed at a greater Distance, it had been frozen and chilled with cold, had he stood still, the one half of the Earth had been always covered with a dismal solitary Darkness, had his Light been constant, the Beauty of the Stars had been veiled from our Eyes, had he still moved in the same Circle, there had been no seasons, no Returns of Summer & Winter of Heat and Cold to fructify the Earth, and to furnish Provision for the Inhabitants of it. Darest any Man say it was blind Chance which settled the Sun so wisely, or ordered him to run his Race so much for the Benefit & Comfort of his lower World. O Lord how manifold are thy Works, in Wisdom thou hast made them all, the whole Earth is full of thy Riches.

But

But we need not step out of Doors, or cast our Eyes any farther than our Eyes to see a wise & mighty Creator, are we not fearfully & wonderfully made? The Structure of the Body is so curious & admirable, every Member has such an exact proportion such a particular Comeliness, such a distinct Office such a regular & useful Motion, & the whole is so well designed, so justly contrived, that let the wisest Man think how he may alter or amend any part of the Body, & he shall not be able to make it more fit or useful. Is not this also an Evidence of the consummate Wisdom of God, that tho' there are many Millions of Men & Women on the Face of the Earth, & tho' all agree in the same parts of the Face, yet the Features of all are some way or other different, if it had not been so, what Disorders had been introduced into the World. The innocent had not been known from the guilty, or the virtuous Man distinguished from the wicked, there had been no Knowledge of Relations, no preservation of property, no possibility of Commerce, & no execution of Justice. How surprising are the powers, how vast is the capacity, how quick are the Motions of our Minds, our Souls are of a noble Extract & transcendence perfection! We think, we reason, we will & remember, we contemplate things higher than the World, with one flight of our active powers we ascend in a Moment to the Battlements of Heaven, view the glorious Majesty of the invisible God & run thro' the extensive Works of Nature to his more wonderful Works of Grace and Love. Can such noble powers be formed by anything less than an Omnipotent hand. Or could such a nimble & spiritual substance be so strictly united to a Body as vile & dull as Earth, but only by an all Being who is God, whose power & Wisdom shines thro' the whole creation, whose Existence is demonstrated from these things we have made

Sermon Ist Text Rom. 1. 19.

I proceed to a second Argument to prove the Being of God drawn from the Works of Providence. If the same active power is required to preserve & uphold as to make & create. What Confusion & Disorder would this World fall into, if a weak & powerless Being did not direct all its Motions? Must he not have a strong & mighty Arm who wheels about the Sun, & the Moon & the Stars, & maintains their constant Order, their regular Motions & unwearied Courses. Must not every Creature, in their various kinds be directed by an Overruling Wisdom, presiding over & when they pursue to obtain certain Ends, & that very often unknown to themselves. For Example, (1) Who makes the Trees spread its Roots, whoot up its Branches & bear its Blossoms & fruits in their proper season. Who instructs the Earth to bring forth so many plants & flowers, & who covers the Field with the plentiful Crofts of Corn. Who teaches the Bee so much Skill in gathering Honey, & building so convenient & well contrived Cells for keeping it. Doth the Stork know his appointed Time, doth the Sparrow go & return in his Season, doth every Beast know its proper Food, or propagate its own kind by Reason & Counsel. If we wait to alledge it, surely then they must be directed by the Understanding of another, excelling in Wisdom and power.

(2) Let us look into Ourselves & reflect on what passes within us, & we shall have a clearer View of this Argument. In many Cases we act by Counsel, & know the End which we are pursuing, but in most of our natural Actions we do not so. Doth a Man advise with himself how or how often he shall breathe, or make his Blood circulate in his Body. Is it by reasoning that his Meat is digested, & the nourishing Juices distributed to the several parts of the Body. Neither doth the Mother of the Child sit in Counsel to determine how the Members

On the Being of God.

of the Infant shall be formed in the Womb, how it shall grow up, & what is the proper Season of its being brought forth. Is it not then most evident that a greater Reason & an higher Wisdom, directs all these things, than what proceeds from Man's Understanding. But for this

(3) Do we not often see Men acting for one End, & yet a higher & better End is brought about, than they could intend or suspect. Joseph's Brethren sold him for a Slave, but this Action of theirs issued in his being advanced to the highest Honour & made the Reserver of his Father's family and many people. The Persecutors of the primitive Christians intended to beat down & destroy the Christian Religion, but their Rage & Violence rendered the Patience & Courage of the Christians the more remarkable, & this Land abounded & engaged Men to consider & Nature & Tendency of the Christian Faith & increased the Number of its Converts, the Blood of the Martyrs proved the Seed of the Church, which did grow up untill it triumphed over the Hearts & Conscience of its Enemies. Prov. 16. 9. A Man's heart deviseth his Way, but the Lord directeth his Steps.

(4) Once more ever I leave this Arg. of Providence, because we are so dull & stupid, that we do not discern the Hand of God in things, which are frequent & familiar, however wonderful they may be in themselves; therefore we are sometimes awakened by sensible & signal Providences. What surprising Miracles have been wrought, inverting the settled Order of things, & suspending all created powers & Agents. What extraordinary Judgments have been poured out upon Nations & Persons, by which we may easily read their Guilt, & know the Nature of their Offences. Was it blind Chance, that smote Herod Agrippa, when by the vain Applause of

of the people who was swelled with pride & flattered
 under the Opinions of his being a God. What glorious
 Appearances have been made, what notable Deli-
 verances have been wrought for the Church, and
 that even when it seemed to be on the Brink
 of Ruin. How often have the deepest and surest
 Counsels of the wicked been defeated, and all yr.
 Politicks outwitted & that even when they were
 come to the very Point of Execution. Psal. 9. 16.
 The Lord is known by the Judgements which he ex-
 ecuteth, the wicked is vanquish'd in the Work of his
 own hands. Must not all these things be managed
 by some powerful Hand, & directed by some Being
 of consummate Wisdom & impartial Justice.
 Who must this great Director & over-seeing Super-
 intendant be, who sits at the Helm of Affairs
 and doth all things so well & wisely. Is it not the
 Supreme & eternal God, whose Being we are proving
 & setting before you. You may see reasonably
 suppose that as they will sail thro' a thousand Rocks
 and ride out a thousand Storms, & at last arrive
 safely at the intended port without the Skill &
 Direction of any Pilot. Or that a numerous
 Army of Men made up of different Nations, Lu-
 mors & Designs, will direct all their own
 Motions, & carry on all their projects with Or-
 der & success, without any Officer or General,
 as to suppose that this great Machine of the World
 with the various Creatures of different kinds we
 are in it, could be preserved in their Order, direct-
 ed in their Operations, & all things so well and
 wisely managed, as we may see & observe, with-
 out a wise & over-seeing Ruler, to be the Governor
 of this great Ship, & the General of all the Hosts
 of Heaven & Earth. S. Ps. 111. 1-19. 1.

Rom. 1. 19. Because that which may be known of God &c.
 The Knowledge of the highest & most perfect Being
 of Original Truth & the chief Good, must give the greatest
 satisfaction to the Understanding, & fill a holy
 heart with the sweetest & most ravishing Joy. And
 tho' the Happiness of seeing God as he is, of viewing
 clearly his excellent Glory & Majesty, belongs only to
 glorified Saints, yet we have here on Earth by the
 Light of Reason & the Eye of Faith many clear No-
 tices of the Being & bright Discoveries of the perfections
 of God. The wisdom & Skill of our Sea Captains even con-
 ceiving the Gentiles, that may be known of God &c.
 III I go on to a IIIrd Argument for the Being of God
 drawn from the publick Voice & general Consent
 of all Nations, no Age is distant, no Countrey so re-
 mote, no people so barbarous, but gives a sufficient
 Testimony of this Truth. However much Men have
 differed about other Tenets of Religion, yet herein
 Heathens & Turkes, Jews & Christians, Indians,
 Americans, Africans & Europeans center without
 any Contention. The notion of a Deity is twisted wth
 our Reason, inlaid in the Nature, & runs in the blood
 of all Mankind. Go to the utmost Bounds of Earth,
 to Nations who had no Commerce with any Nations,
 excepting such as were as savage as themselves,
 to people who clothed not their bodies, who covered
 not their Shame, & were in their Manners, I may say
 but once removed from Brutes, yet even such unpo-
 lished Nations, as people so untamed, have acknowleg-
 ed a Deity. Whence doth this arise? Why have all
 Nations agreed in the Belief of a supreme Being,
 & worshipped his Being, tho' in very different Ways?
 Doth not this plainly argue that the Knowledge of
 the Being of God is an innate principle, & stamp'd
 upon the rational Nature? Or is this not born
 with us, that such is the frame & Make of our Un-
 derstanding.

Understandings, that when we are capable to open
 the eyes of our Reason, we plainly see it. There is a God.
 Will the Atheist say, that some others, as well as he,
 have denied the Being of God? This the world is very
 wicke, yet, blessed be God, the Number of professed
 Atheists have been very small; Men of vicious
 Practices to avoid the storming Fears of y^r own
 Minds, & that they might pursue their sinful Courses
 with the more Quiet Ease, have wished in y^r hearts
 that there were no God, but few or none could attain
 to this as the settled Judgment of their Minds, and tho'
 there have been a very few Dissenters, is their voice to
 sink the Credit of the joint Consent of many Millions.
 Or will it be alledged, that the Belief of a supreme
 Being is a State Engine, a lucky Device of some
 great Prince or Minister of State to keep his credulous
 people in awe? But how could so many Princes
 of so different Interests & Manners, join so unani-
 mously in the Deceit? Or how could so many Subjects
 in so many Nations, many of whom have often as
 much Wisdom & Force as their Superiors in
 power, be so easily gulled & deceived? And are not
 the greatest Princes & Politicians as subject to
 the Fears of an avenging Deity, when they have
 done wrong as other Men are? If this had been only a
 Trick of a fatal sorcery, it not unaccountable
 it has not been discovered & unmasked ere now.
 But Time which has discovered many Errors, im-
 proves this Notion, & the more Reason is brightned
 the Truth grows the stronger & whines the clearer.
 I cannot pass over this Objection, without observ-
 ing, that the Atheist allow the Belief of the Being
 of a God, strengthens the peace & Order of Govern-
 ment, & is for the common Interest of Princes &
 people. Why then doth he strive to destroy a
 Doctrine so much for the Good of society? Why
 doth not every Magistrate ever punish all

Men of Atheistical principles & practices, as
 Disturbers of the publick peace, and the worst
 Plagues of Mankind. I proceed to a
 IV Fourth Argument drawn from the Operati-
 ons & Dictates of our own Consciences. Every
 Man has a Remembrance & Judge in his own
 Breast, whereby he is taught a Difference betwixt
 Good & Evil, virtuous & vicious Actions, whereby
 he is filled with Comfort or Joy when he doth well,
 but this Soul is stunged with inward pain & Re-
 morse when he doth evil, & that in spite of all
 his Endeavours to silence & smother the Consci-
 tions & Approaches of an evil Conscience?
 What pains do some Men take to live free of
 the Terror of Conscience? How greedily do
 they drift in false principles? How willingly
 would they cast off all Fear, & drown all their
 Sorrows by a continued Course of carnal Mirth
 & Debauchery? But I appeal to the most stout-
 hearted & sensual Wretch, if in spite of all y^r
 Endeavours & in the midst of y^r Cup of pleasures,
 Conscience has not sometimes roused itself
 from sleep like an armed Man, & shot its Darts
 with so much Violence as to wound the Soul very
 deep, & that even for such Crimes as have been
 most secretly committed, & above the Cognizance
 & Vengeance of Man, & tho' a Man could hide him-
 self from all the Worlds, yet he cannot hide himself
 from himself, from the Reproaches of his own
 heart, & the Dashes of his own Conscience; and
 these Fears & Terrors not only seize the poor
 & the mean, but also Men of the highest place &
 greatest power, Princes on the Throne, Judges on
 the Tribunal, Men risen above the Fears of their
 fellow creatures have trembled before the Bar of
 Conscience. Is not this an Evidence that there
 is

is a Being of more glorious power & Majesty than the greatest of Men, who settle & secure the Thrones of Conscience, who has planted this his Vicegerent in the Breasts of Men to serve in stead of a third and Witness is that there is a God, a supreme Judge & Arbitrator of all our Actions, a rich Rewarder to the virtuous & a just Avenger of the ungodly, for all the Actions of Conscience, whether illacive or excused, demonstrate the Justice of God, the Omnipotence & Holiness of God, the Terrors of Conscience argue the Justice of God, & the Approbation of Conscience that God is a Bountiful God that there is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

V. I now proceed to a fifth Argument to prove the Being of God, Namely, from the boundless Appetite and extensive Desires after Happiness, which are planted in the Heart of every Man. He had a natural invincible Thirst after some abiding & sovereign Good. Love reaches no farther than to known Objects, but Desire pursues not only that which we know but also what we find wanting, & approaches nearest to infinite of any other Affection planted in us. We may imagine that were we once raised to such a Station & possessed of such & such things, then our Minds would be easily & contented, but our Wishes are no sooner granted, than they again increase & follow hard after some new Thing, & thus in the highest Fruition of worldly things, we cannot taste a perfect Happiness, but we always find some thing wanting in our present Enjoyments. Can such an Appetite be planted in us without any Object to satisfy it? Do these boundless Desires arise originally from Ourselves? Why should we render Ourselves so restless & uneasy? Is nothing in this World can give us perfect Satisfaction, unless there is something superior to all that is in the World, even a Being infinitely perfect & amiable, excellent & communicative, who has planted & can fully & forever satisfy the most craving & enlarged Desires

of our Souls, else the noblest Creature must be more miserable than the meanest, Man must be in a worse Condition than the Beasts? On this Head I will appeal to Experience, to what the Children of God have often felt in their Souls. Hast thou not, O X^r been made to know that there is a God by many sensible Demonstrations of his Love, by many sweet Fancies of his Mercy & Grace? How often hast thou enjoyed inward Consoles & delightful Communion with him? How often hast thou been revived & supported & delivered by his tender & powerful Hands, when the Help of Man was vain? Who made thee to differ from others, & changed the unholly Disposition of thy Mind? Who hears thy prayers, supplies thy Wants, removes thy Fears, restores to thee the cruel Stage of thine Enemies, & casts thy Soul with Joy & Pleasures, which the World knows not of? Are all these Things done by a blind Chance, or owing to thine own Force & Strength? No, it is the most high God, the Lord of Heaven & Earth, of whose Being thou hast a clear Evidence by feeling & Experience, than by all the Arguments Reason alone can afford. — Upon the Experiences of the people of God arises convincing Argument to the ungodly, such as did never feel the Convolutions of the holy Spirit of God, or taste the pleasures of Religion may readily deny them; But my Design in handling this Subject, was not to convince the Atheist, I hope there are none of that Number among my Hearers, but to settle & establish the Faith of those who believe there is a God, & to let them see that their Hope in God stands on a sure Foundation, & that the Rock of their Salvation lives and reigns for ever.

VI. I now proceed to a sixth Argument, and the last I shall mention for proving the Being of God. It is the absurd & dangerous consequence of the contrary Opinion. For Ist The principles of the Atheist are contradictory; he must allow it is not impossible in the Nature of things that there might be a Being infinitely perfect, eternal & self-existent, for this by no means

Means implies a contradiction, but with the same
Breach he must deny what he grants, for when he af-
firms there is no God, he must also affirm, there never
can be a God, for he who has not a Being already, can
never in after Times be an eternal self-existent Being
without which Perfections he cannot be God. Thus
the Atheist may maintain that a thing may be, & can-
not be, possible & impossible at the same time.

(2) But the Atheist's Doctrine destroys all Difference
between Good & Evil, Virtue & Vice; for this Difference
doth not arise from the Will of Man, for then every
thing which Man wills to be good, would be good, &
on the other hand every thing he wills to be evil,
would be evil, & every Man should be a Law to himself,
& his own Will the Measure & Standard of his Actions,
neither can this Difference arise from the Nature &
Relations, the eternal Fitness & Unfitness of things.
abstractedly considered, for who formed this Nature
or established this Relation, where there is no prin-
ciple of Reason, no intelligent Agent, there can be
no fixed Agency or wise Direction; & therefore if
there is a real & immutable Difference betwixt
Good & Evil, it necessarily follows there must be a
supreme Being to give Law & give, whose Will
directed by his infinite Wisdom, Justice & Goodness
has established the certain Relations of Things, &
thus fixed the essential Differences of Good & Evil.

(3) The Atheist's Doctrine is again all the present and
eternal Interests of Mankind. This is a Doctrine w.
ruins the Comfort, & mars the Peace of particular
Persons, is not every Man full of Wants, which he
cannot supply, is able to Evils which he cannot pre-
vent, exposed to Dangers which he cannot over-
come, & compassed with Infirmities which he cannot
remove? Are not his Troubles & Sorrows more nu-
merous than his Joys & Pleasures? Are not his
Hopes far above his Enjoyments? Now if there is no
Being of infinite power, of boundless Goodness, in
whose

whose Love & Care, he may repose his Confidence, under
whose Protection he may dwell safely, Man of all
Creatures must be the most miserable & distressed
on his sensible of a present Pain, & is not racked & dis-
quieted wth the Hopes or Fears of things to come wth
with the Remembrance of things past. But Man has
more noble powers & Faculties, & all these powers
in the present Case, his Reason, his Memory, his Wis-
dom, his Foresight add to his Grief & Sorrow. Wo, wo,
then to Man if there is no God; the Want of so good a
Being, such a tender Parent, such a kind Friend,
such a wise Governour, such a powerful Protector,
an eternal Spring of Joy & Bliss, must fill our hearts
with more Grief & deeper Sorrows, than if the Sun
were darkened in the Firmament, never again shined
above our Horizon, or if we lived all our Life under the
gloomy Shades of Darkness & Death.

(4) The Atheist's Doctrine razes the very Foundations
of Government & destroys the Peace & Order of all
Society; for if there is no God, where can there be
any Ties on the Consciences of Men? Is there
any Force in Oaths, whereby we appeal to an Omni-
potent Judge? Would not all the Bonds of Com-
merce & all the Grounds of Trade be quite re-
moved? There would be no Trust, no Faith, no Ho-
nesty amongst Men; if once you destroy the Faith
of God's Being, every Man becomes a God & a Law
to himself, & so the flood-gates are set open
to all Manner of Wickedness to rush in upon Man-
kind, the Thief, the Murderer & the Adulterer is
no Offender, for he is subject to no Law superior
to his own Will; thus all Order should be broken, &
every Man's Rights & Property should be precarious.
So then it plainly follows, yet as when we consult
our Reason, we cannot but believe there is a God,
so when we study our Interest as single or social
Creatures, we cannot but heartily wish ye Being
of

of men who is both able & willing to protect & provide for us
 for without such a Being we cannot be happy or think
 ourselves so. But You'll say
 It is not a wicked Man's Interest by should be a God.
 To this I answer. It's not Man's Interest to be wicked, e-
 ven tho' there were no God. Intemperance & Luxury, Covet-
 ousness, pride & Ambition are necessarily attended
 with Unhappiness, & such in pain & Misery, are hurt-
 ful to Ourselves & render us hateful to others, but
 if the wicked Man resolves to forsake his evil, & to
 do that which is good, which in all Reason he ought
 to do, it is as much his Interest to wish there were a
 God, as it is a rich Man's to wish for a skilful Phy-
 sician, or a poor Man's to wish for a rich & gene-
 rous Benefactor. But this is the main Pillar of
 Atheism, that this great Mystery of Iniquity, is un-
 sailed, Men are wedded to their Lusts, resolved to pur-
 sue their sinful pleasures, & to gratify their crimi-
 nal Appetites; & that their Conscience may not dis-
 turb them in the pursuit of their vitious Courses,
 they wink hard that they may not see the Light,
 that the Knowledge of God, his Being & Perfections
 may be hutt out of their darkned Minds Ps. 14.
 1, 2, 3, 4th. The fool hath said in his heart there is no
 God. they are corrupt, they have done a bominable
 Work, they have said that doth good. The Lord looked
 down from Heaven upon the Children of Men, to
 see if there were any that did understand & seek
 God. They are all gone aside, they are all together
 become filthy, there is none y^t doth good, no not
 one. have all the workers of Iniquity no know-
 ledge, who eat up my people as they eat Bread, &
 call not upon the Lord.
 Thus I have endeavoured to demonstrate y^e Being
 of God from the Making, the managing, the beauti-
 ful Order & the manage of the World, from the Frame
 of our Bodies, the powers of our Senses, from the
 strong Apprehensions of our own Minds, & the

common Consent of all Mankind, not to mention the
 absurd Consequences of the contrary Doctrine, &
 these Arguments I have advanced, I think are so
 plain & obvious, that no person of the meanest Ca-
 pacity, who can take the smallest Notice of the Works
 of God, or give the least Attendance to the Reason
 of things, can possibly resist the Evidence of them.
 But notwithstanding the Force of all these Arguments,
 Let us for once suppose, that these Arguments for
 or against the Being of God are equal, that the
 Atheist has just as much to say as his Adversary.
 On this false supposition, Let us view the Conse-
 quences, & consider what side of the Question, a
 Man in point of Prudence & Interest ought to
 chuse. If there is no God, then the Atheist may
 freely enjoy his brutish Lusts & sin with plea-
 sure, unworthy of his manly powers & rational
 Nature, he need not be afraid of the Thunder-
 Blaps of Conscience, or the Terrors of another World,
 he at last dies & becomes a loathsome Carcase,
 & this is the Extent & period of all his Joys and Hopes.
 Upon the same supposition that there is no God, the
 virtuous Man who believes there is such a Being
 is even in this Life more Quiet & easy, has as much
 outward Health & more inward Joy than his grace-
 less Neighbour, & when he dies, tho' all his Hopes
 die with him, yet he is still as happy as y^e Atheist
 & runs no Danger, he feels not his Loss, & meets with
 no Reproaches on his Disappointment.
 But if in the last Event of things, it doth appear that
 there is a God, a Being of impartial Justice and all
 mighty Power, who can imagine or conceive the
 Depth of the Atheists Misery. How is this Man
 filled wth Confusion & terrible surprize, with
 what Horror & trembling will he dragged before the
 awful Tribunal of that great & holy Being, whom
 he denied & despised. With what Regret and

and Reluctance will he sink into y^e place of endless torment. Whereas on the other hand, he who lives & acts as believing there was a God, worthy of his highest Esteem & best Services, shall with chearful & comfortable and holy Boldness enter into the World of spirits and approach the presence of the most High. How will he then triumph in his happy choice? with what Transports of Joy will he then enter into the possession of his hope for Bliss & Happiness. Do then You endy plainly see its unspeakably safer to believe there is a God, even tho' the Scales of the Balance were equal in point of Argum^t; for by confessing the Being of God, the Believer suffers not at all, but by denying him, the Atheist runs the most desperate Hazard of losing an eternal Crown of glory, & of sinking into endless & intolerable Torment, for nothing is more dreadful than to fall into the hands of an angry God who will tear in peices when none is able to deliver & will give obstinate sinners the most sensible & terrible proof of his Being by making them know the power of his Wrath & feel the Stroakes of his Justice. Consider this well that forget God, consider & be wise in time.

And thus I have handled the doctrinal Part of this Text, and set before You the most proper & useful Arguments for proving the Being of God, Arguments sufficient to convince any reasonable & well-disposed person. And now it would be very proper to enquire what Lessons we may learn, what Benefits we may receive from this great & fundamental Truth, & what Influence it ought to have on our hearts & Lives. But this I must reserve to another Opportunity. L.P. 102. 25. 50. 10.

Rom. 1. 19. Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them.

I Having in a Discourse or two handled the doctrinal part of this Text, & set before You y^e Arguments for the Being of God, I hope it will not be improper now to enquire what Lessons we may learn, what Benefits we may receive from this great & fundamental Truth, & what Influence it ought to have on our hearts and Lives.

- I. We may learn that the Favour of this great & glorious Being must be better than Life; and that they are surely & for ever happy, whose God is the Lord. In these any good thing, the heart of Man can desire, which Almighty power & boundless Goodness cannot bestow? Will a Being in whom Compassion overflows, ever suffer the Objects of his Love to be miserable? Is he not ever near unto them that fear him, both able & ready to supply all their Wants, to satisfy their longings, & to fill the hungry soul with good Things? What abundant Pleasure & Joy must spring from an Interest in the Love of so great & so good a Being? How serene & chearful must the Mind of that Man be, who can repose his Confidence in God, & pour out his whole heart before him in all his Dangers, Wants, and Distresses, with full Assurance of a rich Supply and complete Deliverance?
2. When the proofs of God's Being are so clear and convincing, how stupid and ignorant is the Atheist who cannot see the strength of them, or rather how perverse & obstinate who will not open his Eyes & see the Being & Glory of God shining with the brightest Beams on every Object we behold. Some Children have been so wicked

wicked as to refuse to give the Honour due unto the Parent, but never was any Child so irrational and perverse, as to deny they had a Father, this is such a prodigious blinde ness that I can scarce think it possible for any Man who fairly & impartially considers and reasons to bring his Heart to a firm and settled Belief, that there is no God, however much a wicked Man may wish it, yet no Man is able to stifle all Sentiments & to be false all the Impressions & Characters of a supreme Being & righteous Governour & Judge, which are engraven on the Hearts of all Men.

3. Tho' I hope there are no Atheists in Judgem^t. among us, yet alas! How many Atheists are there in Practice, who live as if there were no God, to whom they are accountable for all the Works done in this Life. Tit. 1. 16 They profess to say the opposite, that they know God, but in Works they deny him, being abominable & disobedient, & unto every good Work reprobate. The practical Atheist is in some Respects worse than the profest Atheist, & his Conduct is more inconsistent. Are not Actions a clearer Discovery of a Principle than Words, for Deeds are usually more deliberate than Words, and the frames and Sentiments of the Heart are better known by what Men do, than by what they say - Let us then search our own Hearts & charge our Consciences to give an impartial Answer. Did we never please Ourselves with the Thought, O how happy should we be, if there were no God? Did we never wish that God might be contrary to his holy Will to command, & of his righteous Will to punish? Do we not by every Sin deny or deface one or other of the Perfections of God? We slight his All-sufficiency, when we seek our Happiness in any thing besides him; We disparage his Wisdom, when we set up any other Rule of our Conduct than his Will; we dishonour his Holiness, when we cast our Filth before his Face: We

We contemn his Justice, vilify his power & disown his Sovereignty, when we despise his holy Laws. Every Sin is a denial of the Rights and wills of the glory of God; therefore the presumptuous Sinner is the greatest Enemy of God, and aims at the Destruction of his Being - Both the common Swearer, the habitual Drunkard, the profane Scoffer, the deceitful Hypocrite, believe that there is a God? Are not all such practical Atheists, And Alas! that there should be so many amongst us who enjoy the dear Light of the Gospel, & have so many plain Proofs not only of the Being, but also of the immensity, Royalty, his rich Grace, his infinite Love of God in his only & ever beloved Son; that he should have so loved the World as to send his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have ever lasting Life. John 3. 16! O what Ingratitude is this! What an high Contempt of God, how vexing & grieving to them who love & fear him, how stumbling to others, how hurtful & dangerous to Yourselves! O consider this Well that forget God - Now that we may not be partakers with others in this great Guilt, that we may not go abroad without Arms of Defence, in this evil Day, let me exhort you to be firmly settled & well-established in the Faith of this great and fundamental Article of our Religion that God is, this will be our highest Wisdom, our Interest, our Happiness for ever.

1. This will excite and engage us to render him an Homage and Worship becoming an Omnipotent and All-wise; to receive, and rational Creatures to give. The Jews call the Knowledge of the Being of God the Foundation & Pillar of Wisdom. What should make us so slight & careless, so drowsy & superficial in our Acts of Worship & Devotion, but our weak & fluctuating Belief of the Being, our

our low and mean Notions of the perfections of God? Did we really believe that the Object of our Worship is the most perfect, the most amiable Being, the richest, the most precious Benefactor, that without him we cannot be happy, that with him, having an interest in his Favour & Love, thro' Christ Jesus the Son of his Love, we cannot quit to be happy, that he knows and observes the Frame of our Hearts, the Spring, Motives & End of all our Actions; would not such a Faith as this oblig'd & engag'd us to worship him in spirit & in Truth, and to render him the best service we are capable of? Mat. 1. 13, 14. Ye said also Behold what a Weariness is it? Ye have said of it at it, saith the Lord of Hosts, and Ye brought it which was torn, and the lame, and the Blind. Thus Ye brought an Offering: Should I accept this of your hands, saith the Lord. But cursed be the Deceiver, which hath in his Flock a Male, and voweth & sacrificeth unto his Lord a corrupt thing, for I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, & my Name is dreadful amongst the Heathen.

2. This will keep the mind even & steady in the midst of all Convulsions, seeming Disorders, and intricate steps of divine Providence. Providence is a great Depth, we must reach unto it, tho' we are not able to find out all the Reasons and unriddle all the Mysteries of it, for we see but a few Links of this long Chain, but when we meet with many things we apt up, in secret Darknes, & too deep for us to measure, let us remember yt God is, and while he is, we must be for ever, he will be righteous, wise and good, and therefore, though Clouds & Darknes be about him, and our Eyes can not pierce thro' this Darknes, we see thro' the deep Design of his Council, and Conduct. Yet let us hold fast this sure principle that Judgments & Righteousness, are the Habitation of his Throne, Mercy

and Truth go before his face. Ps. 89. 14. And tho' we should see wickedness triumphing & Virtue trampled under foot, let us not be discouraged, for verily there is a Heavenward for the righteous, verily there is a God that judgeth in the Earth. Ps. 58. 11. And there is Wrath laid up for the wicked Man because there is a God who judgeth in the Earth, whose present Patience is an Evidence of his power and Goodness; but no Arguement against his Being for Justice.

3. This will be a strong & perpetual Guard agt. all secret Sins & Temptations to Sin. Gen. 39. 9. How can I do this great Wickedness against God. Shall the Fear of Man who is our equal restrain us from open Sin, we shall not the Fear of the Supreme God, who is ever present with us, restrain us from the Commission of secret Evils. To break the Kings Law in his Sight is a bold and daring Offence, the Thief is tempted to steal, the adulterer to trip himself of his chastity and to invade the Rights of another, because he imagines that no eye sees him, thus he is unmindful of the God who made him, & thinks he can be well kept from his all-seeing Eye.

4. This will be a great Encouragement to prayer even to Feruency & spiritualty in all our Approaches & led us to the Throne of Gods Grace. We may freely pour out our Souls before him, & freely unfold all the secrets of our hearts unto him. Here we may make particular Confession of our Sins wth all the Aggravations attending them & freely indulge ourselves in all the Expressions of Grief & sorrow on Account of them. Here we may sanfully utter all our Complaints & lay open the true Cause of our Sorrows with all the Wants & Weaknesses we labour under, as unto a kind, loving & indulgent Parent, ready to hear our Requests & to supply all our Wants. Surely these

then it is good for you to draw near to God, we shall not see him in vain, for he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. This will confound the Hypocrite, convince him of his Folly, and make him ashamed of all his weak Pretences, & oblige him to study Sincerity, that beautiful Ornament of all our Words & Actions, the essential Ingredient in all our Services to God & Man, without this we can never be true Christians, yea without this we cannot pretend to common Honesty. Now these are some of the Advantages arising from our being firmly settled in the Faith of Gods Being. It will excite us to render him the Honour and Homage due to his Name; it will keep our Minds even & steady in all the Charges & Crosses of this World; it will be a strong & perpetual Guard against sin, particularly against secret Sins and Temptations to them; it will be a great Encouragement to fervent prayer; & it will dash the hopes of the Hypocrite, oblige him to lay aside his Mask & study to be sincere & upright.

And that you may reap these Benefits, let me now conclude this Subject with a few Directs.

1. Meditate frequently upon God, view his various & amiable Perfections of his Nature, & the glorious Displays of them in the wonderful Works of his Power, Wisdom & Goodness, of his Grace & Love, this is the plain Character of the Christian Man. Psal. 10. 4. God is not in all his Thoughts. By your frequent Meditation on God, & delightful converse with him, the Faith of his Being will become the more lively & vigorous, & you will discover the more Loveliness & Excellency in his Nature, the more Sweetness & Eagerness in his Service, & the more Beauty & Glory in all his Works.
2. Watch over your hearts, and keep them with all Diligence, resist the very first Approaches

of Sin, and study Sobriety, Temperance & Holiness, if once you engage in a sinful Course, and give Way to your carnal Lusts & Pleasures, they will creep into your hearts; O if there were no God to punish Sin, O that none would call me to account for my Ways, then I might do as I please, thus the Sinner goes on from wishing to believing, that there is no God; Sin & Sensuality is the direct Road to Atheism.

3. Review all the gracious Evidences & Experiences you have had of Gods Love and Goodness, & improve them as Arguments & proofs of his Being. When your Reason is puzzled, & you are not capable to answer all the Arguments of a subtle Atheist, let Faith and Experience step in for your Relief. Shall all the Gent & Wif of the Wld. reason me out of what I feel & know? How often has my soul feasted on the sweet fruits of the Love of God, how many venerable proofs of his power & Presence have I had in my Approaches to him? Lay up such Experiences as these, as a precious and sacred Treasure in your Mind & bring them forth on all proper Occasions, & this will be a powerful preservative against the poisonous Infection of Atheism.

4. Study to know God in Christ Jesus, his Word is an sacred Temple, every thing in it is a Witness of Gods Being, and an Herald of his Glory, but the Knowledge of his Being and Glory shines with a distinguishing Light in the Gospel of the Gospel, & in the Face of Jesus Christ. The Knowledge of God the Creator lays a Foundation for the Knowledge of God the Redeemer, but the Knowledge of the glorious God-man extends, sweetens and illustrates the Knowledge of the Creator. In the Gospel of Christ Jesus, we have a clear & full Revelation

Revelation of God brought down from Heaven by his own Son, who is in the Bosom of the Father, who hath declared him. A Revelation suited to every Capacity, proper to prevent all Mistakes, which the Corruption of our Nature, the Weakness of our Reason, the Negligence of our Application, or the Subtlety of wicked & designing Men might have led us unto; there we have every thing necessary to be known, concerning God, or Ourselves, our Duty and Happiness. Let us bless the Lord with all our Souls that we were born in a Land of clear Light, where this Gospel shines in its Beauty & Power, surrounded with various Evidences, a Land where the Book of Grace lies open before us, as well as the Book of Nature, to teach us the Knowledge of God & his Salvation. Let us say within Ourselves, why was not I born a poor ignorant African, or wild Indian, ignorant of God, and aware not to seek after him, & wish but any Person near me to give me one Beam of Light, to point out my Way to Happiness. Why was not I left to the dumb & silent Lectures of the Heavens, & the Earth, and Sea, or the Instruction of the Trees & Plants & Beasts of the Earth to teach me the Knowledge of him that made me. Who am I that I should be brought into Being in the midst of such Beams, and not in a Region of thick Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death. How boasting Glory be given to distinguishing Grace. How should we value the Bible as our highest Treasure, which gives us such blessed Discoveries of God, & his Wisdom, Goodness and Power, and especially his Mercy & Grace in Christ Jesus, which infinitely exceeds all the doubtful Twilight of Nature, & our own Powers of Reasoning. O may the blessed Bible lie next our hearts, and be the Companion of our Bosoms! 'Tis this lays a sure Foundation for the Knowledge

of our Recovery from all our Guilt & Misery, Ruin & Wretchedness. You that have any Concern for your eternal Interests, love the Bible, walk by the Rules of it, and live upon its promised Grace. Study and search the Knowledge of God here, let us follow on to know God in Christ, and then we shall know him, for no Man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Lastly let us pity & pray for the Heathen World, the dark Corners of the Earth, the benighted Nations, where the Sun of Righteousness never rises, and where they can but feel after God thro' the Mists of Ignorance and Error. Let us remember those antient Times when our Forefathers in this Nation were laid away into the same Errors & gross Idolatries, and exercise our Compassion towards those who are still left under the same Darkness. Now & then O Christians send a pathetic Sigh over the Nations, lift up one compassionate Groan to Heaven for them, and say Hallowed be thy Name, the Kingdom come when shall the Day come, O Lord, that the Heathens may become thy worshippers, and Agyptia and Ethiopia thy people. When wilt thou reveal thyself to the poor African Idolaters, and the Savage Tribes of America, that know not God. When shall the Ends of the Earth learn to know thee, & rejoice in Christ Jesus thy Son the alone Saviour? When all Nations, people of Languages begin their Songs of Salvation to him that sits upon the Throne & to the Lamb that was slain, who has loved us, & washed us from our Sin's in his own Blood & hath made us Kings & Priests unto God & his Father, to him be glory & Dominion for ever and ever Amen. S. Ps. 94. 9-104. 33.

Psalm 97. The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice: let the Multitude of Isles be glad.

It is a very important Question, which the Psalmist proposes Ps. 11. 3. If the Foundations be destroyed, what have the righteous done? If the main Pillars of Religion are cast down, if the first Articles of our holy Faith fall to the Ground, all our Labour in seeking & serving God is vain & useless; all our Hopes Joys & Comforts must perish for ever. It must therefore be our small Advantage to have the Judgment well informed, & the Heart firmly established in the Knowledge & Faith of the first & fundamental Principles of Religion, that we may not only believe, but know why we believe & be ready always to give an Answer to every Man who asks us a Reason of the Hope that is in us. That this may be our happy Attainment, I have purposed, if the Lord will, to set before you the Principles of natural Religion as the solid Foundation of all revealed & super-natural Truths, to explain their Nature, to give you the Reasons & Evidences of them, & then to proceed to assert the Verity, and open up the Excellence & Glory & Usefulness of the Christian Scheme.

I have already proven the Existence of a first & eternal Cause, that there is a necessary, supreme & independent Being, who by his power created the Heavens & the Earth, and formed all things which are in them. Now the first Truth which springs from the Being of God, is his wise and holy Providence; for he not only has a Power and Right to frame what Creatures he pleases, and to give them what Perfections he wills, so he who only has an absolute Dominion over all the Worlds of his Hands, reposes & disposes of them according to his Will and pleasure: That Providence is a Subject full of Mysteries & Wonders, yet it

2.

fills our Hearts with an Over flow of Joy & Comfort, to know that he who is wise in heart, wonderful in counsel, & excellent in working, doth grasp & sturn the great Engin of Nature in his hand, & moves all things according to his eternal Mind. This is the Blessing the holy Psalmist would have us make of this Doctrine. The Lord reigneth, let the Earth &c.

In which Words we have

1. A clear Assertion that the Lord Jehovah is the Sovereign Superintendant & chief Governor of the World, who sits at the Helm of Affairs, & manages all things with an unerring hand. The Lord reigneth.
2. The glorious & desirable Effect of God's exercising his Power & Dominion, it is a source of Joy & rejoicing to all Nations, making the streams of Blessings to run & diffuse themselves throu't the Earth, & to reach to the remotest Isles & Corners of it. Let the Earth rejoice, let the Multitude of Isles be glad &c.

It is generally thought that this Psalm is to be understood of the Messiah's Kingdom & Administration, which is the surest Ground of Joy and Praise to every people; a gracious & tender hearted Redeemer hath all things put under his feet, & is appointed by his Father to manage all things in the Kingdom of Providence & of Grace for the glory of Jehovah, for his own Honour, & for the Happiness of his people; & this must afford strong Consolation to all the Members of his Church, in what ever place or Province they dwell. But though the delegated Power and Authority of the Lord Jesus Christ the Messiah & Mediator, should be intended by my Text, this is so far from weakening, that it rather strengthens & confirms the inherent and Original Power of the Lord Jehovah, & more clearly evinces an all-wise & all-governing Providence. The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice &c.

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And these for in handling this Text, I shall
I. Explain the Nature of Providence in gener. Notⁿ of it.
II. Consider the Extent of Providence.
III. Prove the Truth and Certainty of it And
IV. Conclude this Subject with some practical Inferences.

I return to the first thing proposed in the Method
I. To explain the Nature of Providence in the general
Notion of it. And this I cannot do, in more plain & ap-
posite Words than those You have in the shorter Cate-
chism; God's Works of Providence are his most holy
wise and powerful preserving & governing all his
Creatures & all their Actions.

So that the Providence of God consists
1. In preserving and upholding all things. Nehem. 9. 6
Thou even Thou art Lord alone, who hast made the
Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens with all their Hosts,
the Earth and all things that are therein, the Seas,
and all that is therein, & thou preservest them all,
and the Hosts of Heaven worship Thee. Psal. 36. 6.
O Lord thou preservest Man & Beast. To be inde-
pendent & self-existent belongs to God alone, as no fi-
nite Creature can give a Being to itself, so it cannot
support & preserve itself in Being, the powerful hand
of God is the Basis on which all the Creation leans,
if he should withdraw this prop, every thing he has
made, would relapse to its first Nothing, so that
our daily preservation is a continued Creation.

As this powerful Creator preserves particular Be-
ings, who maintain their various Kinds, there is
no species of Creatures at first made by him, but
continueth to this very Day, & his Wisdom so influ-
enceth their inbred Antipathies & Enmities, that
none of them shall ever prevail to the total Destruc-
tion of the other: O let us remember, & thankfully
acknowledge the kind Providence of God towards
us in particular, if we look into our own Bodies
& consider on how many tender & small Threads
our Life depends, how many thousand Ways

2.

Death may enter in upon us, how small our Strength
is, when compared with many of the Creatures we
are about us, its next to a Miracle we live so long,
& that we so seldom fall into Dangers & Diseases.

2. In Governing all Things, it is for this End that
all things are preserved, that the most High may
dispose & manage all things as he pleases. Job 1. 11
who was the author of all things after the Counsel of his own
Will, he doth powerfully determine & sway all his
Creatures, influencing all their Actions, according
to their several Natures & Faculties, permitting
those Actions which are evil, effecting & exciting to
those which are good, & directing every thing which
comes to pass, whether good or evil, to the noble End
& purposes of his own glory, so that tho' the World should
seem to us to run at Random, & all Affairs to be
huddled together in rude Disorder, yet in the midst
of all the Contrarieties & Contrarieties of second Causes,
the only wise God sees, knows & directeth the Chain of
all Causes & Effects, & will bring a perfect Harmony
out of all these apparent jarrets & Disorders. We
have this exemplified in that mysterious Vision of Ezek.
Chap. 1. where the Providence of God is set forth
by the Emblem of a Wheel within a Wheel, & these Wheels
in all their Windings & Turnings are full of Eyes, in-
timating that God sees & chooseth his Ways in the most
intricate & mysterious Labyrinth of Provi-
dence, & that all things are over-ruled for his
glory. Now these are the principal Branches of Pro-
vidence, the Preservation & Government of all things.

II. To Consider the Extent of divine Providence
The Heathen were much in the dark in this Affair.
Epicurus & his Followers, who foolishly imagined that
the World was made by a blind Chance, thought it might

be

be governed in the same manner. The Stoicks dis-
ted that all things came to pass by an imperious &
inevitable Fate, to which the supreme Being was
subjected. Plato allowed of a divine Providence in
matters of the highest Importance, but that it was a
disparagement to the divine Majesty to notice
the low Affairs of private Families, or particular per-
sons. But both Reason & Scripture asur'd us
of the universal Extent of Providence, & that it is ex-
ercis'd towards good Men with special Tenders
and Love, yet it runs thro' all things with a con-
stant Sovereignty & Care. Psal. 135. 6. Whatsoever
the Lord pleased, that did he in Heaven & in Earth, in
the Seas, & all deep places. 2 Chron. 16. 9. For the
Eyes of the Lord run to & fro throughout the whole
Earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them,
whose heart is perfect towards him. Let us
therefore ascend from the lowest to the highest and
most magnificent Creatures, & we shall see that Pro-
vidence (where it self every where), it pervades
all places, and Things.

I. All inanimate Creatures who are void of Life &
Sense, are under the Influence of Providence,
they act by certain Rules & fixed Laws, who makes
the Sun to run his Race, & to know the place of his
rising & setting. Who preserves all the heavenly
Bodies in their proper Spheres & unswerving
Motions. Who covers the Earth with Grass, and the
spacious Fields with Corn from Year to Year.
Is it not the powerful Hand of the great Superin-
tendant of all things.

2. All the inferior living Creatures from the great
Whales to the smallest Insects & creeping Things,
are directed by, & under the inspection of Providence.
Matt. 10. 29. Will not two Sparrows sold for a farthing
without your Father. I will declare unto you, what
the small Bird shall lodge, on what it shall

how and when it shall die. Every Animal by Land or Sea
knows his proper food, & the great Provider provides
Sustenance, & maintains them at his proper Chan-
ge. Psal. 145. 15. The Eyes of all wait upon thee,
& thou givest them their Meed in due Season. Thou
openest thine hand, & satisfiest the Desire of every
living Thing. The Providence is exercised

3. Over all reasonable Creatures, whether good or evil.
Over evil Angels & Men, to curb their power, to restrain
their Malice, to render unto them according to the fruit
of their Doings. Over good Angels & Men, to direct
them by his Wisdom, in all their Administrations & Ser-
vices, to protect them by his power, & to make them hap-
py & blessed for ever.

4. The most perfect & peculiar Care attends the glorious
God-Man, who is the first born of every Creature, is the
prime Object of Providence: The place & Manner of his
Birth, the whole Course of his Life, all his sufferings
and bitter Ingredients of his Death were determined
by his Counsel & managed by the Sovereign Hand of
the Lord Jehovah: And now the Lord Jesus Christ
having entered into his Glory, the sceptre of Govern-
ment is put into his hand, & he is exalted far above
principalities & power, & might, & Dominion, & every Name
that is named, not only in this World, but also in that
which is to come. Eph. 1. 20, 21. So that we who believe in
him, may now say. The Lord our Redeemer reigns,
let the Earth rejoice, let the Multitudes of Isles be glad.

5. To all Actions, to all natural & evil Actions, to all
miraculous & preter-natural Actions, Yea even to those
Actions that are casual & accidental, with respect
to several Causes, but none are so with, to the first Cause
1 Kings 22. 34. A certain Man drew a Bow at a venture,
& smote the King of Israel between the joints of the Har-
neck. Prov. 16. 33. The Lot is cast into the Lap, but the
whole disposing thereof is of the Lord. The great-
est Difficulty lies in conceiving how the Providence
of God reaches unto the voluntary Actions of free
Agents, if we consider what sagacity is in Men
and

And how far it is concerned in sinful Actions. As to the Actions of Agents free, if we consider what Sagacity is in Men, for what superior Wisdom is in Angels, to know how Men will use their Powers of acting in such or such Circumstances, we may in some Measure conceive how God who is perfect in Knowledge doth fore-see the voluntary Actions of free Agents, but surely he knowin all way infinitely above all our Conceptions, so as to establish the Certainty of events without destroying the natural Powers he has given to his Creatures, so that his certain Providence doth by no means destroy the Liberty of rational Agents. As to sinful Actions, let us hold fast this principle, that an holy God cannot be the Author of Sin, this is inconsistent with his righteous Nature, but since Sin abound in this World, & since it must be acknowledged that he has sufficient Power to put a stop to Sin, it necessarily follows, that by his Wisdom he permits Sin, & preserves the Sinners Faculties & Powers of Action, & no doubt as he knows how to bring Good out of Evil, so he will direct order & dispose every Action, even the most sinful for the Manifestation of his own Glory, & for the good of his Church and People. All the Calamities that befall the people of God in this life however grievous & troublesome for the present, are sanctified & over-ruled for their Advantage, they are sent out in Measure & in proportion to their Strength, and in the End shall yield the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness; God will bring his suffering people out of the Furnace, as Gold that has been tried & purified with Fire, shall make them admit, that it has been good for them, that they have been afflicted. This Divine Influence extends over the whole Universe from the highest Angel to the smallest & most inconsiderable Insect. The second Cause, tho' never so powerful, can act independently on the first: The Revolution of Kingdoms & Nations are by Divine Appointment, do appear from the Example of Nebuchadnezzar, whose Kingdom was taken from him by a Decree, till he knew that the most High ruled in the Kingdom of Men, & gave it to whom so ever he pleased, and after he was restored to his former Grandeur & to the Use of his Reason, he blessed the most High, & praised & honoured him, whose Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, & whose Kingdom is from Generation to Generation & who doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, & among the Inhabitants of the Earth. Dan. 4. 34, & 35th. The Circumstances of particular Persons, as the Time & place of their Birth, their Condition of Life, & all the minute Incidents that befall them, are directed by him, who knows their down sitting & uprising, who knows their Path, & is acquainted with all their Ways. Tho' God is not visible to our bodily Senses, he is present in all places, & interests himself in all human Affairs. The good Actions of Men are excited & influenced from above, & the evil are permitted, and made eva' boerient to wise purposes: When Infidels & Atheists imagine, they are walking in their own Ways, the great Lord & Governour of the World is managing them in a secret & unperceptible Manner, to do what seems his hand and his Counsel had before determined to be done; sometimes he chooses the foolish Things of the World to confound the wise, & at other Times makes the Wisdom of the wise to perish, & the Understanding of the prudent to be hid. He usually lets things take their Course, without any visible Interposition; but upon particular Occasions, he comes forth with his awful & tremendous Judgments against those who bid Defiance to his Lord & Government; till they are made to acknowledge that verily there is a God that judgeth in the Earth, whose Hand none

On the general Providence of God. 37.
 Nebuchadnezzar, whose Kingdom was taken from him by a Decree, till he knew that the most High ruled in the Kingdom of Men, & gave it to whom so ever he pleased, and after he was restored to his former Grandeur & to the Use of his Reason, he blessed the most High, & praised & honoured him, whose Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, & whose Kingdom is from Generation to Generation & who doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, & among the Inhabitants of the Earth. Dan. 4. 34, & 35th. The Circumstances of particular Persons, as the Time & place of their Birth, their Condition of Life, & all the minute Incidents that befall them, are directed by him, who knows their down sitting & uprising, who knows their Path, & is acquainted with all their Ways. Tho' God is not visible to our bodily Senses, he is present in all places, & interests himself in all human Affairs. The good Actions of Men are excited & influenced from above, & the evil are permitted, and made eva' boerient to wise purposes: When Infidels & Atheists imagine, they are walking in their own Ways, the great Lord & Governour of the World is managing them in a secret & unperceptible Manner, to do what seems his hand and his Counsel had before determined to be done; sometimes he chooses the foolish Things of the World to confound the wise, & at other Times makes the Wisdom of the wise to perish, & the Understanding of the prudent to be hid. He usually lets things take their Course, without any visible Interposition; but upon particular Occasions, he comes forth with his awful & tremendous Judgments against those who bid Defiance to his Lord & Government; till they are made to acknowledge that verily there is a God that judgeth in the Earth, whose Hand none

none can stay, nor may any say unto him, g. dost Thou
 Thus I have shew'd You the extent of div. Providence
 It extends to all inanimate creatures who are void
 of Life or sense; - to all the inferior living creatures
 Over all reasonable creatures whether good or evil
 The most perfect & peculiar care attends the glorious
 God-Man. Divine Providence extends to all Actions
 natural & evil Actions, to all miraculous & preternatural
 Actions, Yea even to those that are casual and
 accidental with respect to second Causes.

I now proceed to the 3rd thing proposed in Method viz
 III. To prove the Truth & Certainty of Providence
 The two great Pillars of Religion are the Being
 of God, & the Doctrine of Providence, for if there be
 no God, there is no Object of Worship, & if there be no
 Providence, there is no Reason for our Worship.
 But seeing that God is, that he has made the World
 and takes care of all the Creatures that are in it,
 & creates the Devices of every living thing, he
 justly deserves the praise & Adoration of all Ps. 145. 9.
 Let us now set before You the Reasons & Arguments
 for proving the Truth & Certainty of Providence, &
 in doing this, I shall proceed by so many steps, &

I. It must be allow'd that God who is the first Cause
 and has by his mighty Power made all things,
 must necessarily have the best & most undoubted
 Right to govern & dispose of all things. The World
 is his Family, all things in it are subject to him
 and have a necessary & constant Dependance upon
 him, and therefore it is his property & prerogative
 to enact Laws for them to observe, to appoint
 every Creature his Rank & Station, and to fix
 their End and Uses; so that his Right to govern
 arises not only from the Excellency of his Nature,
 but also from his Interest in, & Relation to all
 things, being their sovereign Lord and Creator.
 2. There is no other Being Qualified for the Government

of the World, or able to manage & wield such a vast
 Machine, to keep all the Wheels Springs & Motions
 of it in Order. For there is none whose
 Knowledge is so extensive, he knows the particular
 Natures, Inclinations, powers & Qualities of every
 Creature, he can direct all the Contrivances of the
 various Labyrinths & secret Intentions of Angels
 or Men Acts 15. 10. It is known unto God all his Works are
 from the beginning of the World, this cannot be imposed
 upon by Flattery or false Information, for
 He is every where present, filling all places, per-
 vading & penetrating all things, and that not as an
 idle & unconcern'd Spectator, but as an active Direc-
 tor & wise Governour Ps. 139. 7. Whether shall I go
 from thy Spirit? Or whether shall I flee from thy presence
 He alone hath Almighty Power, & can do with the
 Armies of Heaven, & among the Inhabitants of Earth
 what seems the good unto him, none can stay his hand,
 or say unto him, what dost Thou. Dan. 4. 35. Surely
 that Power which is able to create is most fit to pre-
 serve & govern, & no less Force than Omnipotence
 is required to uphold & direct so many Creatures
 of so different Qualities, of so contrary Passions &
 Inclinations, & to bring all things to center in the same
 great & glorious End. He is infinitely holy & right-
 eous, & hath an unchangeable Love to Justice & Right-
 eousness, for without this an unlimited Power
 might lead to Acts of Cruelty & Tyranny, but he is
 God of Truth & without Iniquity, holy in all his
 Ways & righteous in all his Judgements. He
 is a Being of immense Goodness, & infinite Pa-
 tience & Mercy, & considering the present Circum-
 stances of the World, his present Dispositions ab-
 solutely necessary to the supreme Governour of the
 World. Moses was the meekest of any man
 but would he have had the right to rule the World
 for the space of one Day, if he had known all
 the

the evils that are done in the world? Would not even the Angels of Heaven be tor'd with the numerous evils & Disorders & Deformities which are to be seen in the Actions of Men, not to mention the secret Evils & sinful Thoughts of the Hearts? Would they not be ready to send down Fire from Heaven to consume the World to ashes? Thine You see that as God has the only Right, so he alone is Qualified for the Government of the World. I. N. 33. 8 - 135. 5.

Sermon V. Psalm. 97. 1. & The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice.

Among many other precious Truths, the Doctrine of divine Providence is brought clearly to Light by the Gospel; many of the ancient Heathens fancied that God walk'd his Circuit in Heaven with a fold'd Army, & took no Cognizance of the things done upon Earth, but the holy Oracles of Truth assure us of his particular Inspection of all Things; that he who is infinitely wise and good, governing all Things and will make every thing with a beautiful Harmony conspire in advancing his own glory, & promoting the Salvation & Happiness of his People. The Lord reigneth, let the Earth &c I have already finish'd the two first heads of Discourse & proceeded so far to prove the Truth of Providence.

1. It must be allow'd that God who is the first Cause has the best & most undoubted Right to govern & direct all Things.
2. There is no other Being Qualified for the Government of the World - And therefore he necessarily follows, that he is the God of Providence he upholdeth & directs all Things - Is it any Disparagement to him to take Notice of the least & smallest Things? Was it no Dishonour to him to create the most contemptible Creature in our Esteem, & since he has created them, why will he not take Care of

Is not his great Power and manifold Wisdom to be seen in his forming the smallest Insect, & shall his providential Care & Goodness be restrain'd from any of his Works of his hands? Doth not the Sun send forth his Beams to warm & nourish the little Flowers, as well as the tallest Trees? Do not the small Flies enjoy the Comfort of his Rays, as well as the greatest Monarchs? Unde shall the living God be outstripp'd in Goodness by the diffusive Influences of his Bounty by an inanimate Creature of his own making?

Is it any Difficulty in the most High to take the Superintendency of all things upon himself? Will it disturb his ease or Happiness? Can he not by the Word of his Power & a single Act of his Will do what soever he pleases? Can any thing be uneasy to Omnipotence? He who made the great Machine of the World, may he not with as much ease manage all the parts of it? With what ease do our Soulders order every Part of our Bodies, with what Quickness are the animal Spirits sent to every Member for exciting & directing all its Functions & Operations? Shall not that God who made our souls so nimble & indefatigable, with much more ease & Quickness move & manage all the Affairs & Concernments of this World, Yea of Millions of Worlds, if there were so many? It was Epicurus's Ignorance of the Perfection of God & of the Nature of true Happiness, which made him deny the Providence of God, because he imagin'd the constant Care of all things would disturb the rest & diminish the Happiness of the divine Being. But farther on this Head, it is the very Law of Nature which God hath implanted in every Creature to provide Care for their own Support. With what Reflection & Tenderness do even the brute Creatures do so? Is this a Praise to mean & finite Beings, & shall it be a Disgrace to the common Parent of all things? Is there such a natural Perfection in weak

wreak ignorant Creatures, & must not thus perfect
 tion be found in the most eminent Degree in the
 powerfull & wise Creator. Job. 39. 13. to 18. Gavest thou the
 goodly Wings unto the Peacocks? Or Wings to Featheris unto
 the Ostrich? W^h leaveth his Eggs in the Earth, & warmeth y^e
 in the Dust, & forgetteth y^e the Foot may crush y^e, or y^e the
 wild Beast may break y^e? This is hardned agst her young
 Ones, as tho' they were not hers; her Labour is in Vain
 without Fear. Because God hath deprived her of
 Wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her Understanding.
 Shall we think that an infinitely wise Being who de-
 lights in communicatin^g his Goodness, will be as
 careless of, & cruel to his Offspring, as the Ostrich
 to her Eggs? Thud I have shewn you that the Provi-
 dence of God necessarily flows from his Perfections
 it is infallible because of his Wisdom, indefatigable
 because of his power, extensive because of his know-
 ledge, & exceeding desirable because of his Goodness & Righte-
 4. But Consider the infinite Variety of that divine
 Art & Wisdom which is to be seen in the Government
 of things, & if the Effects in their Glory & Harmony can
 discover the Excellency of their Causes, surely
 we may see the plainest Marks & Characters of a
 divine Hand in the beautiful Order & uniform Pro-
 ductions of Providence. Shall I again mention the
 daily & yearly Returns of the Sun, & the regular Courses
 of the other heavenly Bodies? Is it not a Wonder that
 for some thousands of Years, none of these great
 Bodies have met in their Motions, & jumbled toge-
 ther? Is it not surprizing that a Bird of Land has
 restrained the proud & swelling Waves of the great
 Ocean from overflowing the dry Land. Who teaches
 the plants & Trees to bring forth their own Seed, & who
 unfolds these small Seeds & brings forth a new Mother
 Plant out of them. — Then as to brute Creatures
 who teaches them to bring forth their own kind, & who
 provides for this great & numerous Family? Is it
 not a Wonder of Providence y^e even the most timorous
 and

and cowardly Creatures, which are ready on all oif-
 Occasions to run from the Face of an Enemy, shall in
 the Sight of the greatest Danger fight in Defence of
 their tender Offspring? With what Art & Industry
 do the Bees & the Spiders, & many other Creatures
 build their own Houses, & prepare sustentances for
 themselves. Surely these are not the Effects of Chance,
 but ordered & directed by him, who is wonderfull in Coun-
 sel & excellently working. — But Providence is
 more evidently to be seen in the Actings towards rea-
 sonable Creatures; we have not yet such a clear View
 of the Angelic World, & of the divine Superintendency o-
 ver them as to give any distinct & clear Account
 of the Principles & Designs of good Angels, or to des-
 cribe all the Designs of Providence in permitting
 restraining & directing the holy & wise Inds the Act-
 ings & Operations of evil Spirits, when the Mysteries
 of Providence are unveiled, then we shall see the
 Glory of divine Wisdom, power & Grace, shining with
 the clearest Beams in all these dark and intricate
 Steps of divine Providence? — But with respect to
 Ourselves, may we not with open Eyes see the
 clearest prints & Characters of a divine Providence
 If we look back & call to mind Gods Dealings towards
 us, may not each of us from our own Experience see
 cause to admire the Wisdom & Goodness of God to-
 wards us? From how many Dangers are we delivered
 in our Infancy & tender Years? As we were fearfully
 & wonderfully made, so we have been as fearfully &
 wonderfully preserved. What manifold Wisdom
 appears in the Conduct of Providence towards
 us, as we are Men, one labours much, & has but
 little, others live at ease, & have plenty. One says
 his projects deep, & yet is disappointed, another has
 but little Art or Design, & yet is successful. Jo-
 sephs Brethren sell him as a slave, he is cast
 into Prison as a criminal, & by these very means he

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his raised to the highest Honour & Dignity, & made
 the Preserver of Egypt & of his Father's Kingdom
 Pharaoh's Daughter, & she came to wash in the River
 & delivered Joseph to be the scourge of Egypt, & the
 Saviour of his Kindred. The chief Priests and
 Pharisees take Course together how to destroy
 Christ, & to disparage his Doctrine, & yet by his
 Death, a way was paved for the Exaltation of his
 Person, & the Increase of his Church. The ene-
 mies of the Christian Religion thought to ruin &
 extirpate it out of the World by their cruel Perse-
 cutions, but the Blood of the Martyrs was the
 seed of the Church: How wonderfully had the
 Church been preserved, in spite of all the wick-
 ed Efforts of Hell, & how surprizingly have ma-
 ny of God's faithful Servants been delivered
 out of the hands of their Enemies, & the means
 they have designed for them. Are not all these
 things convincing Proofs of a divine Providence
 that a wise & overruling Being sits at the Helm
 of Affairs, & doth all things well & wisely. What
 we were wise and could observe, these things
 that we should understand the loving Kindness of
 the Lord. Thus I have finished all I intend-
 ed to say in a doctrinal Way, on the Subject of
 divine Providence from this Text, Altho' we
 now to set before you the practical Language
 of it, and what Influence it ought to have
 on our hearts and Lives. And

I. It is our Duty to study with Attention the Providence
 of God, & to notice the Glory of the divine Perfections
 shining in all Events. God is much offended w^{ch} such
 as neglect this Study. Psal. 28. 5. Because they
 regard not his Works of the Lord, nor the Operation
 of his hand, he shall destroy them & not build up.
 It is an Evidence of great Wisdom, & a Source of

4

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richest Comforts humbly to enquire into the Works of
 God Ps. 107. 43. Who is wise & will observe these things,
 even they shall understand the loving Kindness of the Lord.
 We sometimes see & frequently hear of surprizing
 & terrible Devolutions; a overruling God works
 wonders in Kingdoms, Cities & Families, & the most High
 speaks to us by his Providences; at first we startle
 at them, & stand amazed, but no sooner is the sound out
 of our Ears, than the Impression also wears of our Minds.
 Whereas if we with more Attention did contemplate &
 reflect upon the Works of God, we should be excited to
 the highest Acts of Adoration & praise, & filled with
 an abiding & deep sense of his glorious Perfections,
 neither are we to study only the greater & more won-
 derful Works of God, but we may also learn much heaven-
 ly Wisdom from the Consideration of the meanest; how ex-
 cellent & useful are these things sure & certain sets before
 us from our observing the Providence of God, as it is
 exercised towards the Fowls of the Air, & the Flowers of
 the Field, as You may read in Matt. 6th Chap.

2. Let us hear truly own & boldly believe the Providence
 of God, & that in every thing that befalls us, some Steps
 of Providence are very puzzling, & many holy Men
 have been under strong Temptation to deny, or at
 least to dispute the providential Care of God. Ps. 73. 13.
 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, & washed my
 hands in Innocency. But our Denial of Providence
 arises from our Ignorance, our Pride, & self Conceit
 our Love to a sinful Liberty, or our false Conceptions
 of God, & mistakes of the Designs of his Providence, and as
 there is not a greater or more dangerous Evil, than prac-
 tically to deny the Providence of God, for this strikes at the
 Proof of all Religion, & opens a wide Door to the most
 unbounded Licentiousness, so there is not a more fruit-
 ful spring of all Gospel Holiness, than the steady Faith of
 God's Government & Superintendency of all Things, for
 The Doctrine of Providence furnishes the Mind with the

richest

most

most solid & substantial Comfort & Joy, it is good News
to all the World, even to the remotest parts of the Earth, y^t
all things are governed by unsearchable Wisdom, al-
mighty Power, & immense Goodness, the Lord reigneth, let
Charm. 10. 31. let the Heavens be glad, & let the Earth rejoice:
Let Men say among the Nations, the Lord reigneth. There
is no man so vile or so mean who doth ^{not} experience the good
Effects of Gods Dominion & Government. If he did not
bridle the passions, curb the Malice, & over power the
strength, out with the staff of cruel Tyranny, & blood-thirsty
Men, had not this World ere this time been a field
of blood & a scene of the most horrid Villanies.

But more particularly, this serves for the unspoke-
able consolation of the Church & people of God, who are
his peculiar Care & the special Favorites of Provi-
dence. As 2. 7. How beautiful upon the Mountains are
the feet of him that bringeth good Tidings, that publishes
peace & Salvation, y^t Faith unto Zion, thy God reigneth.
When Melancthon a man of a mild & temperate Spirit was
cast down about the troubled State of the reformed
Churches, & when a man of a more fierce & bold Temper
used to comfort him with these words. The Lord reigneth,
let God alone to govern the World, he knows best how to
do it. Thy things are sufficient to silence the Feare &
revive the spirits of them who fear God in the most trou-
blesome & tumultuous Times, the Lord reigneth, & this
Lord who is so mighty wise & good, is our God, our friend,
our Father, & if this God be for us, who can be against us?

4. Here is a sure Foundation for our Faith & Trust in God,
for the more we trust him, the more we concern him-
self in our Affairs, but the more we trust in any other,
the more he delights to cross us, whatever our Wants
are, if we want not Faith, we cannot want all needful
Supplies; its our duty in all Conditions to trust in God
& to acknowledge him in all our Ways, the great-
est Prince depends on him for his daily Bread, as well as
the meanest Beggar, but its no great Virtue to trust
in Gods Providence, when our Coffers are full, and our
Tables well covered, but here is the Tryal of our Faith

4. This commends our Trust in God, when we see all Ways
of the life stop up, when we have nothing left but an
hand full of Metal, & a ruise of Oyl, then to hope and
believe in the God of Providence, is the great Wisdom
of the Christian, and therefore tho' we must use the
proper & prudent Means for our Subsistence, either
as to Temporals or spirituales, & tho' we may justly
value the Kindness of Friends & Patrons, yet let us
put our sole Trust in God, who blesses the Means we
use, & raises up protectors & Friends unto us, none
can help us but by his Appointment, none can hurt
us but by his Permission, & we cannot put a greater
Honour upon him, or show a more profound Respect
& veneration for his Wisdom, his Goodness, & all his glo-
rious perfections, than by referring our Condition to
him, to choose for us & to do to us, as he shall think
best & fittest, for his own glory & the noble purposes of
his Government. Psal. 37. 3, 4, 5, 6. Trust in the Lord
& do good, so shalt thou dwell in the Land, & verily thou
shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord: & he
shall give thee the Desires of thy heart. Commit
thy Way unto the Lord: trust also in him, & he shall
bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy Righte-
ousness as the Light, & thy Judgment as the Noon Day.
And Psal. 84. 11. 12. For the Lord God is a Sun and a
Shield, the Lord will give Grace & glory: no good thing
will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O
Lord of Hosts, blessed is the Man that trusts in thee.

5. This Doctrine teaches us the divine Art of Contentment,
& the noble Lessons of Patience & Submission & Resignation.
Are we exposed to Contempt or Overload, to Losses or Dis-
appointments? Or do we meet with Sorrows or Troubles,
with Sickness & Afflictions? We ought wisely to consider
that all these things are done & directed by him who
bears the lovely and charming Character of the Father
of Mercies, who doth not afflict willingly or grieve the
Children of Men, who always intends our profit, and
strains

trains up his own Children by strict severe Discipline for his service & glory, and shall not hiss the Rod when such a hand doth smite us. Tho' we do not, & cannot choose sufferings, yet shall we not chuse that the Will of God be done? Tho' it be that we should suffer. Shall we not say with good old Eli, it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, or with David Psal. 39. 9. My jaw dumbe, I opened not my Mouth, because I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth, because I was dumb.

6. Here is the greatest Encouragement to the Duty of Prayer, the Lords prayer concludes with those words for thine is the Kingdom & the power, and the glory: The God of Providence knows all our Wants, for he sees all Events, has all the Treasures of common Providence and special grace in his hands, he has infinite Wisdom, and knows what is best for us, & as he is wise in heart, so he is mighty in strength, and therefore he can bless our Designs, or blast our projects according to his own pleasure. Shall we not then in every Undertaking treat his Favour & Aid? Shall we not in all our Wants seek our Supplies from his bountiful Hand, tho' he has not said that he will give us every thing we desire, yet from the gracious Nature & Immenity of God, from his providential Care, & particularly from his promises in Christ Jesus revealed in his Word, we have all the Reason in the World to believe that he will give us every thing which he knows to be good for us, he will scatter our Enemies, raise us above our Fears, supply our Wants, deliver us from all Dangers & Distresses, when we cry unto him & call upon his Name. Phil. 4. 6, 7. Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer or supplication with thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto God, And the peace of God which passeth all Understanding, shall keep your hearts & Minds thorough Christ Jesus.

7. The Doctrine of Providence calls for our loudest Prayers, & sweetest Songs of thanksgiving. The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice. And let your Joy be expressed

expressed in adoring & magnifying the glorious Sovereign of Heaven and Earth, whose bountiful Hand reaches out all your Blessings. Doth any good come unto thee? Do you prosper in the Labour of your hands or are you successful in your Trade & Commerce? Doth a God of grace open his hidden Treasures, & enrich your Souls with divine Blessings & Comforts? Come with your thankful Acknowledgements & Offerings of Praise to Gods Altar, whatsoever means have been used, or Instruments employed, yet he is the first Cause & the prime Agent, it is his Blessing which maketh rich, James. 1. 16, 17. Do not err, my beloved Brethren, every good Gift, and every perfect Gift is from above, & cometh down from y^e Father of Lights, with whom is no Variableness, neither shadow of turning. - Is there any good done by thee, this power was given thee from above, a sovereign God governs & inclines our hearts, our Tongues, & our hands, to every good Thought Word & Action, for without him we can do nothing, and therefore let him have all the glory and praise. - Is any wil kept from thee? Art thou saved from the raging Waves of the sea, or from the powerful voice of his Thunder by Land? Art thou delivered out of deep distresses, or relieved from the Rage & Malice of thy proud Enemies? Remember it is the Lord who reigns in the Heavens & Earth, and therefore give him the glory of all thy Deliverances.

I shall now conclude this Subject with a few Directions.

1. Don't imagine you can comprehend all the Reasons of Providence Rom. 11. 33. O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom & Knowledge of God. how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out. When Job & his friends had long disputed about the Reasons of his great Afflictions, & had spoke many words of Knowledge, God at last answers Job, but instead of giving him an Account of the Mysteries of his Providence, he convinces him of his ignorance of the most obvious Ways of Nature of the Fall & work of Secy & so forth. This should teach us Modesty & Humility in adoring the Judgments

of God, for it is but little of the great Scheme of Providence which we see, it is but little of the Springs of Action, & of the Ends of Government which we understand, for the Wisdom of Providence is unsearchable, which doth great things in part finding out, Yea & wonder wth Number Job. 9. 10.

2. Tho' the Events of Providence are ordered & determin'd, yet this is so far from encouraging or allowing our Neglect of Means, that it should rather quicken our Diligence wth all our active Powers a working. Joshua had the Conquest of Canaan secured by the Promise of a faithful God, yet he doth not omit any Part of the Duty of a wise & watchful General; to use Means without respect to God, is proudly to despise him, to depend on God without the Use of appointed Means, is irreligiously to tempt him, & in both we abuse his Providence. Solomon joins Diligence on our part, & the Blessing on God's part in Order to our Success Prov. 10. 4, 22. He becometh poor, yet dealth wth a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. The Blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, & he addeth not sorrow wth it, so it holdeth also in Religion. Phil. 2. 12, 13th Work out your own salvation wth fear & trembling, for its God &c. In vain do we by on our backs & think by the Blessings of H^{is} will drop into our Mouths, in vain do we sit wth folded Arms, & think that God will feed such lazy Drones by a Miracle of Providence.

3. Let us beware of using unlawful Means, to carry on the Designs of Providence, God needs not the sins of Men to attain to the Ends of his Government, tho' he can bring good out of evil, yet he will never approve of our doing evil, that Gods may come. We are not to be for God, nor seeming Pretences of glorifying God, or doing good, will ever justify our doing evil.

4. Let us be wth our Providence work for our good, let us cheerfully & willingly serve & glorify the God of Providence. Let us make him our Fear & our Deas, he is our Enemy, who can save us out of his Hand; but he is our Friend, we are a Fear in his Hand, & we are under his protect, we need not be afraid of Man, how furious his passions, however strong his Malice may be, he can do us neither good or evil, but as he is

On this special Providence of God to his Church. 51.
directed or permitted by the most High Psal. 27. 1. The Lord is my Light & my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid? Psal. 37. 3. 107. 42.

Sermon VI. Psalm 73. 1. Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean Heart.

The attentive Consideration of the Works of Providence is a very pleasant and delightful Subject of Meditation to the gracious Soul, but there is not Branch of divine Providence more worthy of our Study, & more enriched with Joy & pleasure than to view the profound Wisdom the infinite Tenderness & incessant Vigilancy of Providence towards the Church of God in all Ages of the World. Such an excell in Wisdom & Experience, may evidently see the only wise God steering all things with an unerring Hand to the port of his own glory & his people's Happiness, & that even while the Variety of Means and Instruments are employed in managing the Sails, or in tugging at the Cars. Tho' many common Blessings are reach'd out by the Hand of Providence to the wicked & ungodly, yet the Fruits of its special Bounty, & the Effects of its tender Care are peculiar to the gracious & renewed Soul. Truly, says the Ps. God is good &c. It would seem that the Holy Christian of this Psalm has been meditating upon the providential Care of the sovereign God, that many Objections had arisen in his Mind, against the Equity of the divine Conduct, some of which he mentions in the latter part of the Psalm; but that after a severe & long Conflict with himself he conquers & silences his Scruples, by laying down this wise Maxim, that tho' he could not comprehend or account for all the Steps of divine Providence, yet truly God

Had it good to Israel, as if he had said; I cannot deny but yee many Mysteries in Providence by the Troubles of the righteous & prosperity of the wicked, I am often under very strong Temptations of entertaining unworthy Thoughts of God & a mean Opinion of his League; however I am fully perswaded that when this Scheme of Providence shall at last be opened up, it will evidently appear that God doth all things well, that he is a kind Father, a sure friend, a liberal Benefactor to all true Israelites who love & serve him with the whole heart, and are sincere and upright before him.

I have formerly discoursed of Providence in the general and shewed You that the Care & Goodness of the Lord Jehovah extends unto all, but I could not think of finishing this Subject of Providence, until I had also considered the tender & special Concern of Providence with respect to the Church & people of God Rom. 8. 28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are thus called according to his Purpose. Every Event of Time & all the Acts of Providence whether smooth & pleasant, or rugged & bitter, shall with an admirable Harmony concur in promoting the Happiness of that Body of which the Lord Jesus is the glorious Head, for they are the special Objects of divine Love & the peculiar Favourites of the divine Providence.

In managing this Subject, I shall thus divide Myself into three Methods. I. I shall endeavour to prove that all the Motions & Workings of Providence are especially intended by a God of Grace for the good of my Church & the Happ. of his People. II. For the farther Illustration of this Truth, I shall consider on some special Events of Providence with respect to particular Believers, and

III. Then set before You the practical Language of the whole I return to the first Head of Discourse. Namely

I. To prove that all the Motions & Workings of Providence are especially intended by a God of Grace for the good of his Church, & the Happiness of his people. And I hope none can refuse that the Lord Jehovah is an infinitely wise Agent directing all his Actions to the best & most glorious ends, having some grand Design worthy of himself always in his heart, & still in his View; Now from this certain undenyable principle it must necessarily follow that in all the Motions & Workings of Providence he designs to promote the Good of his Church & the Happiness of his people, for this will evidently appear from the following particulars.

I. He is by his Church he intends & designs to show the Harmony & set forth the Beauty & to magnify the glory of all his excellent Perfections & glories excellencies. The glory of the divine Attributes center in the Lord Jesus Christ, & the Church is the glory of Christ Jesus. Even the glorious Angels desire to look unto the deep Mysteries of divine Love, Grace & Mercy, & to learn the manifold Wisdom of God by the Church Eph. 3. 10. it is in his holy Temple that every one speaks of his glory Psal. 29. 9. Is not this his Covenant with his people, I will be your God, that is, he will employ all his Wisdom & power, all his Love & Grace, all his Fulness & sufficiency in doing Good unto them. But how can he glorify himself, & thus manifesting his Perfections, but by ordering & over-ruling all Events for their Benefit and Advantage.

II. He has a special Interest in & bears a singular Affection to his Church & people. He has chosen his Persons, he delights in their Services, he loves the meanest & poorest saint more than all the World of sinners. He delivers a righteous Lot, when he destroys all the wicked Inhabitants of Sodom, & saves

saved Noah, who feared him, when he drowned a
 sinful World, he loves the Gates, the Outworks of
 Zion, more than all the Dwellinges of Jacob. See his
 charming, raptur to joy, of his kinmens. De-
 light of his soul in his Church. Lept. 3. 17. The Lord thy
 God in the midst of thee as mighty, he will save, he
 will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love,
 he will joy over thee with singing. Men delight in
 that which hath cost y^m much paines & a great price,
 or which yields them a rich profit & immense Re-
 venue. Now the erecting of a Church, the polishing
 & perfecting every Stone in this great Building has
 cost the Lord Jehovah an immense Treasure of Love
 and Grace, his only Son a vast Ocean of precious blood
 and sufferings, & now when he has laid out so much
 Cost of charges, & when he expects to receive a rich re-
 turn of glory & praise, will he suffer the wild Beasts
 to break down the hedges & destroy the Fruits of
 his vineyard? Will not the most bligh order all things
 for the good of those who are the Objects of his sweet-
 est Delights, and strongest Affections. Truly he
 bears the nearest & dearest Relation to his Church
 Relations which begeth the most tender care, the
 warmest love, & the most melting compassion. Doth
 a Father care every thing for the good of his child,
 Christ the Father of Mercies, & in him the Father lets
 find Mercy. Doth a tender-hearted Mother have com-
 passion on the Fruit of her Womb. His pity is greater
 and his Affection more strong & constant. Can a
 woman forget her suckling Child, that she should
 not have compassion on the Son of her Womb. Yea they
 may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have
 graven thee upon the Palms of my hands, thy walls
 are continually before me. Doth a Husband love
 and cherish the Wife of his Bosom. Christ's Love to
 his Church is not exceeding abundant, he purchased
 his

Spouse by his precious blood, and will at last pre-
 sent her to himself as a comely & glorious Bride
 in the solemn Day of their Espousals, that she may
 for ever dwell in his presence, & rejoice in the sweet
 Embraces of his infinite & everlasting Love. Now hav-
 ing this great Design in his View, will he not make
 all things conspire to the Advancement of it. God
 having so loved his Church as to give his own Son to
 be the Head of the Band of it, shall who not be invest-
 ed in all her husband's Estate, & have the Service of all
 Creatures for her Jointure, for all things are put under
 the Feet of her Lord & Husband 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22, 23. There
 forget he Man glory in Man: for all things are Yours.
 Whether Paul or Apollus or Cephas, or the World or
 Life or Death, or things present, or things to come,
 all are Yours; & we are Christ's, and Christ is Gods.
 4. He hath made precise and ample promises to his
 Church, & hath engaged his Truth & Faithfulness. He
 given his Oath that he will not fail in his performance
 of them Isa. 41. 10. The Lord will keep thee, he will water
 thee every Moment, lest any hurt thee, he will keep thee
 and Day, and fear not I am with thee, & not
 dismayed, 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. Gods Presence in his
 Church for his Defense and glory, & the special Pro-
 mises he has made, are the Treasure & safe guard,
 everyone of them is a sure Ground of Hope, that
 the God of Israel will protect & provide for his Israel
 and every thing by his Direction and Influence will
 work together for the good of his Israel. God will
 not alter his Word, or violate his Oath, he will
 not break his Covenant, or suffer his Faithfulness to fail.
 5. God has given the best Gifts, the choicest Blessings
 to his Church. He spared not his own Son, but gave
 him willingly up to Death for her, and much more
 will

will be able freely give all good things with him
 Rom. 8. 29. He shall commit the Power of Govern-
 ment and the providential Administration of all
 things both in Heaven and Earth, to the Lord Jesus
 Christ as Head of the Church for her good & Advantage
 Eph. 1. 22, 23. And hath put all things under his
 feet, & gave him to be the Head over all things to the
 Church, which is his Body, the Fulfillment of him, that
 filleth all in all. He hath given his Spirit
 to be a faithful Teacher, a faithful Monitor, a sweet
 Comforter to his Church. He hath given his
 holy Oracles to contain and reveal the Wonders of
 his Love, & the more surprising Wonders of his Grace
 and Love. He hath given to the Church
 the Ministry of his holy Angels, the most glorious
 Courtiers of Heaven are sent down to be the
 Guardians & Servants of the Saints upon the Earth
 Heb. 1. 14. Are they not all ministering spirits sent
 forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of
 Salvation. He hath given his Pastors and
 Teachers for perfecting of the Saints, for the Work
 of the Ministry, for the edifying the Body of Christ
 Eph. 4. 12. and all the various Gifts & Abilities of
 Ministers, even of the most eminent, as well as the
 meanest are for the good of the Church
 Heaven with all the unspeakable Joy and eternal
 Glories of it is the inheritance of the Saints, & the
 Kingdom which is prepared for them. Now
 seeing God has bestowed so great Gifts on his Church,
 doth not this plainly demonstrate that all he
 doth is intended in a special Manner for her Well-
 fare and Happiness.

6. Look back to the Church in all past Ages of this
 World, and see the glorious Appearances of Pro-
 vidence for it, the whole History of the old Testa-
 ment

On the special Providence of God. &c. 570

Testament as a continued Account of the most sur-
 prizing Steps of Providence towards the Jewish Church.
 Was it not for them that so dreadful & many Plagues
 were inflicted on Pharaoh & the Egyptians, that so
 many Miracles were wrought in the Wilderness, that
 so many Nations were destroyed, that Governours
 were sometimes raised, and at other Times cast down,
 that Kingdoms & Empires were established or over-
 turned. If we come down to the Christian Church
 shall we not see Providence working with surpris-
 ing Power, and raising it to its Glory and Perfection.
 A few poor illiterate Fishermen preach and spread
 the Gospel in spite of the Wisdom and Power, the
 Rage and Malice of the Princes, great Men, and
 Powers of the Earth and Hell, and to this Day in
 spite of all the Efforts of the wicked, the Church of
 Christ has been preserved, the Veils of Mercy have
 been converted, sanctified & saved, many Sons and
 Daughters brought into Glory. Had I time to re-
 hearse the History of the Reformation, I might shew
 You the special Providence of God in it. Did not
 Luther a poor Monk, with an undaunted Spirit and
 Courage set himself against all the Power & Strength
 of the Church of Rome? Did not the God of Providence
 preserve, protect & prosper him? Did not the Light of
 the Reformation spread very quickly & triumph over
 the Darkness and Delusions of Popery in many Nati-
 ons? In what a wonderful Manner was the Reforma-
 tion brought about in England? And by what surprizing
 Means & wonderful Providences has our native Church
 been preserved, & the Gospel of Christ continued among
 us in a great plenty, and I may warrantably say
 in more purity than in any other Nation. Surely
 this is the Doing of the Lord, and it must & should
 be marvellous in our eyes. & Lastly

7. It is from the Church only, that God receives the richest Revenue of Glory & Praise. The Heavens declare his Glory, the Sun Moon & Stars, yea every Creature in its Capacity proclaim his praises, but none of his Creatures are capable to do it in an active Manner, but rational & intelligent Agents, & among them he is the most eminently glorified by the Members of his Church; with cheerful Hearts, with willing Minds, they bless & adore, they praise and admire him who sits on the Throne, & the Lamb that was slain for we & ever, this is their Study, their Aim, and Ambition here in the Church militant, this will be their delightful Exercise, their everlasting pleasure here & after in the Church triumphant. When they are so much concerned for the Glory of God, so zealous & active in his Praises, is it not reasonable to expect, yea may we not assuredly believe, that an holy & righteous God who doth not forget their Work & Labour of Love, will be concerned for their Wellfare, & make all things center in their Happiness in a special & eminent Manner. Thus I have demonstrated, & I hope to the Conviction of the judicious, that all the Works & Signs of divine Providence are especially intended by Acts of Grace for the Good of his Church & the Happiness of his People; for it is in his Church, that the Glory of his Attributes shine with a distinguishing Splendor & Loveliness. He has a special Interest & Property in the Church. And has brought her into the nearest & dearest Relations to himself. To her he has made exceeding great & precious promises. Upon her he has bestowed the richest Gifts & choicest Blessings. For her he has made the most signal Appearances & wrought the greatest Deliverances in Ages past. And from her he expects & receives the most willing Offerings of Praise & the richest Revenue

Revenue of Honour & Glory, & may we not therefore reasonably infer & respectfully indubitably that to his God is good to provide, even to such as are of a clean heart.

I now proceed to the 2^d. Head of my Discourse viz
 II. To condescend on some special Events of Providence with Respect to particular Believers. There is indeed every Believer's own Feeling, Experience & Observation is his best Teacher, every Saint can best tell what the Lord hath done for his own Soul, & it is of great Use and Advantage to be aware up in our Minds and Memories, and faithfully to record the wise & wonderful Steps, whereby the Lord has preserved, guided and governed us, and whereby he has begun, & is from Day to day carrying on his own Work of Grace in us, for there is a surprising Variety & manifold Wisdom to be discerned in the divine Conduct: a sovereign God works all things according to the Counsel of his Will. But yet I may descend to some particulars.

I. Let us consider the Kindness & special Care of Providence towards us, that the World of Mankind hath not cast us forth upon the dark & dismal places of the Earth, which are full of the Habitations of Ignorance & Cruelty, that we were not born among the Savage Indians, the deluded Mahometans, or superstitious Pagans, but in the Island of Britain, where we may such in the first Notions & pure Principles of Christianity even almost without our Mother's Milk, where the Truths of the Gospel are set before us, & may be learned by us as soon as we are capable of Instruction & that we have Reason to say with the Psalmist Ps. 16. 6. The Lines have fallen to us in pleasant Places. Yea we have a goodly Heritage. Must not some of us see the tender Care of Providence in bringing us out of the Loins of religious Parents, who were early Monitors & Teachers to us, who by their assiduous Care planted in our Minds the tender Seed of Piety and Virtue, who watered them with their Tears and

Prayer encouraged their Growth by their
holy Example, who check the beginning of Sin, & nip
the Seed of Corruption by their pious Correction &
early Discipline, for if they was not our Case, if the Pa-
rents of which we were born, & the Families in which
we were bred, were strangers to God, & Enemies to Ho-
liness & Godliness; let us admire the Freedom & Pow-
er of divine Grace, which has pluckt us as Fire-
brands out of the Burning, & the Kindness of Provi-
dence in raising up others, it may be strangers to
be Helpers of our Faith and Joy.

2. Wherever there are any Objects of Mercy, Provi-
dence sends them all the necessary Means of Grace
& the successful Instruments of their Conversion &
Salvation. Thus Acts 8. 26. Philip is sent unto the
Eunuch to join his Chariot, when he was reading
the Prophet Isaias concerning the sufferings and
Glorie of Christ, & proves the happy Instrument of
his Faith & Joy in Christ Jesus. Thus Paul & Silas
were made Prisoners at Philippi, that the Keeper of
the Prison might by them be made a spiritual Free-
man with all his House Acts 16. 25. An Adulteress
coming out of Amacia with a Design only to draw Wa-
ter, meets with Christ, believes on him, & brings many
others in that City to Acquaintance with him. Acts 17.
The scattering of Ministers & private Christians by
persecutions from one City to another, has been often
made use of by Providence for bringing home some
lost Sheep to Christ Jesus. Some have gone to hear
Ministers only with a Design to make a Mock of us
Discourages, & have returned with their Eyes opened,
hearts changed, & their Minds filled with the deepest
and most serious Concerns. O the Wonders of divine
Providence which nicks the seasons of Mercy, & leads
unto the Pool when the Angel troubled the Waters of
the Sanctuary! Look O Christian unto thine own Soul
hast thou not received any rich Favours from the kind
Hand

On the special Providence of God to his Church. 61.
Hand of Providence, but consider well, if ever it did thee
this Blessing, & hinderd Office of all others, to lead thee to
Christ Jesus, if it had, surely this happy Season will
be remembered with Pleasure & Joy, if it was not done
in thy most tender Years, & by the Blessing of Heaven
upon thy pious Education. Ps. 103. 7. 11. 7.

Vermon VI. Psalm 73. 1. Truly God is good to Israel
even to such as are of a clean Heart.

When we view the curious Frame & surprising Struc-
ture of the Body of Man, must we not conclude that
it is the Work of divine Wisdom & Power? Even so
when we consider the Beauty, & many & glory of
the mystical Body of Christ, which is his Church,
how the Members of it are united to the Head, & all
joint together, & built up for an Habitation of God
thro' the Spirit, may we not see the glory of all
the divine Perfections shining in this beautiful &
stately Fabric? The adorable Father in one Seat
in Council together to lay the glorious Plan of it,
the precious Blood of a Chedemer was shed to pur-
chase the Materials, the exceeding greatness of
the mighty Power of the eternal Spirit is employed
in digging the lively Stones of this Building out
of the unmeasurable Quarry of repugnant Nature,
infinite Skill & divine Art, a Variety of Means &
Instruments are used in fashioning & perfecting
every single Member of this glorious Body, & when
the Work is done, how can we but exclaim in a humble
Treasurer of Grace and Love, & at so much Cost
& Pains to prepare a Church and people for
himself, doth it not appear in the strongest Light
and with the clearest Evidence, that truly God is
good to Israel. This holy Psalmist speaking of the
Works of Providence, doth in a very elegant Manner

set forth the mysterious nature of them. Psal. 77. 10.
 The way is in the sea, & my path in the great waters,
 and the Footsteps are not known, & surely if any
 Branch of Divine Providence is deep mysterious,
 that which relates to the Church and people of
 God must be so, for here the manifold stores of di-
 vine Wisdom & power are laid out, here the rich
 Treasures of love & goodness are expended, for
 truly God is good to Israel &c. Psal. 136.

3. By what strange unexpected ways has Providence
 supplied our temporal & spiritual Wants. Psal. 10.
 The children of men do laugh & suffer hunger, but they
 that seek the Lord shall not want any thing. Psal. 104.
 Psal. 136. The path given He has unto him that fear
 him, he will be mindful of his Covenant with him. It is
 true we are not to expect that Providence in sup-
 plying our Wants, will satisfy our extravagant
 Desires; the only wise God knows & sees the mi-
 chievous Influence of Fulness, Redundancy,
 how apt it is to make even the best of men remiss
 in their Duty to, & unmindful of their Dependance
 on God, & therefore they are ready to join Augur
 in his excellent Wish Prov. 30. 8. Give me neither
 Poverty, nor Riches, feed me with food convenient for
 me. And has not Providence done this much for you?
 Have you not gott your daily Bread? Has your
 heavenly Father suffered your Bodies to starve
 away with Hunger, or your Souls to languish for
 Want of Provision? Consider the Flocks of the
 Air & the Lillies of the Field, how they first are
 fed & the last are arrayed, will not your heavenly
 Father who knows you better than this, &
 much more feed and clothe you, O eyes of little
 Faith. Matt. 6. 25.

4. How often has Providence brought us to your
 Souls

On the special Providence of God to his Church.

Souls the rich Returns of your prayers, & ea how often
 has it quicken'd your Fears, & bestow'd your Hopes
 and Expectations? We would fain carve out our own Lot,
 chuse our own Condition & Circumstances, & chalk out
 our own way, we often see this & the other Blessing
 and Comfort, but sometimes the Blessing is delayed
 and sometimes denyed, & we are disappointed in our
 hopes for enjoyment, we often fear the Approach of
 some evil, the Approchions of it render us un-
 easy, but when Providence has perfected its Works,
 we are then made to see, it is far better for us to have
 been crossed in our Wishes, than want of the things we
 desired had been for our Good, & the evils we feared have
 been made the real Instruments & best promoters of
 our Happiness. What we could learn from this not to
 disquiet our selves with vain Hopes or vain Fears,
 our own Wishes & Desires, were they always answer'd,
 would often undo us, & there fore the only way to
 be safe & happy, is by a perfect Resignation to the
 Will of God, with a full Assurance of his protection.
 Psal. 125. 10. All the Paths of the Lord are Mercy &
 Truth unto such as keep his Covenant & his Testimony.
 Phil. 4. 6, 7. Be careful for nothing, but in every thing
 by Prayer & supplication with thanksgiving, let
 your Requests be made known unto God, & the Peace
 of God, which passeth all Understanding shall keep
 your hearts & minds through Jesus Christ.

5. Providence measures out & wisely orders all the suf-
 ferings Troubles & Afflictions of the people of God, this
 is by many reckoned a great Blessing of Providence,
 that the Children of God are so much afflicted, & so
 troubled, while many wicked men are happy and
 prosperous, this was a sore Tryal & Temptation,
 to holy Joseph, in this Psalm where our Seat is, this
 Difficulty

Difficulty, shall at more length remove in an after dis-
 course, if this Lord will, and I shall only now say, that
 this is the flaw of our Ergal & Probation, here we
 must be trained up by severe Discipline, here we
 must be purified from our Drops in the hole Furnace
 of Affliction, our Faith & Patience, our Submission &
 Resignation must be tried, all our Graces must be
 exercised, that our proud hearts being humbled,
 our strong Corruptions broken, our Wills moulded
 into the Will of God, we may be the more pliable for
 his Service here, & the better prepared for his King-
 dom and Glory. This is the noble End of the Afflic-
 tions of Gods people, & therefore in order to it, Gods
 Providencie measures out, & manages all their
 Troubles & Ergals, appoints the Degree to which
 they shall rise, & settles the Times for which they
 shall continue, & affords the Means by which they
 shall be removed, & by which they shall be sanctified
 and improv'd. *Psalm 119. 67, 71, 81.* Before I was afflic-
 ted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy Word. It
 is good for me, that I have been afflicted, that I might
 learn thy Statutes. *Rom. 5. 3, 4, 5.* I not only so, but
 we glory in Tribulations also, knowing that Tribu-
 lation worketh Patience, & Patience Experience, &
 Experience Hope. And Hope maketh not ashamed,
 because the Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts
 by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.
 This preventing Care of Providence delivers us
 from many sharp Dangers & Temptations to us:
 we are lyable & laid open, or if at any time for holy
 Ends & wise purposes we are permitted to fall into
 them, the God of Providence always finds out a way
 for our Escape. Many a mortal Christ doth Satan
 make at our souls, many a deadly & poisonous Error
 doth he throw, we are very ignorant, if we are

ignorant of his Devices, if we know nothing of his
 Arts & Stratagems. Now a sovereign God, not only
 by the internal Efficacy of his Grace, but by the exter-
 nal Workings of his Providence doth often break the
 Force & Efficacy of Temptations. Look back Christian
 to the past Ages & periods of thy Life, remember how
 many fierce Temptations have assaulted thee, how
 many cunning snares have been laid in thy way,
 & to this Day thou hast obtained Help of God, and
 he hath wrought out thy Deliverance, by very sur-
 prizing and unexpected Turns of Providence.
 Sometimes indeed he suffers things to come to the
 utmost Extremity, & permits our Oppressors & Enemies
 to rise to the Height of their Power & Glory, & all human
 helps & Counsels leave us in a hopeless State, then
 a sovereign God steps in for the Relief of his people,
 that he may have all the Glory of their Deliverance,
 & his Providence may be visibly seen in it. This
 was the Case of Israel in Egypt, long had they
 groan'd under the Oppression of Pharaoh, heavy
 were the Burdens which they did bear, & were the
 Afflictions which they endured, in Babel did they look
 for help from the Arm of flesh, then the God of Israel
 sees their Affliction, & his Servant, his Servant, delivers
 them with a mighty hand, and outstretched Arm.
 Never was the persecution of the primitive Christians
 more fierce, than a little before Constantinople was
 advanced to the Imperial Throne, whereby a flourish-
 ing Peace was restored to the Church, & Christianity
 became the triumphant Religion of the Roman Empire.
 7. A God of Grace stretcheth out the Wings of an auspici-
 ous Providence not only over the Righteous, but also
 over their Seed & Offspring, he shows Mercy to thou-
 sands of them that love him & keep his Commandments.
 Most of the Labour and Toil which we under go

is for the sake of our Children, to provide for them while we live, & to leave them in easy Circumstances when we dy; And as the Wickedness of a wicked Man entails a Curse on his posterity, so the Righteousness of a good Man derives a Blessing on his Children, when God visits the Iniquity of wicked Parents on their wicked Children, and makes their Destruction more certain, and severe, he will not surely fail to bless the Seed of the Righteous, his Providence by its tender Care, will preserve, protect, provide for, and prosper them. Ps. 37. 25, 26. I have been young, & yet have I not seen the Righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging Bread. Also our merciful and tender God his Seed is blessed. Here then is the greatest Encouragement to sincere Piety, our Seed shall prosper, our Children shall flourish in the Earth, and tho' we should leave them but a little in the World, it will be a better, a more lasting, and increasing Inheritance, than the great Wealth of many wicked Men, and the liberal Charities which we give to the Lord's poor, which some Men think is to defraud their Children, will be like seed sown in the Earth, which reaps all with a plentiful Harvest. And thus I have concluded on some speciall Writings of Providence with respect to particular Believers. The kind Care of Providence hath ordered for us all the necessary & proper Means and Instruments of Grace and Salvation: sup-
 plies our real Wants whether temporal or spi-
 ritual - often prevents our Fears and excess
 our

our hopes and expectations, when it denies or takes away, its for our good, when it gives, it is also for our Advantage. Providence measures out, wisely orders all our Afflictions & Troubles, & delivers from them in the best Time, & saves us from many Dangers, Temptations and Enemies, & makes the Glory of his Providence and Grace very conspicuous by appearing for our Relief, when Matters are in the utmost Extremity - and lastly the kindness of Providence stretches out its Arm & receives into its Embrace the Children of its Favourites, for the Mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, & his Righteousness is unto Children's Children, so such as keep his Covenants to those that remember his Commandments to do them Ps. 103. 17. 18. Thus I have finished the Doctrinal part of this Subject, and now I proceed to set before you the practical Language of it, which in many Cases must be of great Service and Comfort.

Hence therefore we may learn

1. The high Honour and Dignity of the Saints and people of God, they are the Objects of divine Care, it is amongst them that his most High hath his Seat of Government, it is for them that the vigilant Eye and unwearied Hand of Providence is employed.
2. Chron. 16. 9. For the Eyes of the Lord run thro' out throughout the Earth to behold himself strong in behalf of them, whose Heart is perfect towards him. It is for their sake that so many Drops of common Mercy fall to the Share of the wicked; & I may say it is for them that the World is preserved in being, & that all the ungodly are not instantly turned into Hell. Had there
 been

been but ten righteous persons among the numerous Inhabitants of Sodom & Gomorrah, these wicked Cities had not been destroyed for their Sakes. Gen. 18 & 32. Let this engage the words of Men to honour & esteem the people of God, it is his Interest of Cities and Nations to countenance, protect and encourage the goodly, for the Saints & people of God are the Guardians of the place where they live, and their prayers are our Walls and Bulwarks, and the surest means of our protection.

2. We may hence learn the folly, Vanity & Iniquity of acting against the Interest & Well-Being of Israel, it is to strive against the Almighty, to endeavour to blind his piercing eye, or to stay his powerful Arm; It is to attempt to cast him down from his Throne, & to pluck the Reins of Government out of his hand, in which is as vain, as if a silly Horse would attempt to dig down a Rocky Mountain, or a little Fly to stop the rapid Motion of a Mill-stone; Will not the anger of the God of Israel be kindled against those who break open his House, and rob him of his Jewels? Will he suffer his beloved Spouse to be hurt and not highly resent the Injury which is done to her? Shall they avoid the dreadful strokes of his Wrath who break the Bars and Gates of Zion, who hate and oppress those whom the Lord loveth, and whom he keepeth as the Apple of his Eye?

3. Let us beware of censuring Providence, even in the darkest Steps of it. Can the only wise God do any thing in vain. Can he who is good and righteous do any thing wrong or unjust? We are too short-sighted to understand our own Way

Way, much less can we know the Ways of an infinite God, or search out the Wonders of the Almighty into Perfection. Gods Judgements are a great Depth, we may soon, y^e fathom the deepest parts of the Sea and search out all the Turnings & Windings of the subterraneous Passages of it, than comprehend all the Reasons & Mysteries of divine Providence; why then shall we usurp an Authority above our power & Ability, & make ourselves Judges of what infinite Wisdom doth? Is it not better, more modest & becoming to submit to infinite Wisdom, & to forbear our Censures of the righteous conduct of the great Governor of the World. This frame of Temper would silence many of those curious Disputes, and solve many of those knotty Questions which are so much agitated amongst the Disputers of this World, such as, why did a holy & good God suffer sin & misery to enter into the World when he had power enough to prevent it? Or why did he make Creatures, whom he knew their own Folly would make miserable for ever? Why did he withhold the necessary means of Grace, & the knowledge of a Saviour from so many Nations? How will he deal with the Dispose of the Heathen Nations in the Day of Accounts. These and many other things are deep Mysteries to us, & will ever be so, until we see the whole Chain of Providence unravelled, and tell that happy & bright Day, we should learn to be modest, and sober, to adore and reverence what we cannot fathom & comprehend being always sure & well persuaded, that the wise Governor of the World doth, and for ever will do all things well and wisely; and this will appear to the Conviction of all rational Creatures, who

he is pleased to open up the intricate Labyrinth of Providence, 1 Cor. 4. 5. Therefore judge nothing before the Time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of Darkness, and will make manifest the Counsels of the heart, & then shall every Man have Praise of God.
 1. Cor. 4. 5. - 72. 17.

Sermon VIII. Psalm 73. 1. Truly God is good to Israel

4 Hence we may learn the great Love which the Lord Jesus Christ bears to his Church and People, since the whole Administration of Providence is intended for their Good & Benefit, his great Design in making, was not to have the vast Canopy of the Firmament bespangled with the glorious Luminaries of the Sun, Moon & Stars, those dumb Trumpeters of his praise, but it was to have a Church to bear his Image, to receive his special Favours, to taste the Sweetness of his Love, with which his heart was full, and overcharged, and to render him a rich Tribute of Praise and Glory, and that in the most active, willing, and cheerful Manner. Now in Order to accomplish these noble Ends by his special Providence, he established, maintains & nourishes his Church, makes her victorious over all her Enemies, trains her up for, and will at last transplant her into the nobler Part of his Empire and extensive Dominions, & give her much Grace and Love is now laid upon the Church, since the Spouse of Christ Jesus is prepared and purified with

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With so much Pains and Cost, O what Treasures of Love, what Stores of Goodness, what infinite and inexhaustible Riches will be laid out upon her, in the solemn Day of her complete Spousals Rev. 19. 6, 7, 8. And the third as it was the Voice of a great Multitude, & as the Voice of many Waters, & as the Voice of mighty Thundering, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad & rejoice, & give Honour to him, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine Linnen, clean and white, for the Linnen is the Righteousness of the Saints.

5 With what vollicious Care & fervent unwearyed Endeavours should we strive to be the living Members of the Church the spiritual Seed of Israel, that so we may be the special Favoured of Providence, & the Objects of its peculiar Care. - It would be a very great Happiness indeed, You'll say, if this were our Case, We question not the Love of God to his Church, we readily believe that God is good to Israel, but the main Difficulty with us is this, how shall we know each of us with Respect to Ourselves, if we belong to the Israel of God, & so can lay claim to the Protection Care and Kindness of a special Providence. To this I answer Search and consider the Marks & Characters You have of the Saints in the Word of God, if You have this Marks, why do You question your Claim

Claim and Title. For your help herein

1) Remember the Mark my Text gives You, that God is good to Israel, but as the Apolth tells us Rom. 9. 6. They are not all Israel, which are of Israel, and therefore the Psalmist explains his Meaning, & confines Gods special Love & Goodness to such as are of a clean heart, so the Apolth does Rom. 2. 29. But this is a Jew who is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of his Heart, in the Spirit & not in the Letter, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God. There must be a real Change and cleansing of the Heart, an inward Work of the Spirit of God, applying the Blood of sprinkling in the Exercise of Faith, & creating in us the Temper and Disposition of one of the Children of God.

2) Consider the Bent and Exercise of your Soules, are You much taken up and employed in Acts of Worship and Praise, rejoicing in the Good of Israel, delighting in Communion & Fellowship with God and Christ, aiming at Likeness and Conformity to him, longing for the Enjoyment of him, and earnestly desiring to enter into the Land of Promise. Phil. 3. 3. For we are the Circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no Confidence in the flesh. 1 Peter. 2. 9. But Ye are a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People, that Ye should shew forth the Praises of him who hath called You out of Darkness into his marvellous

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marvellous Light. But further Consider what Effect the Providence of God have had upon You, & the Fruits they produce in You. Do the Mercies and Comforts of what ever Kind You receive, humble your Souls before God under a deep Sense of your Unworthiness. This was the Frame & Disposition of Jacobs Mind Gen. 32. 10. I am not worthy of the least of all thy Mercies, and of all thy Truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy Servant. Do they fill your hearts with more Love to God. Gal. 3. 1. I will love thee O Lord, my Strength. Do they render You more active in his Service, and more zealous for his Interest and Glory. 2 Chron. 17. 3, 4. And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first Ways of his Father David, and sought not unto Baalim. But wrought to the Lord God of his Father, & walked in his Commandments, & not after the Doings of Israel. In a word, are your Blessings received in the Exercise of Prayer, & returned to God in the Exercise of Thanksgiving and Praise. And do You still bear in Mind that faithful saying Ja. 1. 17. Every good and perfect Gift is from above, & cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no Variableness, neither Shadow of turning. As to cross and afflictive Providences. Do they purge away your Corruptions, and fill your hearts with more Hatred to sin, with more Love to God, & larger Measures of Faith and Patience, and higher Degrees of Submission and Resignation. Do they make You more weary of this vain World, and wear your Heart to from all the Trifles of Time

Do they kindle in You the most ardent Breathing and vehement Longings after the eternal glorious Rest which remains for the people of God, where You shall be delivered from all Sin, Sorrows and Sufferings, for God will then wipe away all Tears from your Eyes. Here these the blessed Effects of Divine Providence with respect to You, do all things thus work together for your Good. Surely this is a Token of divine Love, an Evidence of God's special Care of You, when he takes his You thus to profit by his Providences towards You, & to suck so much Sweetness out of the bitter things which are bitter & unpleasant in themselves. I shall now conclude with a few Directions.

1. Let us accustom Ourselves in all Events whether prosperous or afflictive in the first place to take Notice of God and his Providence, this will teach us to make the best and wisest Use of whatever befalls us or Ours. How ready are we, to repine or complain. O if such a Man had been done, or such a thing had been done, this Affliction had not befallen us, we had not been deprived or disappointed of such a Comfort, but did You what You thought best in the meantime, depending upon God for a happy Event. Surely then tho' the Event is not according to your Wishes, yet it is for the best for infinite Wisdom does all things well and wisely. John 11. 21. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord if thou hadst been here, my Brother had not died. Christ's raising La-
Zaruz

Lazarus from the dead, was more for his own Glory and more for the strengthening of Mary's Faith and the increasing of her Joy than if he had recovered him when he was sick.

2. Let us study a life of Comfort and Joy in God. Psal. 149. 2. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him, let the Children of Zion be joyful in their King. Since we are the Favoured of Providence, directed by infinite Wisdom, and protected by Almighty Power. Why are thy Looks so gloomy O Christian Believer, thy Tears so many, thy Countenance so sad? Let Sinners in Zion be afraid, let Fearfulness surprize the Hypocrites against whom Providence is employed & armed for their Destruction; but of whom do you afraid, who have a God of Grace, the Father of Mercies watching over You, keeping You Night & Day every Moment as the Apple of his own Eye. Never shall the combined Policy & Power of Men & Devils, of the most cunning and active Enemies hurt or destroy You, for thy God O Believer, has Wisdom to dive into their most secret Plots, Skill to defeat their most malicious Counsel, and Power to bridle all their Rage and Violence Ps. 27. 1. The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear. The Lord is the strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid? And therefore learn to rejoice in God, and let thy soul be filled with Comfort. Psal. 1. The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice, let the Multitude of Isles

be glad thereof. And verse 12th Rejoice in the Lord ye righteous, and give Thanks at the Remembrance of his Holiness.

3. Let those who are in a State of Enmity to God consider how terrible the Wrath of his great & mighty God must be, and of what Importance is it to secure his Favour. How much should it be our Concern and Care, who have sinned against God, to make our peace with him, who governs all things, both the natural & moral Worlds. What can be so bad, as to have this God for our Enemy? Who is so great & mighty, who can punish us a thousand Ways, who can curse our Blessings to us, or strike them out of our hands, whenever he pleaseth. As Pharaoh and the Egyptians found it a very dreadful Thing to have that God against them, whose Kingdom ruleth over all; who had Beasts & Insects, Hail & Fire, Light & Darkness every Element, and every Creature, absolutely at his Disposal. Only to be without God in the World, to be without his Favour in Christ Jesus is the most miserable, base & a very sad Circumstance; how much worse to have him for our Enemy, to live under his Curse & to fall into his hands at last, as a God of just & almighty Vengeance? Oh how much is it our Interest, how much should it be our Concern & Care, while as yet there is Hope, to seek after Reconciliation & peace with this great and terrible

terrible God! With what earnest Attention, should we hearken to his most gracious Calls & Invitations in the Gospel! With what ready Compliance should we entertain his proposals of Peace! With what Joy and Gladness, should we embrace his Promises of Mercy! Blessed be his Name, & adored be his Grace, that he is willing to be at Peace with us; that he has provided a way for our Return & Acceptance, if we return to him in his appointed Way, he will be at peace with us; that he will delight over us to bless us; & that that all Nature at his Disposal, promises that he will make all things work together for our good.

4. Mind your Duty to God, which is to believe & obey, to hope and trust, the governing part belongs to God; the obeying part is ours: How shall we commit our Souls to God, & cast our Care & Burden upon him? Do it not in well-doing, if we go out of the Road of our Duty, and slacken our Faith & Dependence, or if we use any unlawful or indirect Ways, we do what we can to cast ourselves out of God's protection; But if we walk with God, and wait upon him in the Road of commanded Duty, we shall be safe & blessed indeed; & he will never suffer us to want any good thing. Rather than he will suffer his promise to fail, he will countermand the ordinary Course of Nature & work Miracles, he will make the Sun stand still, that his favourite people may have Day light enough to subdue their implacable Enemies. The hungry Lyons shall lose their voracious Force, rather than they shall kill a prophet, whom God has determined to save. The greedy Ravens shall carry their

Their Orey to find another Prophet in a Lane some
 Desert. What a safe and happy Condition are
 they then in, who have the God of Providence for
 their God, their Covenant Friend and Father
 through Christ Jesus, who has been pleased to en-
 gage himself by many a promise to bless them
 and to bestow upon them every desirable good thing.
 Let us reckon Our selves always safe, while in
 his hands, & we owe our Obedience to his Will.
 How needless & vain then is our anxious Carefulness
 How sinful are our distrustful Fears. Can God
 who has all Nature at his Disposal, & most absolute-
 ly in his Power, be ever at a Loss for Ways & Means
 to bless his Children. Fear not then O Christian, for
 when thou art in thy Duty to God, let thy Wants be
 never so many, thy Afflictions never so great, and
 the prospect before thee never so sad and gloomy,
 thy God who is the God of Providence, who of his Kingdom
 telleth over all, is able to deliver thee, is able to
 relieve and help thee. And let our Belief of Gods
 special Providence reconcile us to his fatherly Cor-
 rections, & teach us Submission to his Will under
 all Dispensations. Hence learn with patient Job,
 to bless taking, as well as a giving God. It is the Lord
 that gives, & the Lord takes away, blessed be the Name
 of the Lord, for he can, & most certainly will, in every
 Dispensation of Providence bless his Children, &
 do them good. He that spared not his own Son, but
 delivered him up to die for them, how shall he not
 with him, freely give them all things. Lastly
 Remember & record the by-past kind Steps of
 Gods special Providence towards You, if every
 Mercy You have received, if every Deliverance your
 God has wrought for You be sweet & refreshing,

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 Oh how ravishing & transporting will a clear & full View
 of all the gracious Steps of Providence be to your Souls?
 Here You'll clearly see many precious promises of
 the new & everlasting Covenant fulfilled by the
 Course of divine Providence. This will excite
 the various Powers of your Souls, & awaken the several
 Grace of the Spirit of God planted within You, to
 such holy Exercises as may carry on the Designs,
 and correspond with the Purpose of God in all his
 Providence towards You to be humble and sub-
 missive under adverse, joyfull and thankfull
 under prosperous Events. — By this means You
 may maintain sweet & sensible Communion with
 God in Christ from Day to Day. The Works of divine
 Providence so filled the Psalmists Heart with Joy,
 that he said so much he sweeten'd in the Study of them,
 that he cries out in Ps. 104. 33, 34 I will sing unto the
 Lord as long as I live, I will sing Praises to my God
 while I have my Being. My Meditation of him shall
 be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord. — This will
 be an angular support to faith, when labouring under
 the greatest Difficulties & exposed to the greatest Dan-
 gers. Oh how useful have former Experiences been to the
 Peo. of Is. in the most pinching Straits, & in the hottest
 Hours of Temptation, yea this will sweeten our Pas-
 sage thro' the dark Valley of Death, & mightily assist
 our Faith, & encourage our Hope in our last Moments.
 I know, says the dying St. his loves is like himself un-
 changable, he hath taught me from my Youth, &
 hitheerto I have declared his wondrous Works, much
 Mercy and Goodness has followed me even all the
 Days of my Life, my God never failed me in any for-
 mer Strait, and sure I am, he will never leave me
 or forsake me, hold out then O my Faith & Patience
 for a little, for he who shall come, will come, and will
 not

not far off. Such bold and believing Language as this, will not only be a sweet Cordial to the dying Sainth, but also a sure Testimony for God and Religion to the living, and a convincing proof of the Truth of my Text, that truly God is good to Israel. 2^d Par. 20. 1. 152. 6. 11

Sermon IX. Jeremias 12. 1. Righteous also art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgments &c.

Having already at some length opened up the Doctrine of divine Providence, & endeavoured to establish the Truth, & explain the Nature of it, I am very sensible that after all I have said, many will be ready either to Question or deny the Providence of God, when they see and see that the Affairs of this World are managed with such an uneven and partial hand. Can we think that the World is governed by a wise and just Being, when it fares so ill with good Men, as if they were Gods greatest Enemies, and it goes so well with ill Men, as if they were his fastest Friends? Do we not often see one having scarce Necessaries to support a poor Life, spent in the Service of God & Religion; And another flowing with rich Stores to supply his Riot and Luxury? Here a wicked Slave who worships no God, but his own Belly, & feasts deliciously every Day: And there a godly Lazarus pines away with Woes, & tapers at the Glutton's Gate? Here is Virtue clothed in Rags and languishing in Obscurity, & there is Wickedness adorned with a purple Robe, & swaggering in State & Magnificence. Is it not evident from this that either the things of this World, fall out by a

blind

blind Chance, or they must be managed by a perverse and ill-natured Being? Can such Disorders flow from the only wise God? Can these be the Doings of a Holy & just Governour? This was an early Complaint against Providence, an Objection which puzzled the most learned among the Heathens to answer, a Stone of Stumbling & a Rock of Offense to those who were taught in a higher School than that of Nature. The Holy Psalmist, tho' he was perswaded of Gods Goodness, yet is much pained how to reconcile it with the Troubles of the Righteous, & the prosperity of the wicked Psal. 73. from 3^d Verse. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their Death: but their Strength is firm. They are not in Trouble, as other Men: neither are they plagued like other Men; y^e. Eyes stand out with Fatulth; they have more than their heart could wish. They are corrupt & speak wickedly concerning Providence; they speak loftily. They set their Mouth against the Heavens, & their Tongue walketh thro' the Earth. & they say, How doth God know? It is here knowledge in the most High? Behold these are the ungodly; who prosper in this World, they increase in Riches. Verily I have cleaned my heart in vain, & washed my hands in Innocency. For all the Day long have I been plagued, and chastened every Morning. And here in our Text the Prophet Jeremias humbly pleads for Liberty to reason this Matter with God, after he had declared & ascribed his firm Belief of Gods Justice & Righteousness in the Government of this World. Righteous also art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgments. Wherefore doth the Way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? As if he had said when

when

When I take notice of these steps of thy Providence, O Lord, I often see the persons of the wicked very happy, their projects & Affairs very successful, even while they manage them with Treachery & intend them for Evil, and that even to me, of whose Integrity thou art an impartial Witness and Judge; (as in 3rd verse) James perplexed with this Difficulty, this has been such a strong Temptation to many wise & good Men, that I earnestly plead, I may be allowed humbly to enquire into the Reasons of thy Conduct, not that I hereby intend to quarrel thy Providence, or find fault with thy proceedings, but that I may the more clearly understand this Difficulty, & the more easily satisfy the scruples of my own Mind, & answer the Objections of others; for in the meantime I know & am well assured, that God never did, never will do any Wrong, to any of his Creatures, he is just & righteous in all his providential Dispensations, so I cannot always see the Cause, and find out the Reasons of them. This is the Sense and meaning of our Text, & that I may enquire into, and remove this Difficulty I shall thro' thy divine Assistance endeavour

- I. To premise a few general Things for giving You a clearer View of this Difficulty.
- II. Condescend on particular Answers for removing it, and vindicating the Conduct of divine Providence as to this Branch of the Government of the World. And then apply the whole.
- III. I return to the first Thing proposed in the Method.
- I. To premise a few Things in general for giving a clearer View of this Difficulty. — And to such as precisely observe & consider, it will appear
 - 1. That good Men are not always most afflicted

On the Equity of divine Providence. — Wicked Men most prosperous in this World, if we judge even by outward Appearance, we shall often see that Wisdom hath Length of Days in her right Hand, & in her left Hand Riches and Honour, and that her Ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her Paths are peace Prov. 3. 16, 17. And on the other hand we shall often see wicked Men very much afflicted, reduced to pinching Want, & tasting the bitter Fruits of their Riot and Intemperance; and if You cast into the scale their inward Grievous and Things of their guilty Consciences, their unceasing Care & Apprehensions, and compare these with the inward Peace and Serenity, the present solacing Joy & future flourishing prospects of the goodly, there is not such Ground for the Reflection as is commonly imagined.

- 2. We are not proper Judges of the Conduct of divine Providence even in this matter, & that for these plain Reasons: — (1) We know not the true Characters of Men, we cannot enter into their hearts or look into their Closets and secret Retirement to us often conclude that he is a good Man in God's account who is good to us, & perhaps has a very flourishing profession for the Time, and yet the very same Man, may in a little with his own hand pull of the Match, & appear in his true & proper Colours, & again a very little Matter will give Men a bad Character in this censorious World, different Sentiments in Religion, different Interests in Business, State Factions & Politicks, or private Quarrels will make Men paint each other as black as Hell, & then quarrel with Heaven, if it doth not revenge their Quarrel, & tho' there are some Men openly vicious, yet they may have many generous Qualities, & social Virtues very useful to others in the World, so that untill we know Men as they

they are in themselves, and as God knows them, we can never judge of the equity of divine Providence towards them.

(2) We know not the real Worth & Nature of things, for we rashly judge by present Feelings or Sense. Riches Pleasures & Refinements are so many flattering Names & vain Nothings in themselves, & too often attended with anxious Cares, distracting Fears & sorrows. Content & Cheerfulness, true friendship & Peace, Health & Innocence, the sweetest & most substantial Blessings of Life are oftner to be met with in Cottages & Shades & Solitudes, than in great Cities, in splendid Courts and magnificent Palaces, so that it may be better for us, & a Token of Gods Love to us, that we are not advanced to high Honours in the World, and not self of great Riches, for prosperity and Plenty often corrupt Men's Manners, swell them with pride, & make them forgetful of God & their souls Happiness, whereas even Disgrace and Poverty sickness & Trouble, often reform bad Men, & make them serious & considerate, and exercise the Graces and Virtues of good Men, and make them shine more and grow better.

(3) We know not the Design of divine Providence, and cannot trace things to their End & Conclusion, & therefore it is impossible for us to judge of the Wisdom and Justice of intermediate Events, had we, for Instance, heard no more of Joseph, but that he had been sold for a Slave by his envious Brethren, & then falsely accused by a wanton Mistress and cast into Prison. Would we not have blamed divine Providence, and have said that God dealt hardly with him? But when we hear that this was the Way to Pharaoh's Throne, who amongst

us would not wish to have been in Joseph's place, and to have born all his Disgrace & Sufferings? So that it is impossible for us to judge of particular Events, where perhaps they may reach to the remotest places, and the most distant Ages, and by infinite Turnings, may be brought to some unknown but glorious Conclusion.

3. The present State of things, and the Nature & End of Gods Government of the World, must not allow of dealing with every Man here, according to his real Character, for this is their Season of Trial & Discipline, the Day of Gods Patient Torment the wicked, the time where in the godly are to be purged from their Sins, and trained up for the Kingdom of Heaven, and a State of perfect and unmix'd Happiness, and as such Men must swallow down many bitter Medicines for the Recovery of his Health, so the Favourites of Heaven must bear many Tryals & sufferings and Afflictions to prepare & purify them for Heaven and Glory, and to restore their Souls to their primitive Strength and Vigour. Besides must not wicked Men in the common Course of things abound most in Wealth and Riches, they are wiser in their Generation than the Children of Light, they make it their main Business to prosper in this World, they boggle at no vicious Action, they study all the Arts of Deceit and Knavery, they will flie and swear, they will cheat and oppress, dissemble and deceive, and all for gain, whereas a religious Man lives above this World, his main Pursuit is after Heaven, and shall have none of this Earth, unless he can gett it by lawful fair and honest Means, so that unless divine Providence would immediately interpose

interpose, and work Miracles, which if never doth in vain, it is no wonder that the wicked prosper for a season, and make a greater Figure some times in this World than the goodly.

4. Tho' it were not possible for us to answer this Objection, or to give any present Reasons for the prosperity of the wicked, and the Afflictions of the righteous, yet this would in the most convincing Manner prove the Certainty of a future State, that a Day is surely coming, wherein all the Entanglements of divine Providence shall be clearly unfolded, and truly if it were not so, it would be very difficult to witness the Holiness, Justice and Righteousness of God in his providential Dispensations, since we often see Virtue & Piety reproached and debased to the Dunghill, and Vice gloried in Impunity, and wanting to the Firmament, without granting it is so for a season, what virtuous & pious Man in his own Wits would exchange his State and Condition with the prosperous wicked Man. O never call Dives's rich purple & delicious Fare good Things, when they end in eternal Misery and remediless Torments! Don't say that Lazarus lying in his sores at the rich Man's Gate, is miserable, since he now lies in Abraham's Bosom for ever! Could You lay your Ears to the Gates of Hell, You might hear many of our great and rich Men, whom the vain World gazes on, admired and accounted once the only Men, bitterly cursing their Grandeur, vain Pomp and flattering Pleasures, and heartily wishing they had been in the meanest and most despicable State on Earth; On the other Hand could You hear the sweet Songs and Halleluiahs of the Saints above, their loud

loudest Notes of Praise arise from the Memory of their past Danger & sufferings, and the noble Army of Martyrs with peculiar Pleasure and Joy will rehearse their dreadful and glorious Story; once dreadful to suffer, now glorious to rehearse. Having thus premised a few general Things for giving You a clearer View of this Difficulty I now proceed to the second Head of Discourse.

II. To consider more particularly the Objection, & confute it on particular Answers for removing & vindicating the Conduct of divine Providence as to this Branch of the Government of the World.

And that I may proceed with the more Clearness I shall first consider the prosperity of the wicked and then the sufferings & Afflictions of the righteous.

I. I shall consider the Prosperity of the wicked, and these following Reasons may be assigned for it.

(1) That by these common Mercies, and the Abundance of them, Sinners may be invited to take notice of the Kindness of Heaven, and persuaded by a Taste of these good Things to seek after those Things that are infinitely better, and more valuable. Acts 17. 17. Never the less he left not himself without Witness, in that he did good, and gave us Chain from Heaven, and fruitful Seed, filling our hearts with food and Gladness. Rom. 2. 4. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Or despisedst thou the Riches of his Goodness, and forbearance & long-suffering; not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance? But after thy Hardness & impenitent Heart, treasured up unto thyself Wrath against the Day of Wrath, & Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God; Who will render to every Man according to his Deeds. To them, who by patient Continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory, Honour, and Immortality; eternal Life. But unto them that

that are contentions & obey not the Truth, but obey
Unrighteousness, Indignation & Wrath, Tribulation &
Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil, of
the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. Now the com-
mon Father of all Men by Creation, & to show his ex-
uberant Goodness & Beneficence, he gives them who
are evil many Large ones here, because if they re-
pent not, they are not capable of receiving any
good Things hereafter, & why should we judge of
their Honours, their Wealth & pleasures, for
this is all their portion.

(2) The wicked prosper and are raised to Power and
Greatness, that they may be employed as Instru-
ments of good to the Church and People of God.
Thus we read of the Grandeur and Success of Cyrus
King of Persia, whom the Lord Jehovah raised to
deliver his Israel, & to send them back to their own
Land. Isa. 40. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5th. Thus saith the Lord to his
anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to
subdue Nations before him; and I will loose the Loops
of Kings to open before him the two leaved Gates, &
the Gates shall not be shut. I will go before him, &
make the crooked places straight. I will break in
pieces the Gates of Brass, cut in sunder the Bars
of Iron. I will give thee the hidden Treasures of Darkness, &
hidden Riches of secret ^{Places} ~~Places~~; that thou mayest
know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy Name, I am
the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant, I have called
thee, I have even called thee by thy Name. I have
signified thee, tho' thou hast not known me; I am the
Lord, & there is none else, there is no God besides me;
& girded thee, though thou hast not known me.
At other Times Power & Strength is given to the wicked
to scourge & correct a declining back-sliding Church,
they are the fittest and readiest Instruments for
this purpose to humble, purge & polish the people of

off God, & give them Occasion for the Exercise of the most
heroick Graces, never did the Church of Christ flourish
more, nor shine brighter, than when persecuted
by the Emperors of Rome and the Heathen powers.

(3) Sometimes wicked Men prosper, and are raised high,
that having filled up the Measure of y^e Iniquities, their
fall may be the more conspicuous, they may be public
& standing Examples to the World, & glorious Triumphs
of div. Vengeance, this You know was the Case of the
Coadj. 9. 16. I'm very deed for this Cause, have I raised
the up for to shew in thee my Power

(4) To give us a true Estimate of the things of this World,
the wise Disposer of all things hath given a large Share
of them to the worst & vilest of Men; whence a very
little Logic or Reasoning will teach us to infer, that
perfect Happiness liv not in the Enjoyment of these things,
they must be of a mean & low Value in Gods Account,
who is the best Judge of true Worth & Excellence, and
surely he has prepared, & in due time will bestow Bless-
ings infinitely better on his own Children, and

(5) However the wicked may prosper, tis but for a season, a
very short Season Deut. 32. 16, 17. A little t^r a righteous
Man hath, is better than the Riches of many wicked.
For the Armies of the wicked shall be broken & 35, 36th
I have seen the wicked in great Power, spreading himself
like a green Bay tree, till he was cut away, & flourish'd not;
Yea, he sought himself, but he could not be found. Jerem. 12. 2, 3.

I have nothin any Reason to question the Providence of
God. What tho' Sinners thrive & flourish for a season, yet
their fatal time, their final Ruin is fast approaching,
when an angry God lays his almighty hand upon
them, he will tear in pieces, & none will be able
to deliver out of his hand. Let me here compare the
Vengeance of God to a great & many Bell, which is a
long time in raising, but when it is once up, it
makes

makes a dreadful sound, and strikes Terror and Astonishment unto all that hear it. It is an excellent Lullie which You have Psal. 37. 1. Fret not thyself, because of evil Doers, neither be thou envious against the Workers of Iniquity —
J. Ch. 63. 1. — 37. 16. —

Sermon Xth Jer. 12th 1st H. Righteous also art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee.

This is not the least of the many notable Advantages we enjoy by the Light of the Gospel, that many of the Mysteries of divine Providence are unveiled, and we may clearly see the Wisdom & Love of God shining even in those Events of Providence which at first view appear to be very dark & threatening; these are a Branch of the present Administration of Things more intricate and perplexing than the Prosperity of the wicked & the Sufferings of the righteous. The Minds of many who have had a high Esteem of God, just Sentiments of his glorious Perfectiones, & a firm belie of his Providence, have been much troubled with this Difficulty, and have earnestly endeavoured to have it removed; this was the Case with the Prophet Jeremias herein our Text Righteous also art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee. Having already assigned some Reasons for the Prosperity & worldly Success of the Wicked.

2. I now proceed to Consider the Sufferings of the Righteous, for tho' they are not directly contained in my Text, yet the Consideration of them is necessary to remove this Objection against the Justice and Goodness of God in his Government of the World, and that our Way may be the clearer, let us observe the following Particulars.

1. That there is no Man on this Earth perfectly righteous and pure in the Sight of an holy God Eccl. 7. 20

For there is not a just Man upon Earth, that doth good and sinneth not. Surely the least Sin we are guilty of, deserves eternal Wrath; if God should strictly mark our Iniquities, why then do we find fault with God, that we are Sufferers, when we are all so great Sinners? Lam. 3. 39. Wherefore doth a living Man complain or murmur, a Man for the punishment of his Sin, for wherein the Man who dares say that his present Afflictions are greater than his Transgressions.

(2) Tho' Man were every Man has sinned, & tho' Sin has brought Death with a vast Train of previous Troubles and Diseases into the World, yet God in his infinite Love and Goodness to Mankind hath by the Sufferings and Death of his own Son, capitulated & abolished Death and brought Life and Immortality to Light by the Gospel, this Dispensation of free and sovereign Grace renders this Life a State of Tryal & Probation for Eternity, & removes the Scene of our compleat Happiness from this World to the next; hence I plainly follow, that the greatest Good God or Man can do for us, is by any Means, however bitter & unpleasant to preserve us from eternal Misery, & in any Way however rough & difficult to prepare us for, & bring us to eternal Life & Happiness, and if our present Troubles and Afflictions are the most powerful Means, & the most proper Way to bring about these noble Ends, here is a fair Account of the Sufferings of the godly, for surely it is good for them that they are afflicted, when these light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding & eternal Weight of Glory 2 Cor. 4. 17.

(3) Let us more particularly consider the notable and precious Fruits of the Afflictions of a good Man. God is greatly glorified by them, his Wisdom & power are more conspicuous, in carrying on such weak and frail Creatures, through so much Tribulation

and in blasting the biggest Hopes & most cunning Projects of their Enemies, even when they were ready to triumph over them, and to trample them under their feet, this Mercy and Love will taste the sweeter, when his ^{holy} Spirit fills their souls with inward Joy, under outward Troubles, or delivers them from all their Distresses. — Afflictions make Religion appear more amiable, & they set forth the Truth and Excellency of it; as the Foundation of the Church was laid in the Blood of Christ, so its Growth is furthered by the Blood of Martyrs: Must not that Cause be good, and those Truths lovely and valuable, for which Men will chuse the severest Afflictions, yet rejoice in the greatest sufferings, and for which they will cheerfully part with all the Riches and profits this World can afford. Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26. th Lay. th Faith. Moses when he was come to Years, refused to be call'd the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter; Choos'ing rather to suffer Affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season. Esteeming the Re- proach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the Reward. By faith, he forsook Egypt, not fearing the Wrath of the King, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. — Afflictions have a very proper Tendency and peculiar Office to advance a Work of Grace in the soul, & to promote Gospel Holiness, by humbling our pride, by purging away our Sin, by giving us the best Opportunity of manifesting our sincere Love to God, our entire Confidence in him, our cheerful Submission to his Will and Pleasure, by weaning our hearts from the vain trifles & empty Amusements of this World, and making our souls pant & breath after

after Heaven and eternal Happiness: 'Tis in Me, says the suffering Saint, that I sojourn so long in Misery, in a vain World so full of Snares & Disappointments. Oh that I had the Wings of a Dove, that I might fly far away and be at Rest! Blessed be my God that I feel the storms of Affliction beating down, & by Degrees breaking this Vessel of Clay, that my well- ing Soul may the sooner wing its speedy Flight into the Mansions of eternal Rest, & then to my great Comfort and Joy, I shall see, that all my present Sorrows, are employ'd by Providence, as so many useful Artifices, to make my Crown of Joy more bright and glossy, and every Stroke I now bear is for beautifying & polishing my celestial Diadem. However great the Troubles and Afflictions of the righteous may be here in this World, who they should be lengthen'd out even to the End of their Days, yet this Life being so very short, and Death putting a certain period to all their Distresses, & giving them a sure and safe Passage into the Harbour of everlasting Rest and Joy, why should they complain or repine? Is it not better & infinitely better to suffer for a Season, and to be happy for ever, rather than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin, & to prosper in the World a very short time, and then to lie down in sorrow for ever. Matth. 16. 26. For what is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a Man give in exchange for his soul? Rom. 8. 17, 18. And if Children then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint-Heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together: For we reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compar'd with the Glory which shall be revealed in us. There will be a surprizing Change made of the Conditions of Men in

in another life Luke 16. 25. And Abraham said
I can remember, that those in thy life time received
thy good things, and like Lazarus, evil things;
but now he is comforted & thou art tormented.

Thus I have endeavoured to remove the Objection
on against the holy and just Providence of God, arising
from the prosperity of the wicked; and the sufferings
of the righteous in this world, & doth it not appear
from what I have said that the Ways of the Lord are
equal, & that he justly he judgeth in the Earth, & doth
all things well & wisely, & even tho' we could give
no satisfying Reasons for the Conduct of his Providence,
tho' the Measures of his Goodness should be hid from us,
it becomes us to believe that he is a wise Sovereign
and righteous Governour, though he doth not give us
an account of his Majesty

III. I now conclude in a few Inferences from this Subject.

I. Hence we may learn how useful is the Word
of God in opening up the Designs & Reasons
of divine Providence. How much was the holy Dauid
pained & perplexed, while he consulted his
own Reason, or judged according to his own Sense
and Feeling. But how easily were his Doubts re-
moved & his Difficulties solved, when he went into
the Sanctuary of God, and consulted the divine
Oracles Psal. 138. 17. Then understood he his Lutes
surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou
castedst them down into Destruction. Do You
see the wicked Man raised to high Honour, and
enjoying a plentiful Estate for supplying his Lust
and Luxury? Or do You see the deceitful Man
crowned with Success in all his Arts of Knavery,
while the Affairs of the honest and fair Dealer
are daily decaying? Come up into the Sanctu-
ary

Sanctuary, and You will be able to unriddle this
Providence. Do You see the wicked rich Man clothed
in Purple, and feasting sumptuously every Day,
while poor Lazarus lies at his Door full of Sores,
& is fain to be fed with the Crumbs which fall
from his Table? Come up into the Sanctuary, &
You shall see this rich Man so poor, that he could
not command one Drop of cold Water to cool his parched
Tongue, in the midst of his Torments, and
poor Lazarus now so rich and happy, that he
wears a Crown of Glory for ever.

2. Why should we admire or doat upon the Riches
Honours or Pleasures of this vain & transitory
World, why should we envy the Pomp & Grandeur
of prosperous Sinners, when God has set them on
so slippery places? We may see the rich Man's
Wealth and Substance, but can we know all his
Cares, the inward Anxiety of his Mind, or can
we tell the painful Anguish of his guilty Soul?
How often has a running Love been hid under a
purple Robe? And Your'st of Wealth & Power,
You are then free of the Incurbrances which at-
tend them, & it may be You have a better Consti-
tution of Body & higher Endowments of Mind,
than many great Princes have, and it is very
probable You may have more peace & Content-
ment also, and is not Health the chief Blessing
of life? Is not Wisdom the noblest Perfection of
the rational Nature, and a grain of Contentment
far better than many Pounds of Wealth?

3. This Subject teaches the proud, and most
prosperous

prosperous, never to fear & tremble. Dost thou enjoy more Riches than thy Neighbour, or thinkest better in the World, don't conclude from this that God loves thee more; Heaps of Money are no Mark of His Love, nor Tokens of the divine Favour, the great Governour of the World bestows very often the Riches, Honours & Preferments of this World upon the vilest of Men, & how frequently doth Power and Authority tempt Men to injure and oppress? How often are Riches employed in Rioting and Drunkenness, in Chambering and Wantonness. When the Working is most ready to say, Soul, take thine ease, thou hast good laid up for many Years; then the Devil most readily comes. Thou Fool, this night shall thy Soul be required of Thee, & then whose shall those things be on which thou so much trustest, so that the Sinner has most need to fear, when he is exalted to the highest pinnacle of Honour and Power.

4. Let the rich Effects of God's common Bounty and Goodness towards thee, O Sinner, lead thee to Repentance & Amendment of Life & Conversation. Sit down and reason and think thus with thyself. I have been a Drunkard, a Swearer, an Adulterer, a Despiser of God, a Murtherer of various Religion, a stranger to Christ Jesus the only Saviour, thro whom I can obtain Peace with God. I never to this very Day entertained a serious Thought about the Salvation of my precious and immortal Soul, and the great God the Searcher of Hearts & Tyer of the Reins of the Children of Men has seen and known all my wicked Ways and spared me all this Time, Yea he has made

Eye to overflow with the good Things of this World, he has prospered me in my Trade and Business, while others better than I have been blasted, and shall not all this unmerited undeserved Kindness soften my heart, win my Soul & gain my Affections? Are there any Sparks of Love, no Remains of Gratitude in my perverse and accursed Nature? Have I lost the Season of Grace, or has an holy God given me up for ever to my vile Lusts & base Corruptions. O Father of Mercies hear the Cry, regard the Tears of a returning Prodigal, & receive me into the Arms of thy Pity & Love thro Jesus Christ. Such sober and serious Thoughts, such relenting Tears and Prayers would pierce the Heavens, and produce noble Effects on thy Heart and Life. But if a Sinner, thou still harden thy Heart in thy wicked Courses, will not thy present Plenty and prosperity make thy Hell at last twice hotter, & render the gnawings of the never dying Worm more painful and tormenting. Consider then this in Time, lest that now forget God, & put the evil Day far away, lest he beat you in pieces, or there is none that can deliver out of his hands for he is a consuming Fire to all the Workers of Iniquity — and Lastly

5. Here is a powerful Motive to all the Saints of God for the lively Exercise of Faith & Patience & of an entire Submission and Resignation in all their Afflictions. Yea here is a sure Foundation of Hope, of Joy & Comfort; for the Crook is the Way to the Crown; in their present Sufferings they shall taste the Sweetness of divine Mercy, and have rich Experience of divine Love and Grace, and they shall ere long be delivered out

out of all their Distresses, raised above all the Terrors & Temptations of their Enemies, & stand before the Throne of God, and of the Lamb, clothed with white Robes, and with Palms in y^e hands, singing Songs of Praise unto their God and Saviour; and the many Tribulations they have gone thro, the great sufferings they have endured in this vain and weary World, will then sweeten their Chest, accent their Praises, and inspire them with more Life & Vigour in all their Unwearied & everlasting Acts of Worship & Service, when they appear before their God in the higher Sanctuary.
L. Ps. 65. 1. L 34. 19.

Sermon XI.th Job. 26. 14. So these are parts of his Ways, but how little a Portion is heard of him.

The greater Progress we make in Knowledge, the more intently we study to understand the Works of God, we shall still see more Cause to confess our Ignorance; And the deeper our Researches are, we shall have the clearer Discoverys of the Imperfection of our Understandings, that we know, but very little of the great and magnificent Works of God, & of the deep and mysterious Reasons of his Providence. As Solomon had with much Wisdom and Labour, the two great Engines of making the deepest Discoveries, searched into the Counsels and Works of God, and considered with Attention the Events of Things, and he gives us an Account of the Fruit of his incessant Study in Eccles. 8. 17. Then I beheld all the Works of God, that a Man cannot

cannot find out the Work that is done under the Sun, because tho' a Man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; Yea further, though a wise Man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it. So here in our Text after that Job had spoke of the manifold Wisdom and most magnificent Works of God in a very sublime & inimitable Style, & considering the Time in which he lived, had in his Discourses given evident proofs of his profound Knowledge as a Divine and Philosopher, he concludes with admiring Thoughts of the Depth of divine Wisdom and Power, & with a free & ingenious Confession of the Narrowness of his Understanding, and his slender Ability to comprehend the admirable Ways of God, or to describe the Worth & Extent of them. So these are parts of his Ways, but how little &c. I have in some Discourses enquired into, & endeavoured to set before You the Works of God's Providence. I have made it my Study to make this Subject as clear and plain as possible: But who can comprehend in his Mind, or what mortal Language can express the vast Magnificence, the infinite Numbers, the various Uses of the Works of God? Let Men value their Reason never so highly, and scorn to own, that there is any thing above their Knowledge, yet there is, and will be ten thousand things, even in the Events of Providence, which no Man can understand or account for, so that after all I have said on the Providence of God, of what others of more extensive Knowledge have said or can say, here in my Text is a very proper Conclusion. So these are parts of &c. You may see my Design from this Text is to teach You a piece of very useful Knowledge.

by convincing You and myself of our Ignorance, not that I hereby intend to discourage a sober and useful Search into the Things of God, but to excite You to a more diligent Search when You cannot comprehend, & to acquiesce in the Goodness, Wisdom and Sovereignty of God, even when You find his Judgements unsearchable, and his Ways past finding out. — In handling this Subject I shall thro' the divine Assistance do these things.

I. Condescend on several Instances of our Ignorance, and show how little we know of the Works of the great God.

II. Assign You some plain and evident Reasons why it is, and must be so, And then

III. Draw some practical Inferences from the whole.

I. To return to the first thing proposed in Method 812 I. To Condescend on several Instances of our Ignorance, and show how little we know of the Works of the great God.

And I need not go far off to make this very evident, for the clearest and most enlarged Understandings of thinking Men do find much Darkeness in the meanest and most obvious Things.

But to descend to particulars. —

1. Let us view the material World, we know not the Essence of any one thing, even of the smallest Particle of Matter, by repeated Experiments we know some few of the Powers & Properties of Matter, but how many other Virtues and Powers may be lodged in material Bodies we cannot tell. Who knows the true Principle of Gravity, or the real Causes of Adhesion? By what Hooks and Bonds doth one Piece of Matter stick so close to another, that no

no Force can almost pull them asunder? By what Powers doth Hemlock kill, or Opium procure Sleep? If we raise our Eyes to the Clouds, the Firmament of divine Power, and consider the heavenly Bodies, the Sun Moon & Stars, how little do we know of their Nature and Operations, their Motions & Magnitudes, their Distances, and Influences? What do we know but there may be as many different Systems as there are fixed Stars, and that the only wise God has greater Use for them, than to twinkle a little in the dark Night to us. I judge some of my Hearers, will now be ready to say, what is the Meaning of this Doctrine, we don't want to be taught Philosophy from the Pulpit. This very Objection is a proof of your Ignorance, Was it not in this very Way, that God taught Job and his friends their Ignorance of his eternal Counsels and mysterious Providences, by showing them how little they knew of the most manifest and visible Works of God. Job. 38, 39, 40, 41 Chapters.

2. The spiritual World, which is certainly greater and more beautiful than the material, and yet it is more remote from our Knowledge, and with Respect to us lies very much in Obscurity, for

(1) Whether there is a Spirit in brute Animals, or what other thing must be the principle of their Motions and surprizing Powers and Operations, we cannot tell. if there is a Spirit within them, and of what Nature it is? Why are their Powers so limited? Why don't Beasts reason and reflect as well as we, who have the like constituent Parts? For what Uses are they intended in another World, or are their Spirits annihilated at Death? All these are Mysteries to us, and Evidences of the Imperfection of our Knowledge.

(2) We feel something within Ourselves, having

having more noble Powers than such as can possibly arise from any Combination of meer Particles of Matter, but we know not what this thing is which we call our Soul, or in what particular Place of the Body it doth reside; we know not by what Bonds and Ligaments it is so closely united to the Body, or in what Manner it acts upon, and makes any Member of the Body move as quick as Thought, we know not in what Manner it will act in a separate State, or how one Spirit communicates its Thoughts unto, or converses with another Spirit.

(3) The whole Angelical World is above the Reach of our Rational Powers, we have no distinct Knowledge of their Orders, Powers, & their several Stations and Services, we know not what infinite Degrees of spiritual Beings may be betwixt our finite Spirits, and the infinite great immense, and self-existent Father of Spirits. We know, but we know it only by Revelation, that there are Angels good and bad, who are active and mighty Instruments in the Events of Providence, but what kind Offices are done us by the holy Angels, when they are present with us, what Influence they have on our Thoughts and Actions, we cannot tell; whether every particular Person, every Church and Nation has a particular Angel assigned them for their Guardian and Protector, has been much disputed among Learned Men, Heathens Jews and Christians, but has not yet been certainly determined. We know as little of the infernal Spirits; how strict their Confinement in Chains of Darkness at present may be,

or what Permission they may have to wander abroad and deceive the Nations, surely it must be a great Mystery to understand, how these Powers of Darkness, whose Designs in acting are always evil and malicious, are made the Instruments in carrying on the glorious purposes of divine Providence?

3. When we view the Providence of God with respect to his Church and People, more thick Clouds of Darkness and Ignorance surround our Minds, and new Scenes of Mystery and Wonder, open before our Eyes, I shall here only name a few.

(1) What a mysterious Step of divine Providence was the Fall of our first Parents, to see such noble and innocent Creatures so soon after their Creation permitted to ruin themselves, and all their Race; And though now we see what glorious Designs the only wise God has brought about by the Entrance of Sin into the World, yet who dares say that he comprehends them all?

(2) After the promise of Grace was made, can we tell why the most high God suffered Sin so to prevail, that he who proposed to destroy all the Inhabitants of the Earth by a Deluge of Water, excepting one Family? Or can we tell why for so many Ages, the Knowledge of the true God, and the Promises of a Saviour were confined to one Nation and People, all others being left to walk in their own Ways, and given up to a bominable Idolatry?

(3) When the Son of God came in the flesh, and gave such evident Proofs of his being the Messiah, why did the Bulk of the Jewish Nation reject him? Can

Can we tell why these ancient Favourites of Heaven were now cast off, or why Aliens and Strangers were brought in, the Apostle Paul in the tenth & eleventh Chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, gives many Reasons of this surprising Dispensation, but at last he acknowledges it was above his Reach, and falls out into admiring Thoughts of a sovereign God Rom. 11th. 33, 34th. Of the Depth of the riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his Judgements, and his Ways past finding out! For who hath known the Minds of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, & through him, & to him are all Things: to whom be Glory and Praise for ever Amen.

(4) Why has the Gospel of Christ been withheld from many Nations and people even to this Day, why hath it been removed from many Countries and Kingdoms, where once there were many famous Churches of Christ? Why has the State of Religion increased and flourished in one Age, and why has it declined and been almost totally eclipsed in another? Why did the Power and Errors of the Church of Rome rise so high & prevail so long in the Christian Church, and why has not the clear Light of the Reformation spread itself farther? All these are great Mysteries of Providence, and no doubt God has many wise & weighty Reasons for them, but how few of them are known unto us, we know indeed but very little.

(5) How various and unaccountable are the Steps of divine Providence towards particular Christians?

- Some are sanctified from the womb, even called in their mothers' Wombs, others go on in a Course of Sin, till the latter part of their Time is past, & yet frequently their Attainments are greater than those who began more early - Some are converted by the awfulling Terrors of the Law, some by the sweet and alluring Voice of the Gospel, and others by afflicting or other remarkable Steps of divine Providence - Some Saints fall into great Sins, and their Back-slidings are very scandalous; Others go with a more even Pace, and finish their Course without any remarkable Blemish - Some are employed as Instruments of doing great and notable Service to God & Religion; others are eminent in Grace and Gifts, tho' they have the Inclination, yet have not the Opportunities of doing any thing worthy of Observation - Some are greatly afflicted, and all the Scenes of their Life full of a Variety of Sorrows and Sufferings; others have but a very small Mixture of Trouble in their Lot in the World - Some even very eminent Saints have been called home to their Rest, in the Flower of their Age, and in the Vigour of their Strength, while others have been left to wrestle with the Weaknesses and Infirmities of old Age. So various, so wonderful are the Dispensations of divine Providence, even towards its own Favourites, the Objects of its peculiar Care & Love; and who amongst us can say, that he is able to see the Causes, and can reach out the Reasons of all these surprising Events? Is it not better and more modest in our Part to acknowledge

9. 26. Sermon XII. Job. 26. 14. Of our imperfect
our Ignorance, and to resolve all these things into
the sovereign Will and Pleasure of God, who doth
all things according to the most exact Rules of
unerring the unsearchable Wisdom. Ps. 106. 1. III.

Sermon XII. Job. 26. 14. To these are part of
his Ways, but how little a Portion is
heard of him

It was an excellent Saying of a wise Heathen
Know thyself; while Men are ignorant of
themselves, and know not the extent of their Abili-
ties, they will often meddle with things above their
Reach, and rashly censure what they cannot un-
derstand. No wise or good Man will think Shame
to own his Ignorance of many things, particularly
of the great Works of God, the Gifts of infinite Wis-
dom and Almighty Power. Thus Job here in my
Text after he had mentioned many of the wonder-
ous Works of God, he concluded with this Acknow-
ledgement, To these are parts of his Ways &c
I now proceed to the 2^d Head of Discourse Viz

II. To assign the evident Reasons of our Ignorance.
& I shall mention the four or five following. Ones

I. Because of the Greatness of the God of Providence,
whose Wisdom contrives, and Power performs
great things past finding out, and Wonders
without Number. Job. 6. 10. The more wise
any Prince or Ruler is, the more the Reasons
of his Government are hid from vulgar Under-
standings; the more skillful any Politician
is, his Modes of Art are the more curious &
surprising, but who is so wise, as the great Gov

Knowledge of the Works of Providence. 107

Governour of the World, how wonderful in Counsel
and excellent in Working, wise in heart, and mighty
in Strength, none can stay his hand or oppose him?

2. Because of the Narrowness of our Capacities,
what a vain weak and ignorant thing is Man,
when compared with the great God? There is nothing
we are more ready to be proud off than our Knowledge,
this is a perfection we glory in, we more willingly
bear to have our Morally censured, than our Intel-
lectuals Questioned. Job. 11. 12. For vain Man would
be wise, though Man be born like a wild Ass Colt.
Yet in Truth, how little do we know? Why are there
so many Disputes, so various Sentiments, so dif-
ferent Opinions amongst Men, even in Matters of
great Importance, each pretending to be in the
Right? Is not this owing to the Weakness of our Un-
derstandings, for Truth is certainly simple and
uniform, and one of the Parties must certainly
be in the wrong; I cannot but observe here that the
Consideration of the Imperfection of our Knowledge
should teach us great Moderation and Meekness,
and much Charity and Compassion towards those
who differ from us; and should also induce us in all
our Searches after divine Truth to be very desirous
of divine Illumination & Guidance; that God by
his Spirit of Truth would shew us his Ways, and
teach us his Paths, & lead us in his Truth. Ps. 25. 4.
3. We know little of God's governing the World, be-
cause all Governments have many secret Springs
and hidden Methods to carry on their Designs, so
Prov. 25. 2. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing:
but the Honour of Kings is to search out a Matter.
One great End of God's Government of the World is to
display his own glorious perfections, and to set
forth

88. Sermon XL: Job. 26. 14. Of our imperfect
for their glory, greatness and Majesty; now Men
do never greatly admire what is plain, obvious, &
easily understood, but how do they stand astonish-
ed, how are they filled with Wonder & admiration
when they see great & wonderful Things brought
about by a long and winding Labyrinth of sur-
prising & perplexing events? When our Tears are
turned into Triumphs, when our heaviest Crosses
are made Instruments of bringing to us the great-
est Blessings and richest Comforts, when we see
the wicked ensnared in their own Counsels, and
falling into the Pit which they have digged for
others, when we see good Men raised by Humili-
ty, and enriched by Adversity, such events give
us justly great and admiring Thoughts of
divine Wisdom, but how can such events be
brought about, but by many, various steps of
the divine Conduct & Providence, which must be
hid from us, untill we see the last End, and the
great Design of them.

4. The Shortness of our Lives is another Cause
of our Ignorance. The designs of divine Provi-
dence often reach from one Age to another, nay
sometimes they comes not to Perfection in many
Ages, and yet all the intermediate Events have
a mutual Dependance and Relation to each
other, so that we whose Days are so very few,
whose Views are so narrow, who have such an
imperfect Knowledge and History of Things -
past, so little Knowledge of things present, so
uncertain Conjectures of things to come, can
as little understand the wise Reasons of di-
vine Providence, as a Man can understand
the beautiful Contrivance & noble Design of

Knowledge of the Works of Providence. The
of a Comedy by a superficial Creading of one Scene
of a small Act. Who would have admired the Wis-
dom or seen the Love and Goodness of God to the Children
of Israel, in observing their grievous Bondage and
hard Slavery in the Land of Egypt? But how bright
and glorious did the Care of his wise & powerful
Providence appear, when they were delivered, and
their Enemies confounded and ruined by the most
surprising & miraculous Chain of Events? Could
we get a full View of the whole Chain of divine
Providence at once, we should more perfectly know
the Wisdom Beauty and Justice of Providence,
but our frail Natures and confined Views hinder
our being competent Judges of divine Providence?
5. The Reasons of the Conduct of divine Providence
must often be fetched from a future State, and the
present Government of the World is chiefly intended
for this next Life, and while we have so little
Knowledge of another World, it is impossible for us
to comprehend the Reasons of Gods Providence
in this World. It is certainly in vain to talk of Pro-
vidence without taking the other World into the
Account, were there no Life after this, it were not
worth the while to dispute whether there is a Pro-
vidence or not, it is of no great Consequence, which
side of the Question is true; if Death put an End
to our Being; but since there is another Life, what
was a Difficulty there may be, which we cannot
answer now, we need not Question, but infinite
Wisdom will then be able to give very wise Rea-
sons for them, and we shall then see the Beauty
and Harmony of all those things which we
now call the irregular and eccentric Motions

10. Sermon XII. Job. 26. 14. Of our imperfect
of Providence, but until that bright and blessed
Day, we must learn to acquiesce in the Wisdom &
Goodness of the God of Providence, & to believe
that he doth all things well, even when our shall-
low Understandings cannot comprehend the
great and wise Reasons of his Providence.

III. I now proceed to the last Head of Discourse.
To draw some practical Inferences from this Subject.

1. From what I have said on this Subject you may
learn how great Pride and surprizing Arrogance
it is, for such blind and ignorant Creatures as
we are to dare to censure infinite Wisdom in
its Actings & Designs, it is thought by some a
great piece of Wit, to start new Objections a-
gainst Providence, and to find out many faults
and Blemishes in God's Government of the
World; as this is the greatest Irreverence, and
highest Contempt of God, so it is a proof of the
most despicable Ignorance; that Men are
ignorant to such a Degree, that they know not
that infinite Wisdom and Almighty power can
do things which they cannot understand.

2. Are we ignorant of the Works of Providence
how much more must the glorious Mysteries
of Redemption be above our Reach and Com-
prehension? Do we so little understand our
own Make and Frame, how much less must
we understand the Nature of an infinite God
who made us so fearfully & wonderfully? Are
we ignorant of the Manner in which our
Souls are united to our Bodies, how much
more must we be ignorant, how the glori-
ous

Knowledge of the Works of Providence. 111.

glorious Persons of the God-head are essentially
united, and partakers of the same individual
Nature; or how the divine Nature in Christ Jesus
is personally united with the human Nature.
Are we so much difficulted to understand the De-
signs & purposes of divine Providence in this
World; how much more must we be difficulted to
understand the Actings of divine Grace in
the Soul? Are we bound to admire the incom-
prehensible Works of the first Creation; how
much more those of the second Creation?
And above all things how much are we bound
to adore the glorious Author of all these things,
and to reverence him who is, and for ever will
be an incomprehensible Being.

3. In our ignorance so great in a former State,
O how thankful should we be to a God of Grace,
who has given us a clear and plain Revelation
of his Will, and of our Happiness, and the Way
leading to it. The deep Mysteries of Nature, or
the hidden Counsels and Designs of Providence
are by no Means made the Rule of our Duty; but
God has given us to know so much of his Works, &
has so clearly made himself, and his Designs of
Grace known to us by the Gospel of his Son Christ
Jesus, that we may attain to all that Knowledge
which is necessary to carry on, and complete our
everlasting Happiness & eternal Glory.

4. Are we capable to know so few Things here,
with what Care and Diligence should we then
employ our Time, and all our intellectual Pow-
ers

II

Power in attaining to the knowledge of those things which are most useful, valuable and excellent, which will be most for our Interest and will lead us to a state of greater Perfection and this is only the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus John. 17. 3. And this is Life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Phil. 3. 8 = 15. Yea doubtless & I count all things but Loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord: for whom I have suffered the Loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ. & be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith. That I may know him and the Power of his Resurrection, and the Fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his Death. If by any means I might attain unto the Resurrection of the dead, but as he I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ's death. But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the Mark for the prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus. And let all the other things we labour to know be made subservient to this grand Design, and if we thus follow on to know the Lord, we shall know him.

5. If God will at last unfold all the Mysteries of Providence and bring to light all the secret Designs of his Government of this World, then surely

surely Heaven is a place where the saints have their Understandings wonderfully enlarged, & the Light of Glory must shine with an unvaried bright. O the Happiness of that clear Day when we shall know even as we are known, when the meanest Saint shall know more in a moment, than the ablest Divine could attain to here below, all the Days of his Life by all his laborious Studies, and most painful Researches. Let our souls be filled with ardent and longing Desires after the place of vision, and the Light of Glory, where we shall be feasted and delighted with an open view of the Glory of God, and with the clear and ravishing Contemplation of all his wonderful Works, of all the Mysteries of Nature, Providence and Grace, so far as shall be necessary for displaying the glorious Perfections of God, & advancing our eternal & universal Happiness. And lastly

6. If there were a future State of Rewards & punishments, then we may here see how reasonable all our Objections against divine Providence are from the present Administration thereof. What tho' the Administrations of Providence are at present for the most part dark & promiscuous, & that he dispenses present temporal Good or Evil with a seemingly undistinguished hand. It is but reasonable it should be so in a State of Trial & probation, in which Men are chiefly to be influenced by the Hopes of a future Reward, & the Fears of future Punishment. The force of these excellent Motives will best appear in a State, in which no Man knows Good or Evil, by the things that are before him Eccl. 9. 1. It will then appear that good Men are excited to persevere in their Duty from

higher Consideration than what are drawn from this World, and can trust the Goodness of God for the Happiness and Rewards of a better. May what though the present Administrations of Providence seem in some Instances contrary to what might be expected from the just Government of the World in thy uninterupted Prosperity of the wicked, and Afflictions of the righteous. This has been a dangerous & stumbling Block & Objection to good Men of old, this occasioned melancholly Reflections in pious Job. 21. 7, 8, 9, 13 & drawn from good Asaph's desponding Language as that he had in vain cleansed his heart, & washed his hands in Innocence Ps. 73. 13. But how do all these Difficulties vanish, when once the Solemnity of a final impartial Judgment appears in our View! Who would regret or complain of this slight & momentary Afflictions of the righteous, that shall work for them an exceeding & eternal Weight of Glory! Who would envy that short lived Prosperity of the wicked, that shall only sit & prepare those Vessels of Wrath for Destruction, & render them the terrible Instance of divine Severity & Justice! The longest and sharpest sufferings of the one shall be rewarded above all that we can desire or conceive; & the most successful & prosperous Wickedness of the other shall be punished far above what the greatest Provocations of those they injure & oppress, could tempt them to wish. Then shall every secret Conspiracy be discovered, every unrighteous Sentence reversed, every hidden Crime detected, every ambiguous Cause decided, every doubtful and dark Providence unveiled, and then the Beauty of Providence shall be displayed

Of the Immortality of the Soul
 displayed, the Regularity & Harmony of all its Administrations shall appear, & the Wisdom & Equity of all its Dispensations be put for ever beyond any possible Dispute, our Ignorance shall be dissolved. I how should this Consideration relieve our Minds under those Methods of Providence that appear at present most obscure & intricate unto us. S. R. 86. 5 - 145. 5.

Sermon XIII. th Matt. 10. th Ch. 28. th But are not

able to kill the Soul. Sometime ago I gave You a Hint of my Design of setting before You the Principles of natural Religion as the solid Foundation of revealed and super-natural Truths: In prosecution of this Design, I have already proven the Being of God, the certain and necessary Existence of a first & eternal Cause, whence all things in Heaven & on Earth do derive their Being, I have also established the Truth, and opened up the Nature of the Providence of God, that he preserves & upholds all the Works of his hands, that he governs all things, and directs all events with infinite Power, unerring Wisdom, impartial Justice, and unspeakable Goodness. — And now it will be proper to enquire what is our Rank and Station in the great Scale of created Beings, What are our constituent Parts, and what are the Designs and Limits of our Being. When we look abroad in this World, we see a surprising Variety of Creatures of different Powers Uses and Continuance; We observe those of our own frame and Make variously employed, pursuing different Courses & Interests in this active and busy World; Yet there is a certain

certain Truth, with Respect to all the Sons of Men, that the Organs of their Bodies decay and lose their Activity, and they are laid as a loathsome Carcass in the wildest Grave? But is this the final Period of our Life and Being? Is such an excellent Creature as Man, made only to eat & drink, to live and move for a few Days on this Earth, & to then to go down in a Prison of Darkness for ever? No Certainly our Saviour here in my Text assures us that the Soul survives the Body, and is not obnoxious to the Stroke of Death. Fear not them which kill the Body, & are not able to kill the Soul

This Advice is intended as an Encouragement to Christ's Disciples in all the dangerous Troubles to which they might be exposed, arising from the Malice and Hatred of Men, let your Enemies be never so outrageous, let their Cruelty rise to the highest Pitch, yet their Powers are limited, their Rage cannot reach or do harm to the better Part; the precious and immortal Soul is safe, survives the Murder & Death of the perishing Body.

From this Text we may learn these things.

1. That besides this Tabernacle of Clay which we see and handle, we have another constituent Part, which is not the Object of our Senses, which is not made of Matter, which has more noble Powers, more excellent Faculties, than possibly can arise from any combination of Particles of Matter.
2. That tho' the Body may be deprived of Life by a thousand Accidents, and must in a few Years be dissolved into dust; yet the Soul is immortal, and is by no means liable to the same

3. That the Immortality of the Soul, and the prospect of its everlasting Happiness, should raise us above the slavish Fears of Men, and inspire every good Man, every Disciple of Christ Jesus, with Courage and Boldness in the Discharge of his Duty, and fill him with Joy and Comfort under the heaviest Oppressions, & the most bitter Persecution & Sufferings, even unto Death.

My Design from this Text is to set before You the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality, which is one chief Principle of natural Religion, and a Truth of the utmost Concern and Consequence. 'Tis of so great Moment to You or Me, whether there be a wise and good God, a just and holy Providence or not, if after a few Scenes of Sorrows & Anxiety here, Death put an entire Period to our whole Being, & if our Souls perish with our Bodies.

Allow me then in pursuing this Subject

- I. To establish the Truth of the Immortality of the Soul, by setting before You such Arguments as may clearly evince it.
 - II. To point out the practical Use and Influence of this Doctrine.
- Return to the first Head of Discourse.
- I. To establish the Truth of the Immortality of the Soul, by setting before You such Arguments as may clearly evince it.
- And to make our Way the plainer let me observe, that by the Immortality of the Soul I do not mean that there is no Power that can possibly destroy the Being of the Soul; certainly the same all mighty Power which at first made our Souls can

can easily annihilate them, and the Life of the Soul depends on the Will and pleasure of the great Creator, for he alone hath an absolute and independent Immortality; But what I mean is, that such is the Make of our Souls, that nothing besides an Act of the Will and Power of God, of which we have no Cause to be afraid, can dissolve their Being, or destroy their active Powers, but our Souls out-live our Bodies, and are capable of perceiving & acting in a separate State.

1. From the Nature and Perfections of God. Particular, From his Justice, the Judge of all the Earth will do right, he will reward the Righteous, and punish the wicked, but this is not always, this is but very seldom done in this World. How often have the wisest, the best, and the most holy Men been ill treated, grievously harassed and afflicted, and that for Righteousness sake? Is not the nobility of Martyrs in many clear proofs, that Racks and Tortures & Death in the most dreadful Forms and hideous Shapes, have been the Lot of great and good Men in this World, while their Persecutors and Tormentors, Men of the most cruel Tempers, and most wicked profligate Lives, were at the same time raised to Honour and Dignity, and abounded in Riches & pleasures? Or is this the Design of a just God, and righteous Governour, if there is no other Life, and future State but the present? Where is the Justice of God if he make no remarkable Difference between those that observe, & those that violate his holy

Law? If he always carry it with an undistinguishing hand towards those that fear and love, & shewer what and affront him? How irresistible a Temptation would this be, without the Belief of a future State, to conclude, either that God does not govern the World, and has given no Laws to Mankind, or that he is wholly indifferent & unconcerned whether they obey them or not. And if we should think such an Indifferency an inexcusable Blemish on the Reputation of an earthly Prince, & wholly inconsistent with Justice, we must needs think it a much irreparable Stain on the Glory of the divine Government, & irreconcilable with that Perfection of Justice, that belongs to the great & universal Sovereign. But these things are matters of Fact, and cannot be denied; and therefore the Consequence must be, either that the Governour of the World is a cruel & unjust Being, which is the highest Blasphemy to imagine, or these very Men must live in another State, where all present Wrongs shall be adjusted. And since the Justice of God does not appear in this World, it seems very reasonable to believe that there will be a time when it will be manifest, & every Eye shall see it, that God will justly vindicate the Righteous, and acquit the Honour of his Justice, and that there shall be a general Dispensation, when all Men shall have a fair & open Trial, & God will render to every Man according to his Works. 2. The Immortality of the Soul will further appear from the Wisdom of God, he hath made Man after his own Image, endued him with the most excellent Faculties, & set him almost at the Top of the Creation. How noble & even Evangelical is our Understanding, which can penetrate into the

Receiver of Nature, survey the wonderful Works of God, ascend above them all, and contemplate the all-wise and glorious Author of all? Is not the Will which can chuse or refuse, and by a soveraign sort of Empire controul and command the whole Man, a very excellent & God-like Power. In a Word consider Man in all his Endowments and Gifts, Prospects and Designs, how admirable a Creature will he appear? Is it consistent with the Wisdom of God to make such a Creature to fetch a few Turns upon the Stage of this World, to view a few Scenes of Vanity & borrow, & then to pass away, and be no more? This would be as ridiculous, as one expresses it, as if a Man should carefully be bred up in all the Depth of divine and natural Knowledge, & curiously instructed in all Arts and Sciences, and then employed only in keeping Swine; surely then the wise Creator of Man, never intended that a Creature of such Dignity and Perfection should be confined for its Being and Happiness within the narrow Bound of Time, but made him for a longer Duration, even an immortal Life.

(3) The Immortality of the Soul will appear from the Goodness of God. How strong are the Desires naturally planted in the Hearts of all Men after Life and Happiness? Even such as are drowned in the pleasures of this present World, desire to eternize their Names and Memories; these Desires grow stronger in Men of Study & Contemplation, who are conscious of their great Ability, for intellectual Improvements, but find their present Attempts very weak and fruitless; they grow still stronger and more vigorous in those whom

whom God has begotten again unto a lively Hope, and made new Creatures in Christ Jesus, who in the Exercise of Faith and Love are groaning in this Tabernacle of Clay, longing for the Day when in Mortality shall be swallowed up of Life, & by patient Continuance in well-doing and sufferings, are seeking for Glory Honour and Immortality. How can we allow Ourselves to think that a good God will delude the Hopes and Expectations of his Creatures, or frustrate the Desires of his Children and Saints? Are we set on the Consines of another World, filled with Hopes of entering into, and enjoying a pure and lasting Happiness in it, and shall we be levelled with the lowest Animals at last, & be mingled with the very Dirt under our feet? No, no, God is good, he who made us, and planted these Desires in us, is the most generous and benevolent Being; and therefore our Souls shall live for ever, that our most extensive Desires may be satisfied by an immortal Life.

2. The Soul's Immortality appears from the Nature of the Soul itself, we know by its active Powers and surprising Operations, it must be immaterial, and consequently it must be simple, spiritual and uncompounded; And therefore having no dissimilar Parts, no jarring Principles, no Seeds of Corruption, it hath nothing in its own Nature tending or threatening a Dissolution, nor is it liable to Death by any adverse Power without it, no sword can touch it, no Instrument of Death can reach it; so that neither being corruptible in itself, nor vulnerable

by others, since Man cannot, and God will not destroy it, therefore we must justly conclude that it remains for ever, that is, it is immortal.

3. The Immortality of the Soul will appear from the Consent of all Nations. That our Souls are of an immortal Nature, that they do not die & perish with our Bodies, but pass into another State upon the Dissolution of our Bodies, is a natural Notion & Dictate of our Minds. That may be called a natural Notion, which the Minds of all Men do naturally hit upon & agree in, notwithstanding the Distance & the multitude of the several Parts of the World from one another, notwithstanding the different Temper, Manner & Ways of Education. How many amongst the Heathen Philosophers, who had no other Guide, but the Light of Nature have strenuously maintained this Doctrine. Plato hath some excellent Discourses of the Immortality of the Soul; Cicero rejoices in the Belief of it, and resolves to maintain it with his last Breath. The Turks acknowledge it, and it is taught by the Impostor Mahomet in his Alcoran, & the he w savage Indians are persuaded of the souls Immortality, and therefore the wives cheerfully throw themselves into their funeral Flames, of their Husbands; to attend their Souls in the other World. Now what will we call a natural Notion, if not that which Mankind in all places of the World, so far as History informs, do universally agree in. What greater Evidence can be given, to prove that any thing is natural? And if we believe a God, can we imagine that this wise and good God would plant such a Notion & Apprehension in the Minds of Men, as would put an universal Cheat and Delusion upon human Nature? And that the universal Consent of all Nations in this principle cannot be resolved

either

either into the Fears & boundless Jealousy & Suspicion of human Nature, nor into universal Tradition, which had its Original from some Impostor, nor into Reasons & Policy of State; might show particularly, but having formerly done that, concerning the universal Consent of all Nations in the Belief of a God, & the Reason being the very same as to this Principle of the Immortality of the Soul, I need not repeat it again upon this Argument. — And that some Persons & particular Sects in the World have disowned this principle, is no sufficient Objection against it. It cannot be denied but the Epicureans among the Philosophers did renounce this principle; The Sadducees likewise among the Jews fell into this Error upon a Mistake & Misapprehension of the Doctrine of their Master Sadoc, who as Josephus tells us, did use to inculcate this principle to his Scholars, that tho' there were no Rewards nor punishments after this Life, yet Men, ought to be good and live virtuously; from whence in process of Time by Heat of Opposition against the Pharisees, who brought in Oral Tradition, & made it equal with the written Word of God, they fell into that Error, & denied the Souls Immortality, not finding such clear Texts for it in the old Testament, as to them did seem fully convincing of their great Truth. But these were but few in Comparison of the rest of Mankind, and like Monsters, which are no Argument against this natural Notion & principle. No Man will deny that it is natural for Men to have two Eyes and five Fingers upon a hand, tho' there have been some Instances of Men born but with one Eye, and with four or six Fingers.

4. The Immortality of the Soul will further appear from the sacred and divine Oracles, which put this

this matter beyond all Doubt, my Text assures us that when the Body is killed, the soul remains untouched: Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul & Body, in Hell. With what Certainty and Comfort doth Job speak of the Immortality and Happiness of his soul in the Vision and Fruition of God after that his Body should be made the prey of merciless Worms. Job 19. 23, 26, 27th. For I know that my Redeemer liveth, & that he will stand at the latter Day upon the Earth: & tho' after my skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine Eyes shall behold, & not another: though my reins be consumed within me: So also doth the holy Psalmist Ps. 16. 9, 10, 11th. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope: For thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy One to see Corruption: Thou wilt shew me the Path of Life: in thy presence is fulness of Joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for ever more: Now clearly is this Doctrine taught us in the new Testament John 14. 2. In my Father's House are many Maneyons; if it were not so, I would have told You: I go to prepare a place for You. Rev. 14. 13. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, unto me, Write, blessed are they which die in the Lord, from hence forth: Yea, with the spirit, that they may rest from their Labours; and their Works do follow them: Yea it seems to be my great Design of Christ's coming into the World, that he might bring life and Immortality to light by the Gospel 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10th. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, not ac-

according to our Works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began. But he now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished Death, & hath brought Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel. — And

5. All Religion must be in vain, all the services & offerings of the saints must be to no purpose, if the Soul is not immortal. Why do I preach from this Place, why do You hear? Why do we spend any Time in serving and worshipping God, if after all our Hopes & Expectations perish with our Bodies. Were not our Time better employed in eating, drinking, enjoying any present Pleasures, if to Morrow we must die? If in this life only we have Hope in Christ, we who study to deny Our selves, to despise the World, & to endure sufferings in Hopes of a better Life, we are of all Men the most miserable. But farther if the Soul is not immortal, the whole Doctrine of electing Grace is a mere Delusion, the whole Plan of Redemption is a vile tale, all the sufferings of the Son of God, and the shedding of his precious Blood were in vain: Is it possible to believe that the Lord though would have bruised his only & beloved Son, or that the only begotten of the Father would have hung groaning, bleeding, dying on a cross to purchase for his people a short life of Vanity and Grief, after which there is to be an End of their being, Capacities, Enjoyments & Happiness for ever? O my Soul, let the Greatness of thy Redeemer's Love, & the precious Blood he shed, the dear price he paid for thy Salvation, convince thee of thine own Worth, & Abuse thee of thine immortal Nature & eternal Duration. 1. Paul. 19. 7 — 21. 4

It was a signal Instance of the Power and Wisdom of God to form the Body of Man out of the Dust of the Earth, a Body so curiously contrived, so fearfully & wonderfully made; But how much more excellent are those Souls! more noble in their Original, more surprizing in their Frame, possessed of higher Powers, Faculties & Endowments, capable to contemplate and admire, to adore and enjoy the Fountain of all Being and Blessings. The Soul is a Ray of Divinity, the Image & Offspring of God, tho' it has a strict Union with, and a tender Affection for the Body, yet it is not liable to the same Dissolution. with the Body, it can not be hurt by the Hand of Man, or touched by any Instruments of Death; Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul.

I purposed in discovering on this Subject

- I To establish the Truth of the Immortality of the Soul by setting before You such Arguments as may clearly evince it. — And
- II To point out the practical Use & Influence of this Doctrine — I have already laid before You the proper Arguments for the Souls Immortality. viz
 - 1. From the Nature and Perfections of God, particularly his Justice Wisdom and Goodness
 - 2. From his Nature & Faculties of the humane Soul
 - 3. From the Agreement and Consent of all Nations as to this great principle of Religion
 - 4. From the sacred Oracles, the Scriptures of the old and new Testament, which putt this Matter beyond all Manner of Doubt — And lastly
 - 5. All Religion must be vain, all the Services

Sufferings of the Saints must be to no purpose, if the Soul is not immortal — I now proceed to the second Head of Discourse proposed viz

II To point out the practical Use and Influence of the Souls Immortality. — And this Subject certainly sets before us many useful and excellent Lessons, such as

- 1. Here is a powerful Antidote against the slavish Fear of Men, however mighty or outrageous they may be. The Fear of Man often disturbs our Peace, and proves an entangling Snare to the Saints and people of God; it is an heavy thing to revolve with, and to speak with Courage, when Danger is at a Distance; but when it comes to the Tryal, Rocks, Tortures, flames and Gibbets are very terrible things, enough to make the stoutest Heart to quack and tremble, & to start back; in what hideous Shapes were these Terrors presented before the primitive Christians, Hea before many of our worthy Reformers, and Ancestors; and tho' blessed be God, we now enjoy Peace, yet who knows what Dangers and Sufferings may be betwixt us and the Grave? Let us then arm Ourselves with Resolution and Courage, from the consideration of the immortal Nature of our precious Souls, whereby they are raised above the Reach of the Rage and Malice of Men, they may crush the fabric of Clay, but cannot touch the rich Jewel within it, it is impossible to cut asunder the Bonds of Union between the Saints, and their glorious Head Christ Jesus, or to separate their Souls from the Love and Favour of God, which is their life and their Happiness. Revel. 6. 9, 10, 11th. And when he had opened the sixth Seal, I saw under the Altar the Souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony

Testimony which they field; And they cried with a loud voice saying, How long O Lord, holy & true dost thou not judge and avenge our Blood on them that dwell on the Earth? And white Robes were given unto every One of them; & it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, & their Brethren that should be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled. Matt. 16. 25. For whosoever will save his Life, shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his Life for my Sake, shall find it.

2. Here is an excellent Rule where by we may know the just Rate and true Value of Things with respect to Ourselves: for Man being an immortal Creature, nothing can give him real Contentment and Satisfaction, which is not of an immortal Nature, nothing can be accounted of great Use and Value, which reaches no farther than this short and momentary Life, & will not accompany us into the other World. Cor. 4. 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. How mean and contemptible must the things of this World then be in the eyes of the real Christian? How little doth he value the Riches, the Honours & the Pleasures of Time, about which the Men of this World make such a Noise and Bustle? How earnestly doth he covet, how diligently doth he seek after those Things which have a Connexion with, or Tendency to prepare for a heavenly and immortal State? What we were learning to make it the chief Work and Business of our Life to improve, and cultivate our Minds, and to gett our hearts

framed for a blessed Immortality. That raising our Affections above the little Things of Time & Sense, and fixing them on Objects more valuable & durable, we might rather prefer and pursue things as they relate to Eternity, and have a Tendency to promote or secure, their Blessedness of it.

3. Here is a proper Relief against the Fears of Death. To die, what is it? It is not to lose thy Being & to be liever, but to lay down thy Body for a season, to be released from thy Bonds and Fetters, discharged from thy Prison, & to live in the most proper sense: Death is a short and most swift Passage to Immortality, to never ending and unmixed Happiness. Why so fond of Earth and a present State? How little O Christian dost thou now know, love, or enjoy God, how mean are thy Services? How weak are all thy Songs of Praise and Adoration? How variable is the Frame of thy Heart, & how often out of Tune? Doth not thy Body hang like a dead Weight upon thy Soul, and hinder its active Powers? Art thou not thin weary of it, and willing to be released? O! happy Day, when we shall visit and suffer no more for ever, when no Enemy shall disturb our everlasting Repose! When we shall never languish in our Love, never wander from our Duty, or weary in our Obedience! Well Death is thy Deliverer, and opens a Passage to thy departing Spirit into the Mansions of endless Bliss and immortal Glory Rev. 14. 13. And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto Me write, Blessed are the dead which live in the Lord, from hence forth: Yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them. Will a weary Traveller be afraid of Rest and Quiet? Will a Pilgrim or Stranger

in a foreign Country be afraid of a Messenger who comes with no other Intention than to conduct him safe to his Country and at home. Such a Messenger is Death to all them that die in the Lord. He comes with no Designs of Hostility, but to convey them safe from this Wilderness & Valley of Tears, unto the Kingdom of their God and Father above, & to the Mansions of his eternal Rest and Happiness. If in this Life we Christians only had Hope; we should indeed of all Men be the most miserable. But when we know our souls are immortal, & when we look for a better Life, when this shall come to a Period, this Hope serves to inspire us with Courage & Comfort under all the Disasters, Trial & Affliction & we may meet with here, as knowing that the slight Afflictions of Gods people which endure but for a Moment, doth work for them a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.

4. Here we have a full Assurance of a future Account and Reasoning, that all Men must appear before the Judgment Seat of the most high, and give an Account how they have improved their Time, their Talents, Enjoyments and Opportunities of doing or getting Good, in a Word of their whole Conduct towards God, others, or themselves. Our Lord will enquire how we occupied these our Talents, whether we have consumed them on our Lusts, or employed them for his Honour and Glory. O let us not mistake our great Business, the main & only Errand for which God sent us into this World, and return to him, leaving his Work of Life undone. It were better for us that we had never been made so noble and excellent Creatures, or that we were annihilated and sunk unto Nothing at Death

Death, rather than to enter upon another and eternal State to continue miserable forever. Let us yet be both full on the Business of Religion, but fervent in spirit, leaving the Lord, that we may at least be able to lift up our heads with Joy, and appear with Confidence before the great and awful Judge of the whole Earth, and receive that happy Sentence from his Mouth, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joys of your Lord.

5. How great Enemies shall they be to the Honour and Happiness of Mankind, who would undermine and destroy this comfortable Doctrine of the souls Immortality, how cruel & inhuman are their Attempts who degrade their own Species, and set themselves on a level with the Beasts that perish. These merciless Men are more numerous than we at first view may imagine, amongst such we may rank not only Atheists, but all those sensual and sottish Men, who only mind the Pleasures of the Body, the pampering of the Flesh, and the Gratification of their venereal Appetites. Surely as such do not live below the Dignity of their Nature, so they are incapable of relishing the Pleasures of Paradise & tasting the joys of Heaven, for these being of a spiritual and intellectual Nature, they must either correct the Temper of their Minds, and thro the Assistance of Divine Grace amend the vitiated Taste of their Pleasures, or renounce all portion to here in Heaven and Glory, for without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord. O! what Folly is it thus to burn the precious immortal Soul for the sake of the frail & perishing Body.

6. Hence it is evident to a Demonstration that our chief Care and principal Concern should be

we to secure the Well fare, the Interest of our
Better and never dying part, our most intense
Labour and chief Care should be employed
about our precious and immortal Souls, and
our greatest Wisdom lies in adjusting the
Claims and Interests of our Souls & Bodies,
and in acting according to their real Value
and Importance. Let me enlarge a little
on this Argument.

(1) Let us upon and consider the noble Original
and intrinsic Worth of thy Soul, is it not more
precious than the Body, capable of higher
Operations, of superior pleasure, of an ever
lasting Happiness. The Body is of a perishing
Nature, it is ever tending towards the Dust, & will
soon be stripped of all Sensation & Suitableness
to the things which are in the World. What are
all the Riches, pleasures & Honours of the World
to a dead Carcase? That will entirely lose the
Relish of things once most agreeable? Now
this is the Case of us all: We are all going down
to the silent Grave & can carry none of the En-
joyments of this World along with us, to be of
any Service to us in the State, whether we are
going, nor contribute any thing to our future
Happiness. All their pleasure and Use, if it
should happen to last so long, must have its
Period with this to a short Death.

On the other hand we consider the Original
Frame and Constitution of our rational Na-
ture, and particularly the powers & Faculties
of our immortal Souls, as being capable of
higher and more sublime Enjoyments, than
the perishing Vanities of Time, we may well
conclude that this World was designed only

as a Inn to accommodate us in our Passage thro
it, but never as our native Country & the place
of our continual Abode. We certainly belong to a
better Country, to which we must therefore retire
after the Days of our Pilgrimage here are expired,
and when by our Improvements in Virtue & every
Christian Grace we are sufficiently Qualified
for a better State. And hence the Apostle tells us
that our Conversation, or as it may be rendered
from the Original, our Citizenship is in Heaven
from whence we look for a Saviour Phil. 3. 20.

(2) What pains has God of Grace been at, to restore
thy Soul to its primitive Vigour & Beauty & Felici-
ty, has he not entertained Thoughts of Mercy and
Grace towards thee before which Word began, and
laid a sure Foundation for thy Pardon Peace
and Salvation, if thou wilt build upon it, he laid
the first Foundation Stone of this glorious & stately
Building, for as the Apostle expresses it 2 Cor. 5. 18
All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to
himself by Christ Jesus. The whole plan of salva-
tion and Reconciliation was begun by his Order
and Council, and is carried on and managed by
his Direction and Influence. The whole Trinity
is concerned, and with joint Harmony concurr
in this grand Work, but each person according
to the Gospel Economy acts a distinct Part.
The Glory of the Contrivance is appropriated
to the Father, the Honour of the Purchase is
ascribed to the Son, & the Office of the Holy Spi-
rit is to apply this Redemption, to fit us for, &
bring us to the enjoyment of the purchased hap-
piness and Salvation. No creature can chal-
lenge this Glory, the Honour of our Redemption
cannot be ascribed to any dependent finite
Being

Being, its a Work so majestic and stupendous. Man was sunk so low, and become so weak and foolish that as he had no Mind to know God, so he had no Will to be at peace with him, he was so forward, so furious in his unjust Rebellion against God, & so filled with Dreams of Happiness in his State of Distance from God, that he will not entertain any Thought, or hearken to any Motions of peace and Reconciliation. Such was the defiled and diseased Nature of Man that the dim Light of Nature & the vicious Philology of the Bleathens could never find a Cure, they might entertain some faint Hopes from the Views of Mercy, but how to satisfy the Justice of an holy God, how to maintain the Honour of his Faithfulness in the Threatnings of his Law, was a puzzling & insuperable Difficulty? What Saviour or Surety could they find or propose worthy of God to receive or accept, sufficiently mighty enough to redeem and deliver? The Angels beheld with Wonder, and many of them did feel with Terror and Dread the Effects of vindictive Justice, but Mercy was hid, and as yet wrapt up in sacred Darkness from them; and when the Mystery of Redemption was revealed, and the manifold Wisdom of God is unveiled, are not even the holy Angels said to look with Attention & admiration unto these things 1 Pet. 1. 12. which plainly implies that these intelligent Spirits have not a perfect & comprehensive Knowledge of this Mystery, and its very probable they did not understand the Meaning of the first Promise made in Paradise so fully and clearly as after the coming of Christ in the flesh, for among other Ends of preaching the unsearchable Riches of Christ, & making known

the Glory of the Mystery of the Gospel, this was great that now unto the Principality & Powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold Wisdom of God Eph. 3. 10. & for what they cannot now comprehend, & what they are daily learning to understand, it was impossible they should invent or contrive but the Wisdom & Grace of God had done what was not within the Complex of Angels or Men to perform. What unspeakable Love has the Lord Jesus Christ evidenced to immortal Souls, when he shed his precious Blood for their Salvation & Happiness? and when it is his Work and Office in the higher Houses to prepare Mansions of Glory for them, and to send forth his Holy Spirit to sanctify and make them meet for the rich and heavenly Inheritance he has prepared for them. Oh! how sweet & constraining is the Force of redeeming Love! Surely if we are not utterly lost to all that this modest & unassuming and tender in human Nature, it will be impossible for us to resist these endearing Instances of the Love of Christ which carry Warmth and Favour enough with them to melt the most odourate Natures. How plainly & clearly is the Way leading to this heavenly Happiness now set before us, Life and Immortality are now in the most evident Manner brought to Light by the Gospel of Christ Jesus. If our Souls are lost, our all is lost, we are undone and ruined for ever. O the unspeakable Misery of that Man who loveth his immortal Soul, he forfeits the Favour of God, he is banished for ever from the Fountain of Life, his loved Heaven and eternal Happiness, and must lie down for ever in Torment, his Lot is irreparable & his Misery everlasting. Matt. 16. 26 For what is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World, and shall lose his own Soul. — And lastly

The Immortality of the Soul establishes the Certainty of a future State, that there is a State of Rewards & Punishments in another Life is another principle of natural Religion, which I design more particularly to discourse on. But what I have already spoken on the Doctrine of divine Providence & the Immortality of the Soul doth very clearly infer the Certainty of a future State, & God's Government of the World & present Administration of things in a great Measure intended for training up & preparing Men for another World. Do our Souls survive our Bodies & remain capable of perceiving & acting in a separate State. Then surely there must be another World and a future State, wherein our Condition is fixed for ever. Are we then fast living this World & hastening to Eternity. Let our Affections be much weaned from all worldly Enjoyments & pleasures, let us often ascend in our Thoughts Meditations & Desires to the upper Regions of Bliss, & let a sure foundation for Heaven be laid in the Frame & Disposition of our Minds by studying an heavenly Temper & acquainting Ourselves wth the noble Exercises & Employments of the Saints above, then we shall not be ashamed to live or afraid to die, & if we leave this World, we shall go to a World & a Work w^{ch} which we have been long conversant & well acquainted, & we shall enter on the Possession of all Happiness immortal as our precious Souls, & extensive as our highest Wishes.

S. Ps. 34. 17 — 36. 8 & 9.

Sermon XVth. Acts 17th, 30, 31st. And the Times of this Ignorance, God winked at, but now commandeth all Men every where to repent &c. There are several Truths in our holy Religion, that are justly called the first principles of the Oracles of God, and the Foundation on which the whole Superstructure of Christianity is raised, among

On the Certainty of a future Judgement. 13.

among these fundamental Articles, the inspired Writer of this Book has taught us to rank these two mentioned in our Text, the Necessity of Repentance from dead Works, & the Certainty of a future Judgement. And how strict and necessary a Connection there is between them, is here plainly intimated, by supposing the firm Belief of a future Judgement to be the most powerful Motive, and Persuasive to a sincere Repentance. What Truth can more effectually startle and alarm the Conscience of the securest Sinner, and stop them in their mad Career of Folly & Wickedness; what Argument can more strongly excite them to fear God and keep his Commandments than this, that he will bring every Work into Judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil. 'Tis therefore very necessary, and of great Use and Advantage, in practical Religion to fix on our Minds the firm & rooted persuasion of this great & important Article, that our Consciences may be under the continual Awe, and may on all Occasions feel the commanding Force of it. For well may God command all Men every where now to repent when he has appointed a Day, in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he has ordained, and has given us such satisfying Assurance of it, in raising him from the dead. We need go farther back to clear the Connection of the Word, than the 19th St. Then & the Apostle Paul being at Athens, one of the most famous and learned Cities in the World, had frequent Disputes with the different Sects of the Philosophers, & was ridiculed by them as a Talker & Seller forth of strange Gods, because he preached unto them Jesus & the Resurrection. Upon this he is carried before their high Court of Judicature, where the most learned Men used, to hear & determine what

what new God was to be worshipped. Your Apostle
 being desir'd to gratify their Curiosity & let them
 know what this new Doctrine, whereof he wrote,
 was for all the Athenians and Strangers (in which were
 they spent their Time) in nothing else, but either to
 hear or tell some new thing. He delivers the follow-
 ing excellent Discourse, wherein he clearly proves
 the Being of God and his Providence from the
 Works of Creation in general, & from the
 Formation of Man in particular, and so strikes
 at the Root of their Pagan Idolatry, by shewing them
 that the Presence of that God who made the World
 and all things therein, & who is Lord of Heaven
 and Earth, could not be confined to a material Tem-
 ple, & that he who needs nothing, but gave to
 all Breath and Life and all things, was not to
 be worshipp'd with Men's hands, as if those
 Temples and Images that are the production
 of human Art, could any way contribute to
 his Glory and Service, that he who has made
 all Nations of one blood to dwell on all the Faces
 of the Earth, and has before appointed the Times and
 Bounds of their Habitation. That he who is not
 far from us, but in whom we live & move & have our
 Being, needs no material Temple or Image to bring
 him nearer to us, & to give us Assurance of his Pre-
 sence with us. Nay that that invisible Deity, whose
 Springs our Souls are, must not be thought like
 unto Gold or Silver or Stone graven by Art or Man's
 Device. These invisible material Images &
 Statues being no ways capable to give us any sui-
 able Representation of an omnipresent and
 infinite Mind, but rather tending to suggest to us
 the most dishonourable Thoughts of him. Now
 these Crimes of Gentiles Ignorance (with the Apostles)
 God winked at or overlooks. God had in his just
 Judgement suffer'd the Heathen Nations for so
 many Ages to walk in their own idolatrous Ways
 without

On the Certainty of a future Judgement. 109
 without sending any extraordinary Prophets to visit
 or reclaim them, without furnishing them with any
 other Notices of himself, or any other Means to see
 or find him, than what the Light of Nature, & the Works
 of common Providence had afforded, which yet render'd
 them inexcusable in their not glorifying God ac-
 cording to what they knew of him. But now by
 sending his Apostles to preach the Gospel, he calls
 all Men wherever the Sound thereof reaches to turn
 from their Idols & banishes & from all their sins to
 the living God, by superadding to what the Light of
 Nature discover'd concerning a future Judgement,
 a clearer & fuller Discovery of the particular Circum-
 stances, & more abundant & convincing Evidences
 of the Certainty of it. But now commandeth all Men
 every where to repent. In discoursing on these Words
 I shall thro' the divine Assistance observe this Method
 I. That God will judge the World in Righteousness.
 II. That there is a Day, or particular Time appointed
 by God for that publick and final Judgement.
 III. That the Administration of this Judgement will
 be committed to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 IV. That God has given us sufficient Assurance of this
 great Truth in raising him from the dead.
 V. That these great Truths contain the most power-
 ful Motives to Repentance. And
 VI. To draw a few Inferences as I go along.
 Let us return then to 1st thing propos'd in Method, we was
 I. To show that God will judge the World in Righteousness.
 And for the Illustration of this Head I shall
 I. Show that the Original Right of judging the World
 belongs unto God alone.
 II. That all those Perfections are to be found in God alone
 that both capacitate him for the Exercise of that Right,
 and assure us of the Equity of his Sentence.
 III. Prove the Truth & Certainty of a future Judgement.

that are formed and found here, being an open
 inspection of his infinite Mind, has our most
 publick Worsh. & Worsh. No Obscurity of Place
 can hide or cover any of our Actions from his
 seeing Eye, to whom the Light is as his
 and the Light and Darknes are all a like. Ps.
 139. 4, 12. The Height or Latitude can exclude from
 the Notice and Observation of this all-seeing Eye
 and Witness who comprehends our paths and
 ways in his forward looking, & from whose unlimited
 Presence we can nowhere flee. No Distance of
 Time can efface any of our past Actions out of
 the Booke of his Remembrance. They are all
 layed down in the Records of his Omnicience.
 All our most secret sins are there set in the light
 of his Countenance, & will appear again to our con-
 fusion and condemnation, if pardoning Mercy
 does not wipe up an Act of Oblivion & Insensibility
 upon them. Yea the Perfection of Gods Judgement
 appears, not only that his own Testimony is in
 this Cause inerrant, and infallible, but he has
 also that sovereign Power over the Consciences
 of Men, that he can awaken their self-reflexive
 Faculty, and oblige every guilty Member to a
 voluntary Confession of all that is laid to his
 Charge, he can command and every wised Mans
 Conscience to turn his own Accuser, & to give
 in evidence against himself. And then there
 can be no farther Disputes about the Truth of
 the Evidence, where two such unquestionable
 Witnesses give it in, as the all-throwing God
 and every Mans own Conscience. So that
 this glorious Perfection of Omnicience gives
 us the highest Security that the great Judge of
 the world can neither mistake in Mat-
 ter of Fact, nor in Matter of Right. He
 alone

On the ... of a ...
 alone therefore we are all of passing an uncer-
 & finally decisive Doom on all Men. But
 the requisite that he who should perfectly judge
 the World, should not only perfectly know the Persons
 and things to be judged, but also by the Perfection of
 his own Nature should be set above the Reach of any
 possible Temptation to pass a wrong Judgement upon
 them. Now there is nothing that can prevent the Judg-
 ment of the great & bleesed God. The essential con-
 inflexible Righteousness of his Nature assures
 us that no partial Affection or Favour can ever bias
 his Judgement, & that there is no Respect of Persons
 with them Rom. 2. 11. And his infinity, Benignity and
 Clemency, who is good to all, & whose tender Mercy
 are over all the Worsh. of his hands, gives us the
 highest Security that he has no Partiality or Iniquity
 against his reasonable Creatures, but what their
 down real Demerits have raised, & that in judging
 them his Justice will be temper'd with Goodness, as
 to make all the favourable allongances that are
 consistent with the Honour of his impartial Equi-
 ty. And for that Passion which often misguides
 the Judgement of Men, it can have no Place with
 him, whose perfect Mind is always in an undis-
 turbed Serenity and Calm, and this Exercise of
 whose Justice is always under the Conduct of in-
 finite Wisdom. And for the Temptation of Interest
 he is infinitely above it, who is absolutely self-suffi-
 cient, who stands in no need of his Creatures, who
 can receive no real Benefit from their Acquies-
 cence and Happiness, nor Damage from their Condemna-
 tion and Misery. He has therefore no even inter-
 est to sway from. He is not capable of being so
 much as tempted to any Act of Injustice or Evil.
 And for that wretched Weakness, the servile Fear
 of human Greatness, we can suspect no such thing
 in

... great vnto Potentate, the King of
... and Land, &c. so whose. But vnto the
... Princes all as entirely the
... of their Capales, & who
... and Justice, they are equally ob
... What an unspcakable excellency ob
... in the Judgement of God, that it is hables
... suspicion to partiality or Iniquity. That
... if it comes will have nothing to ob
... against it, it will be oblig'd to own the guilt
... and go away under eternal Conviction, that
... sentence upon them is most righteous & iust.
The requisits that he who shall perfectly & finally
judge this world, should be endued with Power to ex
ecute the sentence he shall pass upon them. And
such unlimited Power belongs only unto God. The
Power of earthly Judges is but narrow & limited.
The Number and Interest of Offenders does often
set them above the reach of Law, and secures
their present Impunity in their Crimes. But
its far otherwise with the great God. He has an
unlimited Power to execute his Judgement. He
has all the Springs of our Nature in his hands,
& can give us the strongest, as well as the most
durable Generations of pleasure or of Pain.
He can make compleatly happy or miserable
and that for ever. He can inflict Torments
that are both endless & intolerable. He can
fill our souls with that extremity of Anguish
and Despair, against which there is no pos
sibility of Relief. He lives for ever, & there
fore can punish for ever. Men only can kill
the Body, but he can destroy both Body & sou
in Hell for ever. Matt. 10. 28. He can assign
us a Reward suited to the utmost Capacity,
and Duration of our Nature. He has all the

In the Certainty of a future Judgement.
Treasures of Heaven and Earth, of Grace and Glory
in his hand, he can bestow an Happiness upon us as
far beyond our Conceptions, as beyond our Deserts.
He can be an eternal as well as an exceeding great
Reward. None knows either the Power of his vindic
tive Wrath, or the extent of his remunerative Good
ness. There is no superior Tribunal to reverse
his sentence & no superior Power to stop the exe
cution of it, vnto wit that he alone should finally
judge this or to, who alone can fully reward and
punish all its Inhabitants. I come now
III To prove the Truth & Certainty of a future Judgement.
And shall endeavour to illustrate and confirm this
great Truth from these four Heads of Argument
From the Nature of the Soul of Man. From the sug
gestions and Convictions of Conscience. From the
Notions Men generally have of God & his Providence &
lastly from the express Testimony of diu. Revelation.
I. Then away the Truth & Certainty of this great Article
of Religion may be proved from the Nature of the
Soul of Man. Now the Nature of the soul seems plain
ly to declare that it is made for a future existence,
and for appearing in another Scene after this Life.
Whoever with any Attention reflects on his own soul
may easily perceive it to be of an entirely different
Nature from his Body, that it is one simple insi
visible Substance, tho' the subject of various and
distinct Powers, and not like the Body a Compositi
on of innumerable parts, which may be all dis
jointed & separated from one another, that the soul
is endued with many Powers and Affections, such
as Thought and Reason, Judgement and Choice, Love
and Hatred, Joy and Sorrows, which can never be the
Properties or Effects of Matter in any possible Va
riation of its Parts. Who can seriously affirm
that

That Matter a but inactive thing, which is only moved when it is acted upon & impelled from without, can by any Alteration of his Situation Size or Figure of its Particles ever produce the lowest Sensation. And how much less can it produce those noble and divine Sentiments, those sublime and generous Affections, to which the Soul of Man frequently rises up in the Contemplation of God & Holiness, the Order of the Universe & that Providence which sustains and governs all things. Certainly all Attempts to account for these things upon meer mechanical Principles, or by any Laws of Nature obtaining in the corporeal World are absolutely ridiculous. The Soul certainly is an immaterial Principle, & from this its Immateriality we may conclude that the Dissolution of the Body will not infer the Dissolution of this Soul, but that this on the contrary is naturally framed for a State of Immortality. This appears still more probable when we consider what great Capacities the Soul is possessed of, that it has the Force of Reason which can penetrate far into the Causes & Dependencies of Things which can invent the most useful Arts & make the most surprising Discoveries in almost every part of the Universe; that it has a Wisdom which is able to conduct the most momentous Affairs of this World, and a Memory stored with an almost infinite Treasure of Knowledge; that it has many amiable Instincts and generous Affections with a divine Relish & Love of Virtue. That Nature which is the Subject of such great Endowments and such excellent Qualities may be justly presumed to be more than mortal. Especially considering that the Powers and Faculties of the Soul never arrive in this World at

In the Certainty of a future Judgement. 144
 at a full State of perfection, no not even in those who have the greatest Advantages & Opportunities for improving and cultivating the Mind, and who apply themselves to it with the utmost Diligence. Yet after all these Improvements which the wisest and best of Mankind make in Knowledge & Holiness, they find not only an insatiable Desire, but a real Capacity of greater Knowledge & greater Virtue remaining in them: That their Minds are not to be satisfied with any Acquisitions in Wisdom and Goodness, that their Taste for these things particularly for Piety and Goodness instead of being decayed and worn out with Use and Time is always growing more strong and lively. Now the Consequence of all which seems to be that either this most curious and excellent Piece of divine Workmanship the Soul of Man has been made in a great Measure in vain, or there must be a future State where it will be brought into a more august and enlarged Scene of Action, where full scope will be given to its Faculties, and they will attain to a Degree of Vigor and Perfection vastly superior to what they could arrive at in this World; Whether the latter be not the more probable Conclusion, I leave it to the Judgement of those who have the least Reflexion. S. C. 1194. - 50.3
 Arock 11th Aug 1782.

Sermon XVIth Text Acts 17th Ch. 30, 31 verses
 Because he hath appointed a Day &c
 I proceed to a second Argument to prove the Truth and Certainty of a future Judgement Namely
 From the natural Suggest^{ns} & Convict^{ns} of Conscience
 The

The great Judge of the Universe, to remind all Mankind of his own Judgements, has erected a Tribunal in every Man's Breast, in Subordination thereto. Conscience, where the genuine Exercise of its self-reflexive power is not stifled & suppressed, abides in every Man as the part of a Witness, and also of a Judge, both in passing a Judgment upon our Actions, and in dispensing some thing of present Rewards & punishments. For there is no Man who may not be conscious of a Principle within himself, which dictates to him a great Difference between Moral Good & Evil, which directs and excites him to practise the one, and prohibits & restrains him from doing the other, and which affords him, in great deal of inward Peace, Comfort and joyful Hope, or fills him with Horror and Confusion, and uneasy Presages of an after punishment, according as its Dictations are observed or transgressed by him. This is not a fancied Representation, but a Matter of Fact, of which Mankind may be convinced from their inward Feeling and Experience. Every good Man has a most lively Sense of the Approbation of his own Conscience, and a full Acquiescence of the Testimony which it gives to his Integrity, and the Judgement which it puts upon him in his doing good & virtuous Actions. But Men find a secret Fear and Horror, & are inwardly ashamed and confounded in their own Minds, when they are about a wicked Enterprise, and engaged in all ill Design. Now, these ^{Words} and Fears do argue, if not the firm Belief and Persuasion of a future Judgement, yet

In the Certainty of a future Judgement. 111
 yet great Suspicions and misgivings of it in bad Men, and in good Men secret & comfortable Apprehensions concerning it. From whence these can it be that good Men tho' they find that Virtue is discountenanced, and Goodness many times suffers, and is persecuted in this World, & that their best Actions and Designs are often unsuccessful. Whence I say it is, that good Men notwithstanding this, bear up & persist in a holy Course, but because they have this inward Apprehension & Persuasion, that there will be a Time, when Virtue and Goodness will be considered and rewarded tho' not in this World. And whence comes it that bad Men, tho' they prosper in their Impiety, are yet fearful and timorous, but because they stand in awe of a Being greater, more righteous, and more powerful than themselves, but because they have some secret Apprehensions of an invisible Judge, and inward Presages of a future Vengeance which sooner or latter will overtake them, and because they believe there will be a Time when all the Wickedness they have done shall be accounted for. Wicked Men may indeed by various Arts suppress the Voice of Conscience, and elude its Corrections for a time. Yet there are Seasons in which this principle will revive in them, & assert its Right of examining strictly their Conduct & Behaviour, & condemning and condemning them for it, and in which it will, like wise give them some secret Notices of a more powerful & effectual Sentence that will be here after pronounced upon them conformably to its own. Yea the force of this principle is sometimes very remarkable in bad Men in bringing to Light their

closest and most secret Acts of Wickedness, & throwing them, even when they have nothing to fear from any Power or Authority upon Earth, into great Agonies and Convulsions of Mind upon the great Vicin of their own Guilt and their fearful Apprehensions of a future Vengeance ready to fall upon them. Which Apprehensions are sometimes so strong in their Minds, that it is impossible for them by all the Efforts of their Wits, by all the Pleasures & Amusements of the World, & by all the Methods they can invent & make Use of to bear them down, & prevent their giving them extreme Uneasiness and Torment. A Plein Argument that these are not adventitious Notions derived from Instigation & Education, but that they are the genuine Sentiments of Nature which unavoidably spring up in the Minds, & are inseparable from our Constitution. Now the natural Apprehensions of a future State and Existence are strong proofs & forcible Arguments to convince us that these things will really be; it being by no means credible that Men kind are so capriciously formed as unavoidably to have an Expectation of these great Events, if after all they are to be disappointed as to be under a Necessity of falling into an universal Delusion in their most important Matters. It may rather be presumed that the Suggestions of Conscience concerning a future State & a Judgement to come are designed for a solemn Admonition to all of us to prepare for its Approach, and that the Judgement which Conscience now passes upon us will be reviewed & fully confirmed hereafter by the decisive and irrevocable Sentence of God himself.

In the Certainty of a future Judgement. 15
 To this purpose we may apply the Words of the Ap. John. 3. 20, 21. If our hearts condemn us, not, then have we Confidence towards God. But if our hearts condemn us, how much more will God do so, who is greater than our hearts, and knows all things.
 The Truth and Certainty of a future Judgement will further appear from the adorable Perfections of God's Nature compared with the present Administrations of his Providence. According to the most obvious Conceptions that we form of the Deity, how a holy good & just Being, & consequently that he loves Goodness and hates Iniquity, and therefore it must be agreeable to his Wisdom to countenance the one & discountenance the other in such a Manner as becomes his wise sovereign and Governour of the World. But how can we suppose the great Ruler of the Universe to be possessed of the adorable Perfection of Administration, and exclude the Consideration of a Judgement to come? 'Tis a just Observation that the wise Man makes concerning the present Course of things & which he complains of as a great Evil under the Sun Eccl. 9. 2. That all things come alike to all, that there is one Event to the righteous and the wicked, To the good and clean and to the unclean; To him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: he is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an Oath. But where is the Justice and Goodness of God, if he makes no remarkable Difference between those that observe & those that violate his holy Lawes? If he always carry it with an undistinguishing hand towards those that feare and love, and those that hate & affront him.
 How

How irresistable a temptation would this be, with
 out the belief of a future judgement to conclude
 either that God does not govern the world, and
 has given no laws to Mankind, or that he is
 wholly indifferent and unconcerned, whether they
 obey them or not. And if should think such an in-
 difference an irreparable blemish on the Re-
 sultion of an earthly prince, & wholly in con-
 sistent with either Justice or Goodness, we
 must needs think it a much more irreparable
 stain on the glory of the divine Government, &
 irreconcilable with those Perfections that be-
 long to the great and universal Sovereign.
 And yet this would really be the Case, if there
 be no future judgement, no State of Rewards &
 punishments after this life, in which the great
 and visible Difference between the righteous
 and the wicked, between him that seeks for him, &
 him that serves him not. Yea wherein is the Wis-
 dom of God, if he does not rectify this seeming
 Confusion and Disorder? If in his moral Govern-
 ment he leave the very glorious Perfections under
 a perpetual Cloud and Obscurity? If as a task ge-
 neral Courses of his Administrations none ever
 fare the better for their Obedience & Fidelity to
 him, or the worse for their Rebellion & Disobedience.
 How then should that essential Justice of his Na-
 ture be known, that prompts him to give to every
 Man according to his Works? How should that
 Goodness appear that inclines him liberally
 to reward those that diligently seek him, and
 will a God of infinite Wisdom so govern the world,
 as to leave no Traces of Goodness upon his Ad-
 ministrations, & will he always suffer the glory
 of his adorable Excellencies to lie under a
 perpetual

in the Certainty of a future judgement. 16.
 perpetual Eclipse? No certainly, the righteous
 Judges of all the Earth, will do what is right.
 But there is a more insuperable Objection against
 the Conduct of divine Providence, if we admit not
 the belief of a future judgement & a State of Re-
 wards & punishments in another World. For tis
 no unusual thing to observe and see just Men to
 whom it happens according to the Word of the wick-
 ed, & wicked Men to whom it happens according to
 the Word of the righteous, this also saith the
 Preacher his Vanity & Vexation of spirit Eccl. 8. 14.
 For virtuous & holy Men are often ill treated in
 this World, grievously harassed & afflicted, & that
 for Righteousness sake, And on the other hand,
 bad Men many times flourish, and are prosperous,
 they are not in Trouble like other Men, neither are
 they plagued like other Men. And how shall we re-
 concile such Events as these with the Justice and
 Goodness of God, if we suppose that he will suffer
 afflicted Wretches to go for ever unrewarded, & prosper-
 ous Wickedness to go for ever unpunished? Yea
 what injurious Apprehensions must we entertain
 of God, if we suppose his Providence so often to
 establish such a present Connexion between im-
 piety & temporal Happiness, & between Virtue &
 Misery, if there be no judgement to come, and no
 future Rewards & punishments to rectify this
 seeming Irregularity, & to justify the Conduct
 of divine Providence in such things as seem to
 cast the greatest Blemish & Reproach upon it.
 How will the Justice of God does not appear in
 this World, it seems very reasonable to believe that
 there will be a Time when it will be made mani-
 fest, and every Eye shall see it, that God will one
 Day fully vindicate his Righteousness and ac-
 quit the Honour of his Justice, and that there
 shall

... general Abiye this, when all Men shall
 have a full and open Tryal, and God will render to
 every Man according to his Works. Now the Dis-
 positions of God's Providence towards good &
 bad Men are many times very promise-chieve, yet
 ever and contrary to what might be expected
 from his wise, just and good Sovereign, from one
 whom we believe to love Righteousness, and hate
 Iniquity. Now the Justice of this Providence is in
 a great measure hid and covered, but there will
 come a Day of the Revelation of the righteous Judg-
 ment of God, when he will bring forth his Righte-
 ousness as the Light, and his Judgement as
 the Noon Day, and every Mouth shall be stopped,
 and every Conscience and heart of Man shall pro-
 fesse the righteous Judgement of God. This
 true indeed, that sometimes the Providence
 of God has remarkably inteposed in reward-
 ing the Piety of good Men with an eminent De-
 gree of temporal Prosperity and Happiness. We
 have seen pleased sometimes cleavly to ve-
 liberate the precious from the vile, remarke-
 ably to deliver good Men, & to narrow the wicked
 in the work of their own hands. Sometimes he
 gives good Men some Portayntes of Heaven,
 some earnest of their future Happiness in this
 Life. And on the other hand, his Justice has
 sometimes signalized itself by exemplary
 Instances of its Severity against enormous
 Sinners, even by such temporal Judgements
 as have carried the Nature of their Crimes
 engraven on them; he manumitted gives sen-
 tence some Intimation of a future Judgement
 and Shadows of that utter Darkness, where
 they are to dwell for ever. That for which is
 kindled in some Men's Conscience in this
 Life

On the Certainty of a future Judgement. 130
 Life, that unspheakably, unquish, and those inex-
 plicable Horrors which some Sinners have felt
 in this World, may serve to give us Notice of the extreme
 Severity of divine Justice against impenitent Sin-
 ners: that miraculous Deluge that swept a-
 way the old World, those stupendous and terrible
 Showers of Fire and Brimstone which consumed
 Sodom and Gomorrah and the Cities about,
 that dreadful Earthquake, which swallowed up
 Corah and his Company, and let them down as it
 were quick into Hell, may serve for pledges &
 Earnests of the dismal Torments & dread Pun-
 ishments of the next World. But these Instances
 of God's rewarding Goodness, & punishing In-
 iquity in this Life as yet are, that they are no
 way capable to counter-balance the strong Ob-
 jections drawn against the Justice & Goodness
 of God from the more general Course of his Pro-
 vidence. And therefore it is highly requisite and
 fit that there should be a general Judgement for
 more clear and full Manifestation of the Justice
 and Equity of the divine Procedure. Lastly
 The Truth and Certainty of a future Judgement will
 most evidently appear from the clear and expresse
 Revelation of the Holy Scriptures. It is true in-
 deed that there were hardly any Nations that pre-
 vailed more universally in the Heathen World, than
 that there was to be a future State, that Mankind
 were to be brought to an equitable and impartial
 Tryal in it, and in consequence of that to be fixed
 in a State of Happiness or Misery in proportion
 to the good or evil they did in this World. The Vulgar
 it must be owned for the most part received this
 Doctrine as it was dressed out in the Fictions &
 fabulous Representations of the Poets, but this
 tho it diminished the good Effects and Influence of the

22. *Heaven XVIth Text Acts 17th 30, 31st*
the Doctrine upon them, yet did not usually hinder
their having a firm belief of it. For the wisest
Men, among the many, some of whose at least had not
only a strong hope of a future State, but seemed
to have a very rational Notion of the Nature
of that State, and of the Justice & impartiality
& universal extent of the Judgement which Men
would undergo upon their Entrance upon it. I now
proceed to prove this great Truth from Revelation
And I will not cite Texts out of the old Testament
to this purpose, because these things were but ob-
scurely revealed to the Jews in Comparison
Life and Immortality being brought to light by
the Gospel. Yet Jude tells us that his own was an
early Revelation of this to the old World. Jude 14, 15th
And Enoch also the seventh from Adam prophesied
of these, saying Behold the Lord cometh with ten
thousand of his Saints, to execute Judgement up-
on all, & to convince all that are ungodly. But
whether this refers to the flood, or the final judge-
ment of the World, is not so clear and certain. How-
ever this is most plainly revealed by our blessed
Lord and Saviour in the new Testament. The
Process of this great Day, with several of the par-
ticular Circumstances of it, are fully described
by our Saviour Matt. 25 & in the Vision of the Ap-
John Rev. 20th 11, 12, 13th. And the Apostles of our Lord
do most frequently declare and inculcate it 2 Cor.
5. 10 For we must all appear before the Judgement
Seat of Christ, that every one may receive ac-
cording to the things done in his Body, whether it
be good or bad. Rom. 2: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 When speaking
of the Day of Judgement, he calls it, the Day of
Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgement
of God, who will render to every Man according to
his Deeds. To them who by patient Continuance
in

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in well-doing, seek for Glory Honour & Immortality
eternal Life, but unto them that are contentious, &
do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, In-
nation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish upon
every Soul of Man that doth evil. 1 Pet. 1. 7. And if
call on the Father who without Respect of Person
judgeth according to every Man's Works, pass the
Tribe of your sojourning here in Fear. I mention
no more 2 Pet. 3. 10, 11, 12. But the Day of the Lord
will come as a Thief in the Night, in which the Ele-
ments shall pass away with a great Noise, and
the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat,
the Earth also, & the Works that are therein, shall
be burnt up. Seeing all these things shall be dissolved,
what Manner of Person's ought ye to be on all holy Con-
versation & Godliness. Looking for & hastning unto the
Coming of the Day of God, & his Wrath. Wherefore beloved
seeing that ye look for these things, be diligent
that ye may be found of him in Peace, without
Spot and blameless. Thus you see the Truth and
Certainty of a future Judgement confirmed from the
Nature of the Soul of Man, from the Suggestions &
Condemnations of Conscience, from the natural Notions
Men have of God and his Providence & from the ex-
press Testimony of divine Revelation.
I. Allow me to draw an Inference or two from what has been
already advanced on this important Subject.
Will God certainly judge the World in Righteousness,
then we may well see, how unreasonable all our
Objections against divine Providence are, from
the present Administrations thereof. What tho'
the Administrations of Providence do at present
for the most part, promiscuous, and that he dispen-
ses present temporal Good or Evil, with a seem-
ingly undistinguishing Hand. 'Tis but reasonable 'tis
should be so in a State of Tryal, in which Men are
chiefly

chiefly to be influenced by the Hopes of a future Reward, and the Fears of a future Punishment. The force of these excellent Motives will best appear in a State, in which no man knows Love or Hatred by the Things that are before him. Ecl. 9. 1. It will then appear that good Men are excited to persevere in their Duty from higher Considerations than what are drawn from this World, and can trust the Goodness of God for their Happiness and Rewards of a better. Nay, what the present Administrations of divine Providence seem in some Instances contrary to what might be expected from the just Governour of the World in the uninterrupted prosperity of the wicked & afflictions of the righteous. This has indeed been a dangerous stumbling Block & Objection to good Men of old. This occasions such melancholly Reflections in psalm 73. 6, 7, 8, 9, 13. Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh. Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, years are mighty in Power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, & their offspring before their Eyes. Their Houses are safe from Fear, neither is the Rod of God upon them. They spend their Days in health, and in a Moment go down to the grave. And drew from good Asaph's desponding Language as that he had in vain cleansed his Heart, and washed his hands in Innocence Ps. 73. 13. But how do all these Difficulties vanish, when once the solemnity of a final impartial Judgement appears in our View. Who would regret or complain of these light & momentary Afflictions of the righteous, that shall work for them an exceeding and an eternal Weight of Glory! Who would envy that short lived Prosperity of the wicked that shall only fit and prepare those Vessels of Wrath for Destruction and render them the terrible Instances of divine severity

Severity and Justice. The longest and sharpest Sufferings of the one shall be rewarded above all that we can desire or conceive. And the most successful and prosperous Wickedness of the other shall be punished far above what the greatest Advocate one of those they injured or oppressed, could tempt them to wish. Then shall every Secret Conspiracy be discovered, every unrighteous Sentence revealed, every hidden Crime detected, every ambiguous Cause decided, every doubtful & dark Providence unveiled, and then the Beauty of Providence shall be displayed, the Regularity and Harmony of all its Administrations shall appear, & the Wisdom and Equity of all its Dispensations be put for ever beyond any possible Dispute. And how should this Consideration relieve our Minds under those Methods of Providence that appear at present most obscure and intricate unto us. S. Ps. 1. 1. - 9. 7.

Because he hath appointed a Day &c. Having proved the Truth of a future Judgement from several satisfying Arguments I praise God & show that there is a Day or time appointed, when God will thus judge the World in Righteousness. Now tho' the Scriptures speak of the Time of the future Judgement under the Notion of a Day; there is no Reason or Necessity of understanding this of so scanty a Portion of Time, as that of a natural Day. We read of the whole Time of God's gracious Visitation towards a people under the Notion of a Day; The Day of Grace and Salvation 2 Cor. 6. 2. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the Day of Salvation have succoured thee. Behold now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation. & this is called Man's Day Luke

Luke 19. 42. O that thou hadst known, saith our Lord to Jerusalem in this thy Day the things that belong to thy Peace. On the other hand the Time of Gods destructive Vengeance to a people is also called a Day, and that is properly Gods Day, which commences when Mans Day of Visitation is past, and over. Is. 34. 8 For it is the Day of the Lords Vengeance. But this Season or Time of future Judgement is called the Day of the Lord by Way of Emphasis. Sometimes its called that Day, as if no other Day was comparable to it 2 Tim. 1. 10. The Lord grant unto him that he may find Mercy of the Lord in that Day. This is called the Day of the Lord, because its Gods time of final Retribution that succeeds our Time of Probation & Tryal 2 Pet. 3. 10. But the Day of the Lord will come as a Thief in the Night. This is called the last Day, because the solemn Transactions there of will be the conclusive Act of Gods Providence toward this lower World, that shall shut up this transitory Scene of Time, and open that of a boundless Eternity Is. 6. 39. But will raise it up again at the last Day. This is called the great Day by Way of Emphasis, because the Transactions there of are of the highest Moment and Consequence; no less Matters being then to be finally and irreversibly decided than those of our Acquittal or Condemnation that shall adjudge us to a State of endless and unchangeable Happiness or Misery Jude 6th Verse And are reserved unto the Judgement of the great Day. & to add no more This is called the Day of Christ, because he will then visibly appear invested with his royal Authority to judge the Quick & the dead Phil. 1. 10 that Ye may approve things that are excellent, that Ye may be sincere & without Offence, till the Day of Christ. When indeed that Time will commence, it were great

great Presumption for us to pretend we can determine. And to check any needless Curiosity that Way, we are told by our Saviour in Matt. 24. 36. But of that Day and Hour knoweth no man, no not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only. And what Arrogance were it for us to penetrate into his Counsels, who keeps the Times & Seasons of such glorious Events in his own hands, and to think we can discover what our blessed Saviour himself had no sin his Instructions to reveal. But this we know that this Day commences at the general Resurrection, when all that are in their Graves shall hear his Voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, they that have done good to the Resurrection of Life, and those that have done Evil to the Resurrection of Damnation Is. 6. 28, 29. For as I hinted before, the final Judgement is the conclusive Act of divine Providence, that shall put an end to the successive Generations of Mankind, and to that Day of Probation and Tryal, they have here enjoyed, and to that Kingdom of glory that is preparatory for that of Glory; and this by such a final Retribution, as shall fully vindicate the Conduct of divine Providence, and display his infinite Wisdom, his inflexible Justice, & spotless Holiness, his boundless Clemency & Goodness, and marvellous Patience & long-suffering in all his Administrations.

This therefore highly congruous to the Wisdom of God, and conducive to the Illustration of his Glory, that the Time appointed for the final Judgement should be future, & should be at the end of the World.

1. It is highly congruous to the Wisdom of God, that the final Judgement should be future. For were Men to be visibly judged in this World, while in this State of Tryal & Assest, were they to be visibly rewarded or punished before their Success in this Life, how would this detract from the glory and

and lessen the Value of the Virtues & Obedience of the Sincerely godly. 'Tis the Height of true Piety to adore and adore an invisible God in Opposition to all the present Temptations of a flattering & frowning World, and that from a steady Faith in his Promises concerning an unseen and future Reward. But this would be no great Occasion for the Exercise of such a divine Faith, if the process of divine Judgement in visibly rewarding particular good Men, and punishing particular Sinners, were daily presented to our Views. Where would the great Temptation to wickedness lie, if we continually beheld vast Multitudes of Sinners as it were hung up alive in Chains, and made in our Sight the dreadful Examples of a terrible Vengeance? Who would not thereby be affrighted from the destructive Paths of Sin? May there be, if the Rewards of it were present and visible to an Eye of Sense? Piety in this Case would look rather like the Effect of Necessity than Choice; when the visible Flames of divine Justice every where appear to affright and scare Men from Sinning, and when our Obedience should scarce meet with any considerable Difficulty & Discouragement for the Trial of it. — How how improper a place would this Earth be for divine Judgement, and the present visible Executions thereof? The terrible Examples of divine Severity in the Punishment of Sinners would render this Earth too like a Hell, even a scene of Horror & Misery to be a desirable Abode for the righteous. — While we carry with us such Bonfires of Piety and Compassion, we cannot behold the sharp

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 sufferings even of Chastious Malefactors without some uneasy Commotion and Disturbance. But how much more unwelcome and frightful a scene would this Earth be, if filled every where with the tremendous Executions of divine Severity and Vengeance, especially if many of the wretched Sufferers were our own Relations, and Friends, whom we have the tenderest sympathy with. And farther in the second place
 2 'Tis every Way congruous that this final Judgement should be transacted at the End of the World. There is no Doubt a particular Judgement that passes on every one at Death, or something analogous to it. Yet its certain that Souls immediately after Death are according to their Works, either received into the Mansions of the blessed, or hurst down into the Regions of Darkness and Despair. We read of dying Lazarus being carried by Angels into Abraham's Bosom, but of the rich Man's being in the place of Torment. And these are every Man's Actions as at Death so far scanned and considered by the distributive Justice of God as is necessary to their being adjudged to a State of initial Happiness or Misery, that will give them a joyful or terrible prospect of the final Judgment of the great and last Day. — But such a particular and comparatively private Judgement does no ways fully answer the great End of God's Government, namely the publick Manifestation of his rewarding Goodness, and punishing Justice in the View of Angels and Men. And its chiefly for this Reason, that he has appointed a Day, or particular Time for this awful Solemnity, and that is always represented in Scripture, as commencing at the End of the World. 'Tis when all Nations are gathered before the Son of Man, its when all the dead small and great stand before God

104. Sermon XVIIth. Text Acts 17th 30, 31. Vs
God, when the Sea shall give up the dead which are
in it, and Death and Hell shall deliver up the dead
which are in them, that then they shall be judged every
Man according to his Works See Matt. 25. 31, 32, 33
compared with Rev. 20. 12, 13 V. 'Tis then that the
Omnipresence and Omniscience of God will be
marvellously displayed, in revealing the secrets
of all hearts to before that vast Assembly. 'Tis then
the Goodness of God shall shine in its brightest
Tire in vindicating the Innocence of his faithful Ser-
vants, and forgiving them a Reward infinitely
transcending all their Services and sufferings.
'Tis then the vindictive Justice of God will appear
in its tremendous glory, to avenge all the Offences
offered to his holy Name, and all the Injuries and
Abuses done to his Patience and Pity. Then
will both Angels and Men behold and applaud the
Wisdom, the Equity, the purity, the Justice and Goodness
of all Gods Administrations, and carry away with
them the fullest Convictions of the Impastibility of
his Sentence. None will then have Reason to com-
plain, that the least of their faithful Services how-
ever secret, have been overlooked & neglected & are
like to go unrewarded; None shall be able to say,
that any of their Injuries and Wrongs have gone
unavenged. Nor shall the closest Hypocrite have
any Reason to applaud his own Deceit, or boast
of his escaping with Impunity. No Angels & Men
shall go away from that righteous Tribunal with
so full and clear Dates of Action concerning the Equi-
ty of every Ones Doom, as will eternally silence
all Objections against the Government of God,
even render those speechless whom it shall condemn.
From these Considerations its then every Way
congruous to the Wisdom of God that this awful
Work of Judgement should be reserved to another
and

105.
On the Certainty of a future Judgement.
and unseen State: that in Reference to it, we should
walk by Faith and not by sight; that here our Obedience
would have its due Tryal, by conquering all the Tem-
ptations of this vile World thro' the lively Faith
of invisible Reality, that the Difference which the fi-
nal Judgement will make between the righteous &
the wicked, should not now appear to serve, but be as-
sent to on the Credit of the Promises & Threatnings
of the God of Truth, & the Veracity & Truth of God be glo-
rified by relying on it for the Certainty of these fu-
ture Events. — And if also from these Considerations
appears how highly congruous it is to the Wisdom of
God, & how conducive to the Illustration of his own
Glory, that this great Affairs should be openly & publicly
transacted in the Face of the World, & consequently
that it should be delayed, till all the successive Gene-
rations of Mankind have acted their several parts
on the Stage of this Earth, and till the Scenes of time
shall be shut up.
I shall now draw an Inference or two from this Head.
1. If there be such a Day certainly a coming, it may
justly be matter of Wonder and Astonishment to see
the general Impiety and Indolence of Mankind, how
wicked they are; and how careless of their Lives and
Actions, and how insensible they are of that great &
terrible Day of the Lord, which is coming upon all
flesh, and for any thing we know, may be very near
us. Yet how securely do the greatest part of Mankind
away their Time, some in worldly Business, others
in Pleasures and Vanity, & a great many in Wicked-
ness and Vice. Surely such Men have no apprehensions
of a future general Judgement; surely they do
not believe that there will be any Memorial of their
Actions in another World, and that they shall be called
to a strict and severe Account for all the Thoughts
Words and Deeds of this Life. Surely they do not
think that there is a just and powerful Being above
them

them, who now of service every thing they do, and will one Day judge them for it, that there is a Pen a ways writing, and making a faithful Record of all the Passages of their Lives, and that these Books shall one Day be produced & opened, and Men shall be judged out of the things that are written in them, & all our Thoughts, Words & Actions shall pass under a most severe Tryal & Examination. Or if Men do believe these things, they still will suppress their Belief, & detain their great Truth of God in Uprightness, they do not attend to it, & consider it, that it may have its due Law & Influence upon their Lives. For it is not imaginable that if Men were possess'd with a firm Belief & Persuasion of this great & terrible Day of the Lord, they should be so careless & secure, as we see they are, and have so little regard to what they do, that they should pass whole Days & Weeks, Yea Months and Years in the gross Neglect of God and Religion, & of their immortal Souls, that they should spend their Days in Vanities, & their Years in Pleasure, that they should live in a continued Course of Impiety, Lust, and Intemperance, and in the wicked Habit of profane Swearing & swearing, that they should go on in their sinful Courses & abominable practices without any great Regret or Disturbance, as if no Danger attended them, as if divine Justice was asleep, and all their Actions were obscured with them, and never rise up against them. Surely it is evident from the Lives of many that they are strangely inconsiderate, and guilty of the most gross and stupid Madness that can befall a reasonable Creature. For I dare appeal to any Man of common Understanding & serious Attention whether a greater Folly and Madness can be imagined, than for Men to profess in good Earnest to believe that there is a Day shortly coming, where

where in they shall appear before the impartial Tribunal of the great Judge of the World, and all the Actions of their Lives shall be ransacked and laid open, & that there is not any thing that we do, that shall escape a severe Sentence; Yea to further to be persuaded, that as it shall upon that Tryal appear that they have demeaned themselves in their Words, they shall be ventur'd to an eternal & unchangeable State of Happiness or Misery in the other World. And yet after all this Conviction to live at such a miserable Rate, as no Man in Reason can live, but that he is undoubtedly certain of the contrary of all this, and verily perswaded in his heart, that he is guilty of what the Gospel says concerning these Matters is true. This is so incredible a Stupidity and Folly, that did not frequent & undeniable Experience make us sure of the Truth, out of Respect to human Nature, it were not to be believed. Consider this, all ye that forgett God & put the evil Day far from you, consider this Day, and save yourselves Men.

2. From what hath been said we may infer, how much this great Day should command our most serious and attentive thought. Let us then consider, seeing we have the greatest Assurance of a future Judgment, what Manner of Persons we ought to be, in all holy Conversation and Godliness, waiting for, & hastening unto the Coming of the Day of God, as the Apothe argues 2 Pet. 3. 11 & 12. How should the serious of this great principle of Religion work upon us, that we must all appear before the Judge Seat of Christ, if every one may receive the things done in the Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil 2 Cor. 5. 10. The Ap. tells us that this Consideration of it had a mighty awe and influence upon him, to be careful of himself, to be concerned for others, to be careful of himself, wherefore we labour that whether present

80. Sermon XVII. Text Acts 17th, 30, 31 &c.
present, or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we
must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ. & to
be concerned for others, that they may prevent the Terrors
of that Day, knowing therefore their Error of this World, we
persuade Men. To be deeply affected with the Expectation
of great Events that are yet to come, is a noble Passion
peculiar to the soul of Man preparing us to receive in
the most lively and sensible Manner any approaching
Good or Evil. And the more any thing is capable to
raise it in us, the more effectually it will command
our earnest Attention. Now what Event can appear
so amazingly great to a considerate Mind, and so fit
to arrest our Thoughts in the Contemplation of it, as
this of a future Judgement. In Comparison of this, all
those Transactions that make the greatest Noise in
this World, & are managed with the greatest Pomp
and Magnificence, are comparatively but a trifling
and despicable Scene. And to affect us with a
strong Sense of this great Solemnity, & to awaken us
to greater Zeal & Industry in our Preparation for
it, The Scripture has given us some very moving &
affectionate Descriptions of the whole Progress, and
the several Circumstances of this last Day, telling
us that the Son of God himself is appointed to be the
Judge, and that he will come to Judgement with the
utmost Power Pomp & Splendor, that he will appear
in his own Glory, & his Fathers, and have for his At-
tendants ten thousand of his Saints & all his holy
Angels: that he shall descend from Heaven
with a shout, with the Soud of the Arch Angel
and with the Trump of God; that at his appear-
ance the Heavens shall be dissolved, that the Firmament
of the World shall be changed, that the pillars of the
Frame of things shall be dissolved, that the Heavens shall
pass away with great Noise, the Elements shall
melt with fervent Heat, the Earth also & the
Works that therein shall be burnt up: That

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he shall sit upon the Throne of his Glory, and before
him shall be gathered all Nations; that all the Peo-
ple shall be alive, & all the Generations of Men who
ever lived, shall stand before his Throne: For all
that are in their Graves shall hear his Voice, & the
Sea shall give up the dead that are in it; that every
one may be judged according to his Works, that
none of our Words & Actions, Designs & Thoughts how
close & hidden soever they may have been, shall escape
his Examination, for he shall bring every Work unto
Judgement, with every secret Thing, whether it be good
or Evil: that the Judgement which shall be given, shall
be so clearly and unexceptionably just, that every
Man's Conscience shall acknowledge the perfect
Righteousness & Equity of it: That good Men in
that Day shall appear with great Joy & Confidence,
while the wicked shall be filled with the most dis-
mal Apprehensions, & be ready to say to the Moun-
tains & Rocks, fall on us & hide us from the Face
of him that sitteth on the Throne, & from the Wrath of
the Lamb: That the sentence pronounced will be im-
mediately put in Execution, the wicked being sub-
jected to everlasting Punishment, & the righteous
put in Possession of eternal Life. This Representa-
tion which the Scripture gives us of this great
Transaction alluded in many particulars to the
judiciary Proceedings of Men, & is most affection-
ately accommodated to our Capacities & Apprehensions,
and must upon the whole impress on our Minds the
deepest Sense of the Solemnity & perfection of the
divine Judgement, & the necessity of making the most
diligent Preparation for it. Let us then give
glory that this great Scene was now displayed
before our Eyes; that we had just seen the Son of
Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with all his
Power and Glory, that the Heavens were raised up, &
all Mankind assembled before his Throne: that

the Judgement was set, & the books opened, & every one
 writing with the greatest expectation for his final doom
 & suppose, say, we were just now Spectators of this
 amazing Benefit, would without all Question entirely
 be prepossessed, take off our Regard from all other
 Objects & Effectually convinced of their Impertinence
 & Vanity of all other Employments & Exercises of Men
 in Comparison of that of being fitted themselves by a
 holy & virtuous Life for that great & solemn Trial.
 And if we really ask what we profess ourselves to be
 Believers of the Gospel of Christ Jesus, we must be
 persuaded that this great & dreadful Scene will
 one Day be actually presented to us, & certainly after
 the Abatement that are to be made for the
 Distance of this Event, the prospect which we have
 of it, is a most reasonable Foundation for fixing
 our Attention upon it, & making all necessary Pre-
 paration for its Approach, by a Reformation of
 every thing amiss in us, & a hearty & constant per-
 formance of the several Duties of Religion, which
 will only be able to support us in the Day of Judge-
 ment, & entitle us to the Mercy of our Judge.
 It is plainly owing to a fatal Incurability in Men, to
 their contenting themselves with aiding only such
 a blind & slight Assent to this great principle of
 Religion, as they usually give to other Truths in-
 culcated on them in the Course of their Education,
 without being at any pains to obtain a rational
 Conviction, & to fix a lively Impression of it in
 their Minds, by serious Meditation, that the Be-
 lief of the future Judgement has so small an Ef-
 fect on the greatest part of those who profess to
 entertain it. Indeed it is impossible but that the
 Prospect which the Gospel gives us of the Judgement
 to come, if it be but accompanied with a just Sense
 of the Solemnity & Importance of it, must Effectually
 excite & engage us to all Holiness. When this great
 Doctrine is received upon rationally grounded
 and is likewise seriously attended to & viewed

with all its Consequences, there is undoubtedly
 force enough in it for awakening the most dormant Na-
 tures, for alarming the most hardened Sinners, for
 taking hold of our most prevailing Passions, & making
 them all conspire in a Revolution thro' Grace to bread
 off the Habits of Vice & practice all Holiness, which is
 necessary for securing us from the dreadfulllest Punish-
 ment & giving us the Possession of the greatest Happiness.
 Let us then live as if we did believe these Things. Let
 us not suffer Ourselves to be diverted from this attentive
 Consideration of so important a Matter by the trifles of
 this World. Let us be persuaded to break off our sin by
 Repentance, & to resolve upon such a holy & virtuous
 Course of Life, that we may with Joy & Comfort appear
 before our Judge. This leads me to - J. Ps. 94. 14.
 10. 10

Term. XVIII. Acts 17. 30, 31. Because he hath ap-
 pointed a Day in which he
 The third Branch of the Text, viz. That the Administra-
 tion of this Judgement is committed to the Son of Jesus
 Christ, and that he is the person constituted and or-
 dained of God to be the Judge of the World.
 And in the prosecution of this Head, I shall
 Consider how clearly the Gospel asserts this Ar-
 ticle of our Religion if God will judge the World by the Man
 Christ Jesus. And in the prosecution of this Head, I shall
 I. Show the Wisdom & Reasonableness of this Constitution,
 that Christ should be ordained to be the Judge of the World.
 II. We shall briefly consider how clearly the Gospel asserts
 this Article of our holy Religion that God will judge the
 World in Righteousness by that Man whom he hath or-
 dained even by Christ Jesus. And indeed
 this important Truth is engraven there as with a
 Pen of Iron & the Point of a Diamond Matt. 13. 40, 41, 42
 & 43. So shall it be in the End of the World. The Son of Man
 shall send forth his Angels, & they shall gather up of his
 Kingdom all things that offend, & them which do ini-
 quity, & shall cast them into a Furnace of Fire: there
 shall be wailing & Gnashing of Teeth. Then shall the
 righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of
 their

their Father. His our Saviour is represented as the
 chief Minister of Gods Justice, in the Distribution of
 Rewards to the Righteous, & of punishments to the
 wicked, & that the Effect & Execution of the Sentence
 only be ascribed, yet it supporteth a judicial Proceeding
 preceding. As likewise Mat. 16. 27. For the Son of
 Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his
 holy Angels, then he will reward every man accord-
 ing to his works. Mat. 24. 30. where our Sav. speak-
 ing of his coming to judge the World it is said. Then
 shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven,
 and then shall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn,
 and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the
 clouds of Heaven with Power & great Glory, that
 is in order to the Judgement of the World. But most
 fully & expressly Matt. 25. from 31 to the end, where you
 have the Manner of his coming particularly de-
 scribed, together with the solemn Representation
 of the works of that great Day. When the Son of Man
 shall come in his glory, & all the holy Angels with
 him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of his glory.
 And before him shall be gathered all Nations, & he shall
 separate the one from the other, as a Shepherd divideth
 his Sheep from the Goats. And he shall set the Sheep on
 his right hand, but the Goats on the left. Then shall the
 King say to them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of
 my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you
 from the foundation of the World. Then shall he
 say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me,
 ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, ye are prepared for the
 Devil & his Angels. And these shall go away into
 everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous unto
 Life eternal. Thus you see the whole Administration
 of this Judgement, & the Management of
 every part of it, is committed to Christ, as
 John. 5. 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29. Our Saviour here
 produceth his Commission, & taketh us from
 whence this Authority was derived to him.
 The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed
 to all Judgement to the Son, that all things should
 honour

the Person by whom the World shall be judged. 1/2
 honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He hath
 given him Authority also to execute Judgement, because
 he is the Son of Man. & that the Hour is coming in which
 all that are in their Graves shall hear his Voice, and
 shall come forth, they that have done good to the
 Resurrection of Life, & they that have done evil, to the
 Resurrection of Damnation. This was part of that Pro-
 phesy which he sealed with his Blood Mat. 26. 64. &
 that they should see him sitting on the right hand of
 Power & coming in the Clouds of Heaven, Expressions
 which in their highest sense refer to the future ge-
 neral Judgement. The Angels published the same
 Doctrine at our Lords Ascension, telling his Disci-
 ples that the same Jesus, whom they had seen, taken
 up into Heaven, should come in the same Manner as
 they had seen him go into Heaven Acts. 1. 11. Accordingly
 the Apostle on all Occasions delivers this as one of the
 essential Truths of the Gospel. Thus Peter when sent
 to preach the Gospel to devout Corporeals, in verse
 particularly on this great Branch of it Acts. 10. 42.
 That Christ was raised from the dead, & commanded us
 to preach to the people, & to testify that it is he which is
 ordained of God to be the Judge of the Quick & dead. And
 Rom. 2. 16. In the Day which God shall judge the secrets
 of all Men by Jesus Christ. Rom. 14. 10. We shall all stand
 before the Judgement seat of Christ 2 Cor. 5. 10 For we
 must all appear before the Judgement 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.
 2 The. 1. 7, 8, 9 The Ap. in speaking of the Day of Judg-
 ment describeth it thus: When the Lord Jesus shall
 be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in
 flaming Fire taking vengeance on all them that have
 not God, and obey not the Gospel of his Son, who shall be
 punished with everlasting Destruction from the pre-
 sence of the Lord, & from the glory of his Power. & the
 Apostles enforce his Charge to Timothy by this awful
 Consideration 2 Tim. 4. 1. I charge thee before God

and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick & the dead at his appearing & his Kingdom. & to mention no more. Acts 17. 31. Behold, I come quickly, and my Reward is with me, to give to every Man according as his Work shall be. I proceed to the
 II To show the Wisdom & Reasonableness of this Constitution, that the man Christ Jesus should be ordained Judge of the World. 'Tis true indeed that if the Cause were such, that we could assign no satisfactory Reason for such a Constitution, it would become us to reverence the Sovereignty of God there in, & to believe that he has wise & excellent Ends in it, tho' we could not discover and find them out. But it is far otherwise, and there are such manifest Congruities in his being ordained as the Father's Commissioner in judging the World, as do abundantly discover and display the admirable Wisdom of God herein, in all which we shall only rely on scripture, the thing being capable of no other Proof or Evidence. Indeed the whole mediatory Undertaking of our blessed Saviour, & all the Circumstances of it, are Matter of pure Revelation, this is the hidden & manifest Wisdom of God, which none of the Princes & Philosophers of this World knew, & which we could not possibly have found out and discovered, had not God been pleased to reveal it to us. Now the Wisdom & Reasonableness of God's committing the Administration of this Work into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ will evidently appear from these two Considerations. God thought fit to confer this Honour on Christ, as a virtuous Reward of his Obedience & sufferings, of his coming into the World by his Appointment to undertake the Work of our Redemption & to mediate a Reconciliation between God & us, of his voluntary Submission to a Condition so mean & low, to that Covetous Contempt, & to those extreme sufferings, which he did so patiently undergo, in the prosecution of this great Design. That God hath committed all power to Christ, with design to put Honour upon him, as he himself tells us Jo. 5. 22, 23. The Father judgeth no Man, because he that was in the Form of God, took on him the Form

of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Man, & humbled himself so low, as to become obedient to Death even the Death of the Cross, that God has so highly exalted him, as to give him a supreme Dominion over Angels & Men. The Scriptures speak of this matter, as if when Christ undertook the great Work of our Redemption, it were expressly covenanted between God the Father & him, that he should undertake this Work, & submit to all those rigorous things which were necessary to be done & suffered in order to the effecting of it, & when he had accomplished it, God would confer this glory upon him, that in his human Nature he should be exalted to the right hand of God, & have power given him over all flesh, to judge the World, & to give eternal Life to as many as he pleased. With Relation to this Covenant & agreement between Christ & his Father, he prays John 17. 1, 2. Father the Hour is come, glorify thy Son, as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal Life to as many as thou hast given him. I have glorified thee on Earth, & have finished the Work that thou gavest me to do, & thou hast claimed the Reward of it. & thou O Father glorify me with thy own self Jo. 17. 5 & the Ap. to the Hebrews tells us that the Hopes of this did encourage & bear up our Lord under his sufferings Heb. 12. 2. Who for the joy that was set before him &c. And is it not every way congruous to the Wisdom of God, that he who voluntarily stooped so low, in order to his becoming the Redeemer & Saviour of a lost World, should now be advanced to the Dignity of appearing as the final Judge of it? That he in him the divine Majesty appeared heretofore veiled & clouded in the lowest & most abased of his voluntary self-abasement & humiliation, so in him it should appear with all the bright Rays of transcendent glory & greatness. How ever did, or could descend to stoop so low to promote the glory of God in the Salvation of Men, but was a suitable recompense

there of, that he should be exalted so high, that he who
 lived in so mean a Condition, should come again in
 great Glory, that he who was rejected & despised in
 Men, should be attended on by mighty Angels; that
 he who was arraigned & condemned by the Powers of
 the World, should have Authority given him to sub-
 mone all both small & great, the Kings & mighty
 Men and Judges of the Earth, to appear at his Bar,
 and to receive Sentence at his Mouth. How will this
 glorious & amazing Scene surprize the unbelieving
 World, when they shall see him whom they have pierced
 whom they despised & derided, whose Authority they
 rejected, and whose Mercy they trampled on, coming
 in the Clouds of Heaven to take vengeance on all
 that know not God, & obey not his Gospel. Rev. 1. 7.
 How will it adorn the Beauty of divine Providence by
 forcing the most inveterate Enemies of our blessed Re-
 deemer to acknowledge his Dominion, & obliging
 those to submit to his judicial Authority who reject-
 ed his Mercy & Grace? This shall be the last Act
 of his Mediatorship to sit in Judgement upon the
 World, to distribute Rewards to his faithful Servants
 & to punish his obstinate Enemies. In which his Work is
 finished, then his Authority shall expire, & the Office
 and Kingdom of the Mediator shall cease, for when
 he shall have subdued all things to himself, as the
 Ap. expressly tells us 1 Cor. 15. 24, 25 &c. then cometh
 the End, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom
 to God even the Father. When he shall have put down
 all Rule & Authority & Power. For he must reign till
 he hath put all Enemies under his feet. & when all
 things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son
 also himself be subject unto him that hath put all
 things under him, that God may be all in all.

2. God hath committed the Administration of this Judge-
 ment to Christ, that his might hereby declare the
 Righteousness & Equity of it, in that Mankind are

judged by whom the Word shall be judged. 11.
 are judged by given in their own Nature. These for ever find
 that the Scriptures when it speaks of Christ as the Judge
 doth almost constantly call him Man & the Son of Man, as
 Matt. 3. 1. The Son of Man shall come for to his Angels. Matt. 16. 2.
 The Son of Man shall come in the Glory of his Father. In the
 Word of the Text, by that Man &c. By the constant use
 of which Expressions the Scriptures doth plainly tell us
 that this great Honour of being Judge of the World was
 conferred upon the human Nature of Christ. For as he
 is God, he is over all & Judge of the World, & could not de-
 rive this Power from any, it being originally inherent
 in the Deity. Which like wise appears in those Expressions
 one of his being ordained a Judge, & having all Authority
 and Judgement committed & given to him. This cannot
 be said of Christ as God, but in respect of his human Na-
 ture, as our Saviour himself tells us. What given him
 Authority also to execute Judgement, because he is the
 Son of Man. Jo. 5. 27. Now nothing can more effectually de-
 clare the Equity of this Judgement, than that God hath or-
 dained a Man who our selves to sit in Judgement upon
 us. In human Judgements it is reckoned a piece of great
 Equity for Men to be tried by their Peers, by those who
 are as near as may be to them, & in the same Circum-
 stances of Rank & Condition with themselves, because
 such are like to understand their Cases best, & to take
 a fair & equitable Consideration of all the Circumstan-
 ces belonging to it. Now this final Judgement shall be
 administered by one clothed with our Nature, whom
 every Eye can behold, before whom all may freely offer
 their Pleas. Christ Jesus as being the Son of Man,
 is near to us, bone of our Bone, & flesh of our flesh,
 made in all things like unto us only without Sin, we
 was necessary to qualify him to be our Judge? He dwelt
 among us, & by his participation of our Nature experi-
 mentally knows our Infirmities & Temptations, under-
 stand all our Circumstances, & there fore is both capa-
 ble & inclined to make all merciful Allowances for our
 involuntary Slips & Failures, & yet in him dwells the
 Fulcrum of the God-head bodily & is there fore possessed

of all those divine perfections which give us the highest
 assurance concerning the Righteousness of his
 Justice & impartiality of his Sentence. What the Righteousness of
 the Law says of Christ as our high Priest may be
 applied to him as a Judge, Heb. 4. 15. We have not a
 Judge which cannot be touched with the Feeling
 of our Infirmitie, but was in all things tempted like
 we are, yet without sin.

Draw a few Inferences from this Head
 I. If the Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the World, then it great
 ly concerni every one of us, so to demean Ourselves in
 this World, that we may be accepted of him in the next.
 If a Man be to be tried for his life, upon will his court the
 Favour of the Judge, that when he comes to stand at his
 Bar, he may receive a favourable Sentence. Now there
 is a Day coming, when every one must appear before
 the great Judge of the World, therefore we should diligently
 endeavour to approve Ourselves to him. We are apt to
 court the Favour of great Men, that when we come to stand
 in need of it, we may have the Benefit & Comfort of it.
 But this is not our great Interest, for the Sentence that
 Men can pass upon us, doth but operate for awhile,
 the Effect and Consequences of it, do not reach beyond
 this World, it is not final & conclusive as to our eter-
 nal State. To allude to that saying of Solomon, many
 seek the Prince's Favour, but every Man's Judgment
 is of the Lord. We seek the Favour of the great Men
 of this World, but there is a greater Man than any
 of these, whom we are apt to despise & neglect.
 The Prince of the Kings of the Earth, the Man who is
 ordained of God to be Judge both of Quick & dead.
 Every Man's Judgment shall be from him, it is his
 Sentence which above all other, we have most
 Reason to desire or dread, therefore we should
 have Regard to him, & by submitting to his scepter
 and yielding a willing Obedience to his Law of
 his holy Gospel, seek his Favour, serve him with
 Fear, & if the Son be to be angry & we perish
 from the Way as the Paladines Ps. 2. 10, 11, 12.

The Son of whom the World shall be judged. 179

If God will judge the World by the Man Christ Jesus, then there
 may administer Matter of great Joy & Comfort to all sincere
 Christians. Before whom should the true Christian stand
 with greater Comfort of appearing as his final Judge
 than before the blessed Jews, whom he has unfeign'd
 by accepted & trusted as his Saviour, & loved & beloved
 his right ful Lord! Were it left to our own Choice, into
 whose hands that final Judgement should be committed,
 we would chuse none, in whom we could find greater
 Encouragement to our Hopes, & greater Relief against
 all our anxious Fears. What tho' we are conscious
 of many sold Offences, that might justly expose us to
 the condemning Sentence of God, should he proceed
 against us according to the Rigour of his Justice.
 How effectual a Relief is it to consider that all our re-
 pent'd Sins are done away in the Blood of Christ, & ac-
 cused out of the Book of God, & his gracious Covenant
 has given us entire Absolution from them. And we
 are sure, that our blessed Saviour will never condemn
 those, whom his attoning Blood has cleansed, and his
 gracious Covenant has pardoned & justified.
 What if we are conscious of many sold Defects, Failures
 and Imperfections even in our best Services, we have
 this Encouragement, that he who now intercedes for our
 sincere Services, will not then reject them, nor deny us
 that liberal Reward of Grace, that he has by his ven-
 erable Obedience merited for us, & by his gracious promise
 entitled us to. In a Word we may expect from him as
 a righteous Judge, all he has purchased for us as
 a merciful Redeemer, & promised to us as a bound-
 ful Master. We may humbly look for the Mercy of
 our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal Life.

3. This is Matter of great Error to all that dissent by the
 Gospel, & by their wicked Lives confute their profes-
 sions & pretended Reliance of it. Christ is the Author of
 eternal Salvation only to them that obey him. Surely
 it cannot but be Matter of great Dread & Amazement
 to the wicked of the World, who live in Ungodliness & world-
 ly Lusts, who be ample runner foot the Son of God, and by
 their Lives openly declare that they will not have

have this man to rule over them. I say it must be made of great terror to such persons to think of this Judge and to consider, that he whom by their lewd practices & lives, they have so contemned in this World, will sit as Judge upon them & condemn them in the next. & therefore our Saviour tells us Luke 21. 25 that when the Day of Judgement shall surprize the World, & they see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, the wicked of the Earth shall be in great Distress, the Complexity, & their hearts shall fail them wth fear, & for looking after those things that are coming upon the Earth.

And Lastly, This shews what Reason the Minds of Christ have to be earnest & importunate with the Sinner, to repent & turn to God, to believe & obey the Gospel of Christ, that they may have him their friend, who will certainly be their Judge. This Inference the Sp. makes from this Doctrine

2 Cor. 5. 11. knowing therefore the Terror of the Lord, we persuade Men; we who are employed by Christ, to warn Sinners of the Danger & Terror of a future Judgement, who are Ambassadors sent from this great King & Judge of the World to treat with Sinners & to offer Peace to them, in Christ's stead to beseech them to be reconciled to God. Can we then forbear with all possible importunity to sollicit their Repentance, & to warn them to flee from the Wrath which is to come? Can we let them sleep in their Sins, when we see them neglect so great a Salvation & run themselves upon so intolerable a Misery? If we believe that holy Book out of which we preach, we may take an easy prospect of another World, & see the Wrath of God revealed from Heaven at all Ungodliness & Unrighteousness of Men. For the Gospel hath made a more particular & clear Discovery of the State of the next World & the proceedings of the great Day, than ever the World was acquainted with before. It tells us who is the person that shall sit in Judgement upon us, even Jesus Christ, whose of God hath given Assurance in that he hath raised him from the dead. Now if we know this & be assured of it, we cannot but deal plainly with Sinners, & out

of sinners, & of compassion to them, & each other, to make the vile & vile of the sad & sinner & sinner of a wicked Life, & that without Repentance & Amendment, wth faith in Christ, they will not be able to stand in the Judgement of the great Day. Consider then Sinners, whom it is not rejected to whose Laws thou canst not be bound by thy back! It is he who is the Lord of glory, into whose hands the Father hath committed all Judgement. Can there be a greater Madness, than to grow up & make him thy Enemy, who shall be thy Judge? Than to despise him who can destroy for ever, & appeared once as a Lamb to take away the Sins of the World, but if thro' Obstinacy & Impenitency we render this Appearance of his ineffectual for our Recovery, he will appear a second Time in a more terrible Manner, as a Lion to tear us in Pieces. He came once as a Light into the World, in a gentle way to convince and convert Sinners, but if we resist this Light, he will come in flaming Fire to strike vengeance on all them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of his Son Christ Jesus. — 1. Cor. 8. 13. — 1. Cor. 2. 7.

Sermon XIX. Text Acts 17. Ch. 30, 31. Because he hath appointed a Day to judge the World &c.

I proceed to the 4th Head of this contained in the Text viz That God hath given all Men full Assurance of his judging the World by Christ Jesus in raising him from the dead. And indeed since this Constitution whereby Christ Jesus is ordained at the Father's Commission in judging the World is an Act of God's sovereign Pleasure, & no raised discoverable by the Light of Nature, & yet of great Importance to be considered & believed; it was very fit that some convincing & satisfying Evidence of it should be given to the World. And indeed convincing Evidence that points here supposed the Assurance of our blessed Saviour to be. Now that Christ's Resurrection is such a proof of God's constituting him the Judge of the World, & ought to convince & satisfy every unprejudiced & considerate Mind will appear, if we duly weigh the following Particulars

1. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a strong
 convincing proof of the whole of his Doctrine & consequently
 of his important and essential Article thereof. This
 was & always will continue to be the convincing Evi-
 dence that Christ Jesus was indeed the Son of God &
 Saviour of the World, and consequently that what he
 taught was true Doctrine, that his Religion in all its
 Parts, was exactly agreeable to the Mind and Will
 of Heaven, & of perpetual Obligation on the Consci-
 ences of Men. If Christ had not risen from the
 dead on the third Day according to his promise,
 but been still detained by the Power of the Grave,
 I doubt not but this world for ever have ruined the
 Christian Cause, not withstanding of all the other
 Arguments, which might have been adduced to
 support it. Whatever had been urged from the Reason-
 ableness of our Saviour's Doctrine, the Innocence
 of his Life, or Multitude of his Miracles, & the like,
 would have all appeared but insignificant Proofs
 of the Truth of his Religion, as long as he who was
 the Author of it, was detained Prisoner in the Grave.
 In this Case his Enemies might still have invaded
 him, as the Jews did when he was upon the Cross,
 saying he saved others, himself he cannot save.
 Luke 23. 35. His Friends also had been left in
 Despondency, without being able to make any
 other Reply, than the two Disciples did, with
 our Lord conversed as they were travelling towards
 Emmaus: We trusted that it had been he, which should
 have redeemed Israel. Luke 24. 21. But now Christ
 having risen from the dead, & having afterwards ap-
 peared to his Disciples, & to many others, also he
 shewed himself alive after his Passion by many
 infallible proofs, he hath hereby ascertained Man-
 kind of the Truth of his whole complex Doctrine,
 so that no Man who believes the one, can possi-
 bly doubt of the other. Our blessed Lord when
 he was here upon Earth frequently taught this
 Doctrine

Doctrine that the Father hath committed all Judgement
 unto him, & given him Authority to execute Judgment upon all
 Men, because he is the Son of Man. And it was the Pleasure
 of all Power in Heaven & Earth being committed to him,
 that he commissioned his Disciples to go & teach all Nati-
 ons, & the Ap. accordingly declare that he had given them
 as one eminent part of their Instructions, to preach
 & to testify that he is ordained of God to be the Judge of
 the Quick & the dead. Hence we find our Saviour say-
 ing so great Stress on his Resurrection, that in his
 Reasoning with the Jews, he refers them to it as the
 demonstrative proof of his divine Authority, &
 Mission & of the Truth of the Doctrine he taught. De-
 stroy this Temple, says he meaning the Temple of
 his Body, & in three Days I will raise it up. Jo. 2. 19.
 An evil & adulterous Generation seeketh after a
 Sign, & there shall no Sign be given to it, but the Sign
 of the Son of Man. For as the prophet. For as Jonas was three
 Days & three Nights in the Whale's Belly, so shall
 the Son of Man be three Days & three Nights in the
 Heart of the Earth. Matt. 12. 39, 40. Inasmuch that
 his moderate Enemies were alarmed thereby, & accord-
 ingly used the utmost precaution to prevent it, by
 setting a strict Guard upon his Sepulchre. Matt.
 27. Ch. 63. How did these Circumstances what clearer &
 fuller Attestation could the great God give of the Truth
 of his Doctrine, than by thus eminently fulfilling his
 own Predictions & employing his Almighty Power to
 raise him from the dead. Because otherwise we
 must suppose a God of infinite Wisdom Truth & Holi-
 ness to give the greatest Countenance and Credit
 imaginable to a vile Impostor, & to put Mankind
 under the strongest Temptation possible to believe a
 Lie & Delusion. But this we are sure is utterly
 inconsistent with these adorable Perfections of
 his Nature. His Resurrection therefore is a simple an

an illustrious & convincing evidence of the Truth of his Gospel in general, & consequently of this main Article of it, being appointed the Father's Commission in judging the World, as we can well suppose it reasonable for God to give, or for us to expect. O what a mighty Comfort is it to us Christians to know that our Religion is from God, that its Doctrines are true & infallible, that its precepts are just & reasonable, & that its promises are all faithful & to be accomplished in their due Season! Blessed be God that in embracing the Faith of the Gospel, we have not followed cunningly devised Fables.

2. That the Resurrection of Christ was the first Step towards the Administration of that medicinal Kingdom, of which his judging the World is to be the last & conclusive Act. Accordingly we may observe that the Apostle Peter speaking to the Jews, justly infers from Gods having raised the blessed Jesus from the dead, that he had made him both Lord and Christ, & appointed him according to the ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah, to sit upon the Throne of David Acts. 2. 22. His Resurrection was the first Step of his Exaltation. It thereby appeared that all Power, in Heaven & in Earth, was committed to him, & he then entered upon the full and open Exercise of his Royal Authority, and will continue the Exercise of it till he has by the final Reward of his faithful servants, & punishment of his incorrigible Enemies, attained to all the Ends of his Mediatorial Kingdom, which he shall then, and not till then, give up to the Father 1 Cor. 15. 24. Who then make us fit to judge the World, they be who hath the Key of Hell & Death in his hand, & his Management Rev. 1. 18. &

18. 1. That the Resurrection from the dead is a Pledge, and Security of the Resurrection of our Bodies in order to a final Judgement. There is a Day or time appointed in which God will judge the World in Righteousness by the Man Christ Jesus. Now this Day commences at the general Resurrection. We must arise in Order to our coming to Judgment, & there receiving according to the thing we do in the Body, whether good or evil. Now how could we be better assured of the Truth of this by any other Evidence or Assurance, than by that which was brought to pass in Christ, when he was raised from the dead. With what Clearness & Strength of Reason doth the Apostle apply himself to illustrate this Matter in 1 Cor. 15. 12, 13, 14. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no Resurrection of the dead? But if there be no Resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, & your Faith is also vain. Here the Apostle reasons from an Absurdity, & follows us to conclude the Falsity of the Resurrection of the dead, yea & of the whole Gospel Revelation, supposing that Christ is not risen. But this Supposition being absurd & unreasonable, no such Conclusion can be admitted. Now the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ not only demonstrates the Possibility, but is designed as a public Security, & Pledge of the Resurrection of our Bodies. Now Christs rising again from the dead was at least a clear Demonstration to the World that the Resurrection of the dead is a thing possible. Whatever Difficulty may be supposed to attend the Belief of this Doctrine, for however mysterious it may appear to natural Reason, yet when Christ rose again, by his Example, he let all Men see, that it is by no Means impossible that God should raise the dead, or an incredible thing! The same omnipotent power which raised

180. 2. e. mon XIX. 17. 30, 31. In our resurrection
things are equally easy, & as able also to raise
our dead Bodies after all the changes they can
be supposed to undergo by lying in the Dust. &
2. Christ rising again from the dead assures us
not only of the possibility, but also of the certainty
of our Resurrection. He who is the faithful
and true Witness, the first begotten from the dead
who lived & was dead, and is alive for ever more,
and hath the Keys of Hell and Death, hath given
us his express Word and promise, that he will
also raise us up at his second Coming, that
we may live with him for ever, in the participa-
tion of that Glory and Happiness, whereof
he is now possessed at the right hand of
his Majesty on high. I am the Resurrection,
saith Christ, and the Life & again, he that be-
lieveth on the Son, shall have everlasting life,
and I will raise him up at the last Day, Jo. 6. 40.
Now we cannot reasonably doubt of his Power
to do this, since he hath exemplified the same
by his own Resurrection: & as little can we
doubt of his promise; when he hath given us
such a solemn Confirmation of the Truth of
all he hath said or taught. Besides all this,
it is to be considered that Christ did not rise
in a private Capacity only, but as the publick
head & Representative of all the faithful, whose
the members of his mystical Body, shall be
also raised up with him to Life & Immortality
in order to finish that universal Triumph over
Death & the Grave, to which our Saviour is to be
exalted at last in all members. But now, saith
the Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. 20. Christ is risen from the
dead & become the first fruits of them that sleep:
where he alludes to the offering of the first fruits
under the Law, as the Pledge & Assurance of

convincing proof of his being Judge of the World. 181
the whole, can we not follow? O what a
comfortable Doctrine is this, the Resurrection of
our Bodies unto Life eternal, & what noble Assur-
ances hath God given us of the Truth of this beyond
what we could have possibly attained to by all our
improvements in Reason and Philosophy. It is
thus the Immortality of the Soul is in a good measure
undeniable from the Sight of Nature, & many of the
antient Philosophers have owned & defended it:
But the Resurrection of the Body is a matter of more
Difficulty, a point of pure Revelation, & not to be in-
ferred from any principle of natural Reason: & there-
fore, when the Ap. Paul at Athens preached this Do-
ctrine, the Philosophers laughed him to scorn. O what
a distinguishing Privilege is it, to be blessed wth the
knowledge of Christ our Saviour who hath abolished
Death, & hath brought Life & Immortality to Light
thro' the Gospel. Blessed for ever be God & the
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his
abundant Mercy hath begotten us again unto a living
by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead 1 Pet. 1. 3.
I. I shall now draw an Inference or two from this Head
of Christ's Resurrection a convincing Evidence of his
coming to judge the World, then let the Doctrine persuade
us to seek & mind those things that are above,
where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. To set
our Affections on things above, not on things on the
Earth, as the Apostle teaches us to improve it Col. 3. 1.
Earthly things are perishing & transitory, & cannot be
the Felicity of an immortal Soul, being neither suited
to the spiritual Nature, nor to the eternal Duration of
our Souls. They can neither satisfy us while we live,
nor preserve us from Death, nor comfort us in it,
nor accompany us into the other World, nor contribute
any thing to our Happiness there, & if they can do no-
thing towards our Happiness, why should we set our
hearts upon them. Our Happiness is not here, 'tis
risen

rien, its above, let our hearts ascend thither, where our
Treasur is. Why should we bestow our Affections upon
these low mean things, where there are incomparably
better Objects to fix them upon. Let all our Actions then
have Relation to another World, & our Conversation declar
that we are mindful of another Country, that is a heav
venly. In Christ's our head risen & ascended into Heaven
Let us in our hearts & Affections follow him thither, and
patiently wait till he receive our Souls & raise us our
Bodies, & take us wholly to himself, that we may be
for ever with the Lord. The Belief of a future State
after this life should put us upon the most earnest
and vigorous Endeavours, to secure this happy Con
dition to Ourselves, if by any Means, we may attain
the Resurrection of the dead. It should raise us above
the World & all the Temptations of it. Seeing we hope
for so happy a State, we should thro' Grace fit Ourselves
for it by purity of heart & Holiness of Life, by perse
verance & a patient Continuance in well-doing.
What Manner of Persons ought we to be in all Holy
Conversations & Godliness, who have such hopes & ac
tivities. Every Man that hath this Hope in him,
purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Now that Life
& Immortality are brought to Light by the Gospel, what
greater what other Design can any propose to him
self, than to be happy with Christ his head forever.
For such a prize, who would not strive & run & take
any Pains? Who would not deny himself the pleasures
of sin, which are but for a season, conflict with
Difficultys & glory in Tribulation, & be constant &
faithful to the Death, in hopes of that eternal Life
which God who cannot lye hath promised.

2. Let the Consideration of Christ's Resurrection be an
earnest & pledge of the Resurrection of our Bodies, en
courage us to Obedience & a good Life. Let the Belief
of it have the same Influence on us, which the Ap.
Paul tells it had on him Acts 24. 15, 16 I have been
towards God that there shall be a Resurrection
of the dead, both of the just & unjust, & herein do

I exercise myself, always to have a conscience void of
Offences towards God & towards Man. The firm Belief
of the Resurrection of our Bodies, should make us very
careful how we demean Ourselves in this Life; particu
larly it should be a very strong Argument with us, to give
right God in our Bodies, & in our Spirits, & to use the
Members of the one & the Facultys of the other, as In
struments of Obedience unto Holiness; we should
take heed not only how we defile our Souls by sinful
Passions, but how we dishonour our Bodies by ven
ual & brutish Luxuries, since God hath designed so great
an Honour & Happiness for both at the Resurrection.
Hereby we ought to be engaged unto a saving Acquaintance
with the Power of Christ's Resurrection. To believe, that our
Sav. rose again from the dead on the 3rd Day barely as an
Article of Faith is but of small Consequence in Reli
gion; this is what the worst of Men, who bear the Christi
an Name profess to be persuaded of, tho' they be nothing
the better for it, & are never thereby begotten into a lively
Hope: But the Belief of this Doctrine, when it is sim
ly embraced, hath not only an Influence upon the Under
standing of Men, but also works upon their Wills &
Affections, in making them holy & virtuous in the
whole of their Conversation. If we are persuaded of the
Truth of Christianity, whereof Christ's Resurrection is
the great Evidence, how is it possible for us without being
guilty of the greatest Inobedience to resist the mighty
Force which its precepts, promises & Threatnings have
to reform our Lives & to engage us to the Obedience of Holiness.
If we are also persuaded that Christ was delivered for
our Offences & also raised again for our Justification, & that
his Resurrection is of great Efficacy to subdue sin in us
& to raise us up to Newness of Life, with what Countenance
can we afterwards continue in the practice of our Sins,
since this would be to act in direct Opposition to all these
great Ends for which Christ both died & rose again.
What can be a more effectual Motive to make us break
off from sin by Repentance than to be assured of the Par
don of our Sins, & that God hath accepted of that Pa

100. Sermon XIV. Text Acts 17th 30, 31. *See also*
what better encouragement could we desire to engage
us to lead holy Lives, than to know that he who is
from the dead from the dead & is now ascended into
Heaven, where he sits in great Glory at the Father's right
hand, hath also a Power to give down to us
these supernatural Aids & Assistances of Divine Grace
which are necessary to enable us to the practice of our
Duty. Again if we are persuaded that our Bodies
shall be raised up out of the Dust to share with our Souls
in a State of immortal Glory! O what noble Sentiments
what brave Resolutions will this Thought impart
us with! Particularly how careful should they render
us not to pollute our Bodies by making them the
Instruments of Sin, or the Seat of corrupt & vile Affec-
tions, as believing that they shall be made the recepta-
cles of Glory hereafter, & that Christ at his coming
will change these our vile Bodies, that they may
be fashioned like unto his own glorious Body. It
doth not yet appear, says the Apostle 1 Co. 3. 2. what we
shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we
shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Doth
every Man that hath this Hope in him, pursue it him-
self, even as he is pursued. — And lastly

The Belief of this Doctrine is of Use to support us
against all the Fears & Terrors of Death, our Saviour
by rising again from the dead hath triumphed over
all the Powers of Death & the Grave, & having all Autho-
rity committed unto him both in Heaven & Earth, he
employs this last Enemy only as the Messenger of
his Providence, to act no otherwise than as he re-
ceives Power from him who hath the Keys of Hell & of
Death. That which can only make Death terrible
unto us, is the Sting with which we are armed by the
entering of Sin into the World, but they who by the
Power of Christ's Resurrection are delivered
from the Guilt in Dominion of Sin, & brought
into a State of Favour & Reconciliation with
God, are in no Danger of being hurt by this

101. Sermon XV. Text Acts 17th 30, 31. *See also*

of error. Yea tho' they walk thro' the dark Valley
of the shadow of Death, yet they need fear no Evil,
for blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord. But
above all the great support of the Christian against the
Fears of Death is the hope of a glorious Resurrection,
whereof Christ's rising again is the pledge & Assurance.
Tho' our Bodies must for a while be subject to Decay & Corruption,
yet they are not to be lost because of this, but to be re-
stored to us again at the Resurrection, & that too with
amazing Improvement beyond what we can conceive
in this imperfect State, for Christ when he shall ap-
pear, will change these our vile Bodies & fashion
them like unto his own glorious Body. Wherefore
the Apostle, having concluded our certain Victory over
Death, & having represented the Triumph of that glo-
rious Day, when this corruptible shall have put on
Incorruption, & this mortal shall have put on Immor-
tality, he then breaks forth into that joyful & trium-
phant Exclamation. O Death where is thy Sting?
O Grave where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin
& the Strength of Sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, we
quicken in the Victory thro' our Lord Jesus Christ 1 Cor. 15. 56, 57.
1 Co. 6. 8. 10. — 72. 17.

Sermon XVth Acts 17th 30, 31st Now commandeth all

Men every where to repent, because
I now proceed to the last thing proposed in the Metho-
d. To show that the Consideration & Certainty of a future Judg-
ment is the most powerful Motive to a sincere Repentance.
And its chiefly for this purpose that the Apostle here
preaches this Doctrine of God's judging the World by
Christ Jesus to his Gentile Hearers. That God saith he
who winked at or overlooked the former Times of Ignorance
now commandeth all Men every where to repent, because he
hath appointed a Day &c. — Now that the Consideration of
God's judging the World by Christ Jesus is a very proper
Argument to excite Men to Repentance will appear — 1. mo

1. As it shows the absolute necessity of a sincere Repentance to prevent our Condemnation to everlasting Punishment. As it presents to us the greatest Encouragement to Repentance. This Consideration of Gods judging the World in Righteousness by Christ Jesus shows us the absolute necessity of a sincere Repentance to prevent our terrible Condemnation to everlasting Punishment. And this will fully appear from the following Particulars.

1. If God will judge the World in Righteousness by Christ Jesus then we are assured, that no Sin of ours, how secret soever, can escape the notice of his all-seeing Eye. That are conscious to Ourselves, of so innumerable Depravations from the holy Law of God, & many of them attended with heinous Aggravations, as cannot justly expose us to his righteous Severity, cannot doubt, but that righteous Judge of all the Earth might find guilt enough in us to justify his condemnation. Even the Case of the best of Men were hopeless & desperate, if an Omnipotent & infinitely holy God should be strict to mark their Iniquities, & should enter into Judgement with them. Ps. 143. 2. What then must the dismal Cases of those, whose whole Life has been a continued Defection from God, & an obstinate Course of wilful Disobedience to his known & holy Commandments. Such can never plead not guilty to the long & dreadful Indictment that the Justice of God will draw up against them, & can produce no tolerable Plea, why the Sentence of his violated Laws should not take place, and be executed upon them.

2. If God will judge the World by Christ Jesus, & had appointed a Day for that End, then no present Impunity of Sinners can be any Security against their final Condemnation & Punishment. Ungodly Sinners are too ready to misinterpret the present Forbearance of God, & to draw Encouragement from it to presume upon their final Impunity, because he now keeps silence & suffers them to go on with an undisturbed Prosperity in their sinful Course, without ever alarming

them with terrible Judgements, because Vengeance does not immediately follow their most heinous Provocations at the Heel, & divine Justice seems to sleep. They presently conclude that God is such an One as they believe Ps. 50. 21, that he makes as light a Matter of Sin as they do, & is far from any Revoltment of their Violation of his Law, as the Threatnings of it would import. But this wrong Inference from his present Silence & long-suffering is most inexcusable, when Men are so plainly told, that the Day appointed, in which God will judge the World in Righteousness, & that as to particular Persons, the Manifestation of divine Justice in the Punishment of their Sin is chiefly reserved to that great & terrible Day. For if this be true, every obstinate Sinner has all possible Ground to believe that if the present Riches of divine Goodness & Forbearance do not lead him to Repentance, he is but treasuring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath & Revelation of the righteous Judgement of God Rom. 2. 4, 5. Nay he has all imaginable Ground to conclude, that the more he abuses the sparing Mercy of God, the more he will feel the Severity of his future Vengeance, & the worse that Vengeance, in coming, it will break will be the heavier & more insupportable. Let no impatient Sinner then be so foolish as to draw any favourable Conclusion concerning the final State of his sinful Life from the present uninterrupted Prosperity of it. This is the Day of Gods Forbearance, & Grace that will be succeeded by a Day of terrible Vengeance on all the wretched Despisers of it. So that their present Impunity is but a Preservation of them to be the more remarkable Monument of his just Severity for ever.

3. If God will judge the World in Righteousness by Christ Jesus, then we are assured that nothing short of a sincere Repentance can prevent our final Condemnation. This our Saviour has brought us the clearest Declarations & fullest Assurance of pardoning Mercy, yet this Offer of it are made to none but believing Penitents. All obstinate Sinners are by the most peremptory

2.

beatings excluded from it, & exposed to the severest
 punishment. Every Man has Guilt enough to render him obnoxious
 to the Justice of God, if pardoning Mercy in response, not to
 cancel his guilty Score, & blot his iniquity out of the Book
 of Gods Remembrance? Nothing but the allowing Blood of
 Christ, the great Propitiator for sin, can wash away
 Guilt, but that precious Blood was never shed to protect
 obstinate sinners from the pursuit of divine Justice.
 All such impenitent despisers of the Authority of God are de-
 barred from any Interest in the propitiatory Virtue of
 his Blood of the new & everlasting Covenant, & who only
 will be found under the Shelter & protection of it, who con-
 sent to the gracious Terms thereof, & who by Christ Jesus
 as their Mediator, sincerely return to their offended
 but reconcilable God & Father. For all that refuse, to come
 under the Bonds of that blessed Covenant, the Blood of
 his great purity, of it, can never be sprinkled on them.
 Nay, instead of speaking better Things to them than the
 Blood of itself will rather like this, cry aloud to Hea-
 ven, against them, not for Impunity, but for that vengeance
 that is due to them, as the Rejecters of Gods offered Grace
 and Salvation. Nay such impenitent sinners under
 the Gospel are not only excluded from pardoning Mer-
 cy, & left under that Sentence which the Law of Works
 makes on all Transgressors, but they are exposed to
 a more aggravated Punishment & to a more insupport-
 able Degree of future Misery. Oh how dreadful thin
 is the Case of every sordid & hardened sinner, for
 while he continues such, he is in effect condemned, al-
 ready & has the Wrath of God abiding on him, John 3. 36.
 The Sentence of Gods holy Law stands still in Forces
 against him, & if by final impenitency he reject the
 Offers of Pardon, he will have no Mediator to interpose
 as an Advocate or Intercessor to offend Justice for him,
 & will have no available Plea or Argument for forgiveness
 and Mercy to offer. Nay no must be judged by that blessed
 Saviour, whose Offers of Mercy he has tamely by, who
 calls to Repentance, he has turned a deaf ear to, & to
 whose Spirit of Grace he has offered so great an Opposit, by
 rejecting and quenching his Motions, & who is therefore
 highly concerned to vindicate his own as well as his

Justice Honour by severely avenging on such, not only the
 Contempt of Gods Authority, but of his Grace too, by pun-
 ing their Disobedience to his Law, as extremely aggravated
 by their slighting his compassionate Proposals of Peace
 and Reconciliation. And O how should will the Breas-
 of injured Mercy be for terrible vengeance against such
 who have offered such insufferable indignity & affront to
 His divine will it be, to impenitent sinners to find him
 that in vain offered to become their merciful Lawgiver, appear
 as their now inexorable Judge? How will it fill them
 with Consternation & Despair to see him who came forth
 as the Ambassador of divine Mercy, with proposals of
 Peace, to come now as the Commissioner of his Justice
 in flaming Fire to execute vengeance on all that
 knew not God, nor obeyed his Gospel, to punish them
 with an ever lasting Destruction from the presence of the
 Lord, & the glory of his power! And it will add a peculiar
 but terrible Accent to the condemning Sentence passed on
 such impenitent sinners, that it will be pronounced by
 his Mouth who was once the Herald of divine Grace, & in
 vain published to them his most merciful Tenders of it,
 that ever an offended Majesty made to the guilty Sons of
 Men. There fore the Ap. John seems to make a particular
 Remark on this Rev. 1. 7 when he tells us, he who he comes
 in the Clouds, & every eye shall behold him, even those that
 have pierced him, & all Tribes of the Earth shall wail be-
 cause of him. Not only will these unbelieving Jews behold him
 with Terror & Confusion, who were the immediate Instruments
 of his bitter & reproachful sufferings, when they shall see
 him whom they crucified as a Malefactor, appear as a
 final Judge, but all those impenitent sinners of the Gen-
 tiles, who have in effect crucified him afresh by their wil-
 ful Disbelief of his Gospel, & Disobedience to it, even they
 will then in vain seek to hide themselves in the Den &
 the Rocks of the Mountains, they will in vain call to Rocks
 & Mountains to fall on them & hide them from the Face of
 him that sits on the Throne & from the Wrath of the Lamb, y
 because the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who
 shall be able to stand Rev. 6. 15, 16, 17. The Lamb of

of God upon incurred by the final Impenitency of sinners
 will then appear as a roaring Lion; If they who would
 not bow to his scepter of Peace shall they be crucified
 his iron Rod. How reasonable then is the W. Advice that
 the Son of God by a reverential Subjection to his Authority
 let his hungry & thirsty perish from the way, for if his
 anger be kindled never so little, blessed are all they
 that put their Trust in him Ps. 2. 12. And Oh! shall
 the Considerations may convince every ungodly
 man among us of the necessity of Repentance to pre-
 vent the terrible Justice of his final Judgement
 May every such sinner learn hence to brace & plea-
 sure with himself. How shall I stand at the Bar of my
 righteous Judge under such a vast load of unpay'd
 Guilt! With what Shows of Mercy can I appear before
 that God, whose Law I have cast behind my back, &
 whose Offers of Pardon & Salvation I have undervalued
 and slighted. How shall I look that blessed Saviour in
 the Face, whose compassionate Mediation, I have de-
 spised, whose merciful Invitations to return to God thro
 him, I have refused to comply with, whose Authority I have
 trampled on, whose glorious Attempts for my recovery
 & Salvation I have resisted & defied, whose precious
 Blood I have offered the highest Indignity to, by refusing
 that Pardon which was the purchase thereof, when ten-
 dered on the most reasonable & seconded by Terms
 & that if my timely Repentance & believing Application
 to the Mercy of God by him prevent not, my Case is hope-
 less & desperate for ever. I must then renounce my Sin
 & never I would prevent this terrible Excommunication of them
 I must return to God, as my reconcilable Father, or else I
 shall fall into his hands as my avenging Judge. I must
 hear the calm Voice of the Son of God calling me to repent
 & believe the Gospel, that I may not hear from him that
 terrible Doom, Depart from me ye cursed &c. Mat. 25. 41.

2 This Consideration of God's judging the World in light & shad-
 ows by Christ Jesus, as it shows the absolute necessity of
 Repentance, so it presents to us the greatest Encouragement

ment to it. For if God will judge the World by Christ Jesus, the
 Gospel will be to all that hear it the Bulls of his final
 Judgment. Now in that Gospel Repentance & Remission of Sins
 are to be preached to all Nations in the Name of Christ.
 This the Tenor of our Gospel, Repent & be converted, if you
 shall live may be blotted out, when the Times of refreshing shall
 come from the presence of the Lord Acts. 3. 19. The Gospel
 is God's royal Act of Pardon & Indemnity published to all
 true Penitents. Where in this Chapter is preached unto
 us Forgiveness of Sins, & thro' him all that believe are
 justified, acquitted & absolved from all things from
 which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses.
Acts. 13. 38, 39. Oh! how wondrous free and merciful is this
 to various Repentance to all who upon the Review of their
 past sinful Life, cannot but behold innumerable Offences
 that render them obnoxious to the vengeance of God ac-
 cording to the strict Tenor of his Law: I say how power-
 ful an encouragement is this to such to consider, that
 they shall be judged by Christ Jesus, & therefore not by
 the Tenor of the Law of Works, that denounces a curse
 to all that continue not in all things written in the Book
 of the Law to do them, but according to the Law of Faith or
 Law of Grace, which contains such free promises of justifi-
 cation & pardon to all believers Penitents. For then
 upon our sincere Repentance all the Guilt of our unre-
 generate State of Life shall be entirely blotted out, & all
 our past Iniquities shall be covered & hid & imputed to us
 no more. None of our past Transgressions sincerely repen-
 ted of, shall be charged upon us to our final Condemnation.
 Our most painful Guilt shall be washed away in the be-
 lieving Blood, & gracious God will remember them no
 more, he will cast them behind & throw them into the Depth
 of the Sea Ps. 7. 19. he will remove them as far as he
 is from the West Ps. 103. 12. By such Expressions as these
 he declares the Fulfillment as well as the Principles of his pardon-
 ing Mercy to the truly penitent. Oh! how reviving are
 the Approchings of so entire & plenary a Forgiveness
 to a Soul that entertains various Thoughts of the righte-
 ous Judgment of God! & what abundant Encouragement have

... to return to him, when we are called that upon
 our thus penitently judging & condemning ourselves, we
 shall not be condemned by him. For that Gospel of his Son
 shall be the Rule of his final Judgment, that pronounces
 an entire Abolition to all truly penitent & renounces
 condemning Sentence which the Law of Works had passed
 upon us. So that under the Gospel, it's not the Greatness
 of our Sins, but our Abstinence & wilful Continuance in
 them, that is the insuperable Bar to our Justification
 here, & to our final Acquittal at the Bar of Christ. 'Tis
 final Unbelief or Impenitency aggravated in our other
 Sins that will subject us to inexorable Vengeance.
 And how much so ever our other Offences may have de-
 served the severity of divine Justice; a timely Repentance
 and sincere Conversion to God will certainly prevent that
 dismal Issue. If the wicked forsake his Way, & the unright-
 eous Man his Thoughts, & turn to the Lord, he will have
 Mercy on him, & to our God, he will abundantly pardon.
 Isa. 55. 7. And who that is conscious of his being liable
 to eternal Condemnation, would not readily submit to
 so reasonable & gracious Terms for his prevention of
 it. Who would not penitently lament & renounce his
 Sins now that foresee he shall here by be secured from
 that endless Punishment, which is his due Desert of
 them. Who would not return to an offended God, & to a
 dutiful Subjection to his rightful Authority, that con-
 sider him as a compassionate Father in Christ Jesus,
 ready to receive & embrace returning Prodigals. Who
 would not engage in his Service who is so willing to
 forget & cancell our past Offences, & to accept & reward
 our sincere tho' imperfect and defective Obedience
 for the future. Having drawn some Inferences from
 each Head of Discourse as I went along - I shall
 conclude with offering a few Directions.

1. If God will judge the World &c. let us then often judge our-
 selves. 'Tis that continually brings us to our feet, now,
 is most likely to us happily prepared for his final Tryal.
 'Tis not in vain that God hath set up such a Tribunal
 in every Mans Breast as preparatory to his. Let
 Conscience be then kept in the due exercise of its
 judicial

... a Motive to Repentance
 ... as Gods Deputy in our hearts. Let us then
 daily review our Actions, to discern whether they are such
 as God will approve or dislike. That if they be such as
 will approve, we may reap inward Peace & Satisfaction
 in the Review of them. But if they be such as he dis-
 allows, we may by a penitent Confession & Amendment
 & renewed Application to his pardoning Mercy thro' our
 Redeemer prevent their coming into Judgment to our Con-
 fusion & Condemnation. It highly concerns us often to
 examine in what posture we have presented to the fi-
 nal Judgment, whether prepared or unprepared for it to
 compare our Lives with the Gospel as the Rule of Christ's
 final Judgment, & try whether we are among those believ-
 ing & penitent & sincerely obedient Souls, whom God pro-
 mises here according to the Tenor of his gracious Covenant
 & will finally acquit, or among those unbelieving & im-
 penitent sinners, a gainst whom his Wrath is provoked
 from Heaven; both in the Threatnings of the Law, and in
 those of the Gospel itself. There is no other Way but this
 to get our Sins blotted out of Gods Book & to prevent their
 appearing upon Record against us.

2. If God will judge us by Christ, this should make us
 cautious of passing a rash & uncharitable Judgment
 on others. Judge not with our Sars. That ye be not judge
 Mat. 7. 1, 2. Thus the 1st Reason Rom. 2. 1. How art
 thou a Jew that thou art that
 thou dost judge another, for thou hast thou that thou shalt escape
 the Judgment of God. Especially, we should beware of pre-
 tending to censure the Thoughts & Intentions of others
 any farther than their Words & Actions give a convincing
 Discovery of them, because this is to step into the Throne
 of Christ & usurp his Prerogative, who is the great Judge
 of all the hearts of the Children of Men.
3. This should begot in us a strict Caution & care over all our
 Thoughts Words & Actions, for if we have any eyes to our
 selves, any Grain of true Wisdom in us, or any Sense of our
 eternal Interest, the great Day of Acc't should always be
 before us & present to our Minds, & we should govern every
 Action with a serious and awful Regard to it. How near

readily doth it concern us to take heed to our Ways, lest
anytime we offend, to keep our Hearts with a Diligent
watch, & to set a Watch to the Door of our Lips.

This should dispose us to great sincerity in all our
Dealings, make us always speak as we think, perform
what we profess & promise, & in all things to be what we
would seem to be, since God has appointed a Day when the
secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, & every Mask
of Hypocrisy & Dissimulation shall be plucked off, &
our most close & cunning Designs shall be brought to
open Light. In that great Day nothing will be Matter
of Comfort & rejoicing to us, but the testimony of our
Conscience that in all simplicity & godly Sincerity we
have us our Conversation by the Grace of God in Words
& Opportunities of doing & getting Good which God
afforded, because we are about His service & must give an
Account of them. Our Lord will enquire how we have
occupied these our Talents, whether we have consumed
them in our Lusts, or employed them for his Ho-
nour & Glory. Let us then improve all the Seasons
of Grace & salvation we enjoy. Let us be careful
according to our Capacities to relieve the poor and
needy, the fatherless & Widows in their Affliction,
and to keep ourselves unspotted from the World. This
is pure Religion & undefiled before God & the Father.

Let us earnestly improve the divine Aid & Assistance in
this Duty. Prayer is indeed the most effectual Means to
engage the divine Blessing & Assistance to second our
Endeavours & to secure them from Miscarriage. & if
without the Aid of Gods Grace this Blessing on our En-
deavours they will be all ineffectual. Let us then as con-
siders to Solomon's Advice Prov. 3. 5, 6 trust in the Lord with
all our hearts. In all our Ways acknowledge him, & he
shall direct our Paths. Therefore as ever we hope to per-
ceive & continue in a good Course & to order ourselves so
as to be in preparation for judgment, let us every Day
by continual and fervent prayer apply ourselves to
the Fountain of Grace for his Aid & help, for Mercy to
pardon

to pardon our Sins & Grace to help us in time of need, to make
us vigilant over ourselves & all the Actions of our Lives,
to enable us to a patient Continuance in well-doing, to
keep us from every evil Work, & to preserve us to his
Heavenly Kingdom. — S. Ps. 106. 1 — 119. 59.

Sermon XXI. begun at Doock August 26th 1761.
John 14. 1. 1st Pt. Let not your heart be troubled, Ye
believe in God, believe also in Me.

Though the rational Powers and Facultys of our Minds
are very much adapted to guide us in the Way to
Happiness, yet in the present imperfect State of things
Reason is so weakened, and many things are necessa-
ry to be known and done for securing our Peace
and rendering our Happiness certain, which the dim
Light of Nature cannot find out, & therefore it
has pleased the kind and merciful Author of our
Being to give us the plain and certain Knowledge
of his Will, & of the Way to Heaven & Happiness, by his
only begotten Son, who by the Light of his Gospel
hath taught us our Duty in the clearest Manner,
hath enforced our Obedience by the most powerful
Motives, hath raised our Hopes and removed our
Fears by the most precious Promises, & hath settled
our Happiness on the surest Foundations. Must
it not then be of great Use to our souls to know this
Gospel? Is it not our chief Interest to believe and
improve it? For there are no other Sources of Know-
ledge so big with Comfort and Joy, there are the best
and most blessed Tidings of Salvation. Let not your
hearts be troubled, say your blessed Lord to his Disci-
ples, Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.
Some time ago I signified to You my purpose of setting be-
fore You the principles of natural Religion, and then

to proceed to give You a View of the Glory & Excellency
 the Truth and Evidence of the Christian Religion.
 I have already shew'd You that there is an infinite
 self-existent and eternal Being who made all things
 that he preserves and governs all things by his Pro-
 vidence; that we the Children of Men have rational
 and immortal Spirits within us, and as we are ob-
 lig'd to know, love, and serve our Maker, so we
 shall be rewarded or punished as we regard or
 neglect these Obligations, and since this is not
 always impartially done in this World, that there
 must be a future State, wherein all the present
 Mysteries of Providence shall be untravell'd, a
 time fix'd and appointed for a general Judgment,
 wherein we must all appear before the Judgment
 Seat of Christ, and every Man shall receive ac-
 cording to the Deeds done in the Body. These
 are the great Principles of natural Religion, and
 sure I am, who so ever both heartily & sincerely
 believe these great and fundamental Truths,
 must not only sincerely wish that his Father of
 Lights would give him a clear and plain Know-
 ledge of his Nature and Will, and a certain Guide
 to Happiness, but if there is any thing that can
 claim to be a divine Revelation, he will exa-
 mine it with all Care & Impartiality, and
 if he find that it is attended with such satisfac-
 ting Evidences as the Nature of the Subject doth
 admit and require, he will readily embrace it &
 rejoice in it: And I am also ^{very} confident, that
 never was any Religion in the World, pretending
 to be of a divine Original, so was this of God, and
 so wisely calculated for the Peace, the Comfort &
 the Happiness of Man, as that pure & peaceable
 Religion taught us by the blessed Jesus the eternal
 Son of God, & contained in the holy Scriptures, so
 that who so ever believes in God, will also believe
 in

in him, and by believing in him they shall be delivered
 from all their anxious and perplexing Fears, & have
 your Pledges of the Love and Favour of God, who if in
 a certain measure of endless Bliss & Happiness, do not
 your heart be troubled, Ye believe in God &
 being now to enter upon the Consideration of the
 Truth & Excellency of the Christian Religion, all
 my Design from this Treatise is to remove those gene-
 ral Prejudices, which Men who pretend to follow
 the Dictates of Reason, & to believe the principles
 of natural Religion, are ready to entertain a-
 gainst the Christian Religion, and to show You
 how much it contributes and tends to the Inter-
 est Comfort and Happiness of every one who
 sincerely believes in God, to believe also in
 Christ Jesus, and in doing this thro' the divine
 Aid & Assistance, I shall observe the following Method.

- I. Enquire what it is to believe in God.
- II. Show You what it is to believe in Christ Jesus.
- III. Consider how much it tends to our Peace and Com-
 fort here, & how it secures our Salvation & Happiness
 hereafter, that as we believe in God, we also believe in
 Christ.
- IV. And then shall draw some Inferences from the whole
 I return to the first thing propos'd in the Method
 I. To Enquire what it is to believe in God.
 And this certainly contains more in then to be per-
 suaded of his Being, and to believe that he is,
 but we must also know, as far as our Capacities
 can reach, what he is in himself, and what he is
 to us, what Dependance we have upon him, what
 Relation we bear to him, and what we are to ex-
 pect from him, more particularly
 I. We believe that he being posses'd of all possible
 Perfections & adorable Excellencies in the most per-
 fect Manner, & in the highest Degree, has given us

a bright Display of his glorious Attributes in forming all things out of nothing by the Word of his Power, that he upholds & governs, and directs not only the more considerable; but even the minutest Creatures he has made; that he receives a special Providence over reasonable Beings, and takes a special Cognizance and Inspection over all their Thoughts & Operations. That by his unerring Wisdom and Goodness, he has established an essential and eternal Difference between Good and Evil, so that no Law, Compact or Constitution of any inferior Being can alter the Nature of moral Actions, that the Vice and Virtue are unchangeable things, or their arciditions for ever good in themselves, being agreeable to the moral Perfections of God, and to those significations of his Will he has given us to us, and there are Actions for ever Evil in themselves, being contrary to the moral Perfections of God, and to his Will, so that to deny that there are no Actions in themselves either morally good or Evil, is the same thing as to deny the moral Perfections of God, and consequently to deny the very Being of God, for if God is, he must be infinitely wise, Holy, just and good.

That we having received from him an intelligent and immortal Spirit, must be not only capable to discern between Good and Evil, Sin and Duty, but that we also stand obliged to perform that which is good, and to avoid that which is Evil. Is it not for this very Reason, that we are made free and intelligent Agents, that we have such Powers and Abilities given us, that we may render a reasonable Homage and Service to our Maker? For since we owe our Being and all our Blessings from him, and depend upon him for all our Hopes and Expectations, it certainly be-

comes

comes us, to adore and worship, to honour & obey, to praise him for all the Blessings we enjoy, and to pray to him for every good thing we want. That this Sovereign Being who has given us Laws and Statutes, will reward or punish us, as we regard or neglect those Laws, for he being the Supreme Governour of the World and righteous Lawgiver, he must testify his favour or displeasure according to the good or bad Behaviour of his Creatures, otherwise he governs in vain, & gives Laws to no purpose; and this is not done here in this World, at least but very seldom, it plainly follows that there must be a future State of Rewards & Punishments, wherein an holy and righteous God will render to every Man according to his Works, and that without any Respect of Persons.

5. That if God shall be pleased to give us a more clear & certain Knowledge of his Will, and of the Way to Happiness, than we in the present State of Things can attain to by the Light of Nature, we are bound to examine such Declaration of his Will, and having satisfying Evidences that it is from God, we must receive and believe it. It is by no means contrary to natural Reason, that the infinitely wise God may reveal his mind to his reasonable Creatures, and may give them convincing Proofs that such a Revelation comes from himself; and we knowing by the Light of Nature, that this God is unchangeably Holy and good, just and faithful, is it not an obvious Consequence, that when we know such a Revelation to be from God, we are bound to receive and believe it, for what he says must be true, and what he declares as his Will unto us, must be just and good, and we may rest satisfied that he will never deceive us, but that he always intends our Happiness, & designs to do us good.

Now

how have things I have said on this Head
are agreeable to the plain Dictates of right
Reason & as clearly taught us by the Light
of Nature?

Now proceed to the 2nd thing I propose
to shew you what it is to believe in Christ Jesus
And how I am not to describe that particular Grace
of Faith which unites to Christ Jesus, and gives
us access to all the glorious Blessings
of his Purchase, but am to consider the believing
in the Lord Jesus Christ in the most ample
Meaning of the Word, and as it respects the whole
of divine Revelation, so that in the general
to believe in Jesus Christ, is to profess our
acknowledgement that he is a divine Teacher
come from God, sent down from Heaven to give
us a clear Knowledge of the divine Nature,
Perfections, and Will, and that this Jesus was
in all respects well fitted and qualified to in-
struct us in the whole Counsel of God, so that
all the Doctrines he has taught us, and all the
Precepts he has given us, have the Stamp &
Authority of God upon them, and are infalli-
bly certain and true, such as may lay the
Foundation of our salvation on, but that I may be the
more particular on this Head

To believe in Christ Jesus is to own acknow-
ledge & honour him as the eternal and only
begotten Son of God, equal with the Father, the
Brightness of his Glory & the express Image of
his Person, the glorious Immanuel, God with
us, whom the Father of Mercies sent down from
Heaven to purchase for sinners of Mankind life
and Happiness, provided a Body for him that by
his Death and sufferings in our Nature, by mak-
ing his soul an offering for sin, the Justice of God

might be satisfied, and his way opened for the rich
& Communications of divine Grace be favour to
quilty sinners. That the only begotten Son of God should
become the Son of Man, that the eternal Word should
be made flesh, especially that he should assume our
Nature with a Design of becoming our Propitiation
by his sufferings in it; this is the most astonishing
Condescension that ever was expressed, but this we
may behold a Height & Depth far surpassing our
Knowledge. This is an Instance of Love which if
it had not been clearly revealed, we would never
have imagined or believed, and which when reveal-
ed, we cannot comprehend the greatness of.

That thro' the shedding of the precious blood of Jesus
we have an authentic Assurance of Pardon & For-
giveness, and that in a way abundantly consistent
with the Justice and Holiness of God, the Honour of
his Law and Government, and his irreconcilable
Hatred against all Unrighteousness and Sin. &
now may we not justly admire that glorious De-
vice of having sinners thro' the blood of a Redeemer
Here indeed was a Method, whereby Mercy is exercis-
ed in the highest Degree, and yet Justice satisfied
to the full. Here Mercy and Truth have met toge-
ther, Righteousness & Peace have mutually embrac-
ed each other Gal. 2. 20. Since Christ hath merited the
pardon of sin by his blood, a just God will certainly
deal by his own law according to his Merits, &
therefore he pardons sin not only to manifest his
Mercy, but also to declare his Justice. Thus the
Apostle Paul argues Rom. 3. 25, 26. Whom God
hath set forth to be a Propitiation thro' his blood,
his blood, to declare his Righteousness, for the Re-
mission of sin that are past, thro' the Forbear-
ance of God. And that we may take Notice of the
strong Emphasis of the Word, he repeats it again.

to declare w^{ch} at this time, his righteousnes, that
he might be just, and the justifier of him, that
live in sinners. O the wicked States! O the inconceiv-
able Happiness of Believers in Jesus! When the
very Justice of God and Attributes of his Nature, which
carry in it the greatest Error to all the Work-
ers of Iniquity, instead of pleading for vengeance
will implore pardon, & call aloud for Mercy on
all them that have taken Christ for their Saviour,
& have fled to the blood of sprinkling for Refuge.

3. That they and they alone shall have an alter-
ed in this Redeemer, and a Title to his rich and glo-
rious Blessings of his purchase, who by believ-
ing in him, and obey his glorious Gospel. John. 3. 16 For
God so loved the World, that he gave his only be-
gotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should
not perish, but have everlasting Life: For God
sent not his Son into the World, to condemn the
World, but that the World thro' him might be saved.
Hebr. 5. 9. And being made perfect, he became
the Author of eternal Salvation unto all them
that obey him. So that notwithstanding all that
Christ has done and suffered, yet such as will
not acknowledge and honour him as the eternal
Son of God, such as will not receive his Doctrine
and obey his precepts, such as will not submit
to him as their Prophet, Christ and King, they
shall receive no Advantage, no Benefit by
his merits and sufferings, but shall perish
for ever in their sins. John. 3. 36. He that believ-
eth on the Son, hath everlasting Life: and he
that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life,
but the Wrath of God abideth on him.

4. Whereas we might be discouraged to attempt to
live up to that holy and spiritual precepts of the
Gospel, considering the natural Corruption &
Infirmity of our Souls, we have Ground to hope
for

for the divine and super natural Assistance, that ever
the Holy Spirit of God will work powerfully in us, re-
newing, sanctifying & strengthening our Souls, & sup-
porting us in every part of our Work & here safe.
We do entirely depend on the Influence of the Spirit,
it is the Work & Business of this blessed Agent to work
on the dark & sinful Mind of Man, to change his cor-
rupt Nature, to lighten his Understanding & give
him a new bent and Bias towards God, it is
he who forms in us the principles of a holy & heaven-
ly Life, & enables us to improve & advance them
towards their perfection in Life eternal. And his In-
fluences we are encouraged to hope for Luke. 11. 13
If ye then being evil know how to give good Gifts unto
your Children, how much more shall your heavenly
Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

5. In Order to secure unto us, & bestow upon us this in-
estimable Gift of the Holy Ghost, and to prepare us
for that great Happiness, Christ hath purchased for
us, we believe that as this gracious Redeemer
once laid down his Life a ransom for many, so by
his own power he rose again from the dead on the
third Day, and now lives for ever in a glorious & ex-
alted State at the right hand of the Majesty on
high, acting as our Advocate and Intercessor in
the higher House & preparing Mansions of Glory
for all his people. John. 14. 2. for he is able to save
to the uttermost all that come unto God through him,
seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.
Hebr. 7. 25. & lastly on this Head

6. We have a more clear and certain Account, &
undoubted Assurance of a future State of Rewards
and Punishments, that there is an Heaven of eternal
Happiness prepared for them who believe in Jesus
and walk according to his Gospel, that this Happi-
ness is exceedingly great and everlasting, and shall
we

we shall never be in the least Danger of being deprived of it, but we shall be with ^{the Lord} ever, in whose presence there is fullness of Joy and at whose right hand there are pleasures of Joy evermore. — Whereas on the other hand, we are assured, there is a place of eternal Torment and unspeakable Anguish prepared for the wicked, from whence there is no Redemption. Now this is the sum and substance of the Doctrines of the Gospel, these are Truths worthy of God to reveal, agreeable to the Wishes, the Desires, the Interests of Men. O that we were, as happy, as to believe, receive and improve them, that in this our Day, we knew things which belong to our Peace and Happiness, for these are not trivial Matters, but Matters which highly concern us, Matters of the last Consequence to our precious Souls, and therefore it's absolutely necessary that we should attend unto them. These are the great things that concern our eternal Peace, & if we study not to know them in this the Day of our merciful Visitation, we shall lament our Folly, but lament it in vain, when they shall be at last for ever hid from our eyes. I Ps. 78. 1. — 189. 15.

Sermon XXII. 14. 1. Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. The reasoning Powers and Faculties which the kind & gracious Author of our Being has given us, make us differ from the Beasts which perish, and render us capable to serve, know & glorify our Maker in an active Manner, and yet if in the present imperfect State of Things, we should so magnify the strength of natural Reason, as to reckon it a full and sufficient Guide in Matters of Religion, we should be guilty of a very fatal Mistake

Mistake, and should too much flatter the pride of human Understanding, for it is evident that such as were left to the Guidance of the Light of Nature, have wandered in the dark, & have miserably mistaken the Way to Happiness: Was it not there for an Evidence of the great Love & the richest Compassions in the Father of Mercies, to give us a full and clear Revelation of his Nature and Will, and of the Way to Happiness, and that by such a glorious Person, even by his own Son in our Nature? Would it not be an high Reflection on the Wisdom, and an open Contempt of the Love & Glorification of God, if we should refuse to hearken to his Son, or reject the glad Tidings of Salvation he has brought us? Must not then every one who believes in God, believe also in his Son Christ Jesus, who is one in Essence with him, and sent by him as a true and faithful Witness of the Truth. — In discoursing on these Words I proposed to observe this Method

- I To Enquire what it is to believe in God.
- II Show You what it is to believe in Christ Jesus
- III Consider how much it tends to our Peace & Comfort here, and how it secures our Salvation & Happiness hereafter, that as we believe in God, we believe in Christ Jesus
- IV To draw some practical Inferences of the whole.
 - I To Enquire what it is to believe in God, which implies
 - (1) Our belief that he being possessor of all possible perfections in the most perfect Manner then the highest Degree, has given us a bright bright Display of his glorious Attributes in creating, upholding, governing & directing all his Creatures and Works.
 - (2) That by his unerring Wisdom & Goodness he has established an essential & eternal Difference betwixt good & evil, so that no Law or compact of any inferior Being can alter the Nature of moral Actions.
 - (3) That

- (3) That we having received from him an intelligent & immortal Spirit must be not only capable to discern betwixt Good and Evil, Vice & Duty, but that we also stand oblig'd to perform that which is good, and to avoid that which is evil.
- (4) That this sovereign Being, who has given us Laws and Statutes, will reward or punish us, as we regard or neglect those Laws and precepts.
- (5) That if God shall be pleased to give us a more clear and certain Knowledge of his Will, & of the Way to Happiness, than we in this present State of thin^{gs} can attain to, by the Light of Nature, we are bound to examine with a Diligence of his Will, & having satisfying Evidence that it is from God, we must receive & believe. To whom what it is to believe in Christ Jesus. I proposed not to describe that particular Grace of Faith which unites to Christ, but to consider believing in Christ in the most ample meaning of the Word. (1) To acknowledge & honour him as the eternal & only begotten Son of God, the glorious Immanuel God with us, whom the Father sent from Heaven to purchase for us Life & Happiness by his Death & sufferings. (2) That thro' the shedding of his precious Blood of Jesus, we have an authentic Assurance of Pardon and Forgiveness of Sin.
- (3) That they & they alone shall have an Interest in this Redeemer, and a Title to the rich & glorious Blessings of his Purchase, who believe in him, and obey his glorious Gospel. (4) Whereas we might be discouraged to attempt to live up to the holy and spiritual precepts of the Gospel, considering the natural Corruption and Infirmitie of our Bodies, we have Ground to hope for divine & supernatural Assistance. (5) In order to secure unto us and

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 upon us this inestimable Gift of the Holy Ghost, and to prepare us for that great Happiness, which Christ has purchased for us, we believe that this gracious Redeemer liveth for ever in a glorious & exalted State preparing Mansions of Glory for all his people. We have a more clear & certain Account & an undoubted Assurance of a future State. These things were more largely insisted on, & now I proceed to the third Head of my Discourse, which was
 II To show You how much it tends to our Peace and Comfort here, & to our Salvation and Happiness hereafter that as we believe in God, we believe also in Christ Jesus. And on this Head it will be proper to show You what are the things which the best & wisest Men amongst the Heathens, who had no divine Revelation earnestly desired & sought after, but could not attain to the perfect Knowledge of them, or what are the things which any wise and reasonable Man, who believes there is a supreme Being, who made and governs all things, could wish to know, in order to his own Happiness, and if this Christian Religion affords us such a perfect Knowledge of these things, as is necessary for encouraging our Hopes and establishing our Happiness, then surely it must highly advance our Peace and Comfort, it must be a Religion worthy of all Acceptation. And to set this in a proper Light, consider with me
 I That since God is the Source of all Happiness, the Original of all perfection, & we necessarily depend upon his Favour and Bounty for all we have and hope for, it must be the earliest Desire of every rational Agent to have clear & just Apprehensions of his Nature & Perfections, and to know how he is affected towards his Creatures. We may easily know & comprehend

comprehend what mean and trifling, what wicked and abominable things the Heathens ascribed unto their Deities, how little Knowledge they had of the true and living God; but how clearly is the Unity of his Nature and Essence, and the Glory of his Attributes and Perfections set before us by the Light of the Gospel? With what Beauty & Loveliness is he clothed, when we find him bearing the amiable Character of the Father of Mercies, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? The clearer the Gospel has been revealed, his Name still appears the more amiable, and lovely.

Under this Jewish Dispensation, he appears a more severe and terrible, but since he has spoken to us by his Son, we now know that God is indeed Love. And he has given us the most convincing Demonstration and highest Evidences of his Love in sending his only begotten Son, the Son of his Love to die for us to redeem us from eternal Death, and to raise us to an endless Happiness. Is not this a glorious Instance of his Love & highest Affections? Who can hear it without Traces, ports of Joy? Doth not this afford Matter of eternal Admiration and Praise, how ought we to look upon it as a faithful saying and worthy of all Acceptation that Christ gave himself into the World to save Sinners.

2. Considering that in the present State of Things, Man has not only a strong Inclination to that which is evil, but in many Instances acts contrary to the Laws of God, and the plainest Dictates of Reason, must it not be a very desirable thing to know how God will deal with criminal Creatures, and on what Terms he will pardon them, and receive them again into Friendship and Favour? The Comfort they would raise & draw to themselves

from the Mercy and Goodness of God, is checked by the Consideration of his Justice and Holiness; and it cannot be proven by any Arguments drawn from Reason, that God is absolutely obliged to pardon Sin; on the contrary it is evident that it becomes the Supreme Governour of the World to vindicate the Honour of his Law, and to prevent the abuses of his Patience by some Instance of Severity, so that every Offender must remain in a perplexed & disponding State, full of Fear and Uncertainty, as not knowing how an angry and righteous God will deal with him. The most plausible thing that Reason suggests is, that God will pardon Sin upon Repentance? but what Evidence is there to support this Opinion? What Argument can Reason adduce to prove it? Surely none at all: seeing it gives no Discovery of God's Will and Intention so to do: Under the Case of the Sinner is left very doubtful, he is partly encouraged from the Goodness & Benignity of God's Nature by the one hand; partly discouraged from the Consideration of his Justice on the other, not knowing which will prevail; Viewing the Exercise of God's Justice we come to be neigbary, & that of his Mercy is only gratuitous, the Sinner will be ready to conclude in the Issue, that if it is more probable God will not pardon Sin upon his bare Repentance, than that he will. Thus we see that Reason is manifestly defective in the most material & important Article of Faith, & this single Defect is sufficient to demonstrate the Imperfection of the whole System of natural Religion, which seems Men so much to value. O what a hope left & comfort this Religion is it to Sinners! It lays down no sure Foundation for the Pardon of Sin & the Conciliation with God: It hath no Covenant, no Promise, no Priest, nor Sacrifice; whereas it is the peculiar Glory of the Gospel of Christ Jesus, to reveal an all-sufficient Attainment for Sin, to give us an authentic Assurance of Pardon and Forgiveness, and that God will exercise

his Mercy and Goodness without any violation of
 Justice and Righteousness, and of this we have
 the most plain and positive Declaration given
 us by Christ Jesus & pardon promised upon the
 most easy and reasonable Terms. The Christian
 Religion makes gracious Provision for the guilty
 Sinner in the Blood of Atonement, & proposes a
 Satisfaction for sin, whereby Mercy is exalted, and
 Justice at the same time fully satisfied. Here
 then is the Difference in Point of Comfort & Certainty
 between the doubting Sinner, and the believing
 Christian. The doubting Sinner can only say, I
 hope my sins will be pardoned, who knows
 God will repent, & turn from his fierce anger that
 I perish not: But the believing Christian speaks
 with more Assurance, I know in whom I have
 believed, I am certain that God is reconcilable &
 reconciled thro' Christ, and therefore he will have
 Mercy and abundantly pardon all mine iniquities.
 And while Reason shelters only in the
 Goodness and Benignity of Gods Nature, not
 knowing how far it may be extended, Faith
 relies on the Cross of Christ, and takes refuge
 therein in the Blood of Atonement. The Language
 of Faith, Lord I believe in him whom thou hast
 set forth to be a propitiation for sin to declare
 thy Righteousness and Justice, as well as thy
 Grace and Mercy in forgiving sin: I plead
 for upon the Merits of my Saviour, he hath
 paid my Debt, and purchased my Pardon, let his
 Pains be my Ease, his Shame my Glory, his
 my Crown, and his Death my Life. Doth not
 this settle the Peace & raise the Joy of our Minds
 that God was in Christ, reconciling the World
 to himself, not imputing their Trespases
 unto them 2 Cor. 5. 19. But

3) Since our Dependance on God obliges us to do
 his Will, is it not exceeding desirable to have

clear certain entire system of practical Religion
 set before us with sufficient Evidence of its divine
 Authority, Will not this render our Duty plain and
 easy, enforce and encourage our Obedience? If the
 many wise Men by the Light of Nature have spotted
 many great and excellent things, yet as there is no
 compleat and uniforme scheme of practical Religion
 to be found amongst them, so none of them had more
 Right than another to impose his scheme upon Man-
 kind, and amidst so many different Opinions, as there
 are to be found among them, in Matters of very great
 Moment, no Man has any right to determine which
 of them was in the Right, and which of them was in
 the Wrong: Herein therefore lies the great Ad-
 vantage of a divine Revelation, that it gives unto all
 Men great and small, rich & poor, learned & un-
 learned a clearer view, & an authentick Rule of
 their Duty, and I appeal to the Judgement of eve-
 ry thinking and sober person, if the Precepts
 taught us by the blessed Jesus, are not most agree-
 able to our natural Notions of God, most conducive
 to the Peace and Wellfare of Society, and to the
 Happiness of every single Person. Do they not en-
 join every thing that is virtuous and praise-worthy?
 Do they not teach Love & Benevolence, Justice and
 Temperance, Charity and Faithfulness? What a lovely
 Image and Representation of practical Religion have
 we set before our eyes in our Saviours most excellent
 Sermon upon the Mount. What wise precepts, what
 worthy sayings were ever delivered by any of the Phi-
 losophers, which are not more plainly taught by our
 blessed Saviour or his Apostles? And not only so
 but also enforced with more strength and Efficacy,
 founded upon more noble & consistent Principles

and

and urge with greater Weight and Authority
So that the Preceptes of the Christian Religion
having so manifold Marks of Goodness and
Fidelity must recompend themselves to our
by their intrinsic Worth and Excellency; The
Peace of our Minds and the Perfection of our
Tures is in our giving Obedience to them.

4. If we are sensible of our Weakness, and who is
not sensible of it? If we find it a difficult Work
subdue our irregular Affections & Passions, and
resist strong Temptations, would it not be the
earnest Desire and fervent Prayer of every Man
who would wish to study the Practick of every
and Holiness, that a gracious God of his infinite
Goodness would afford us divine Assistance, and
strengthen us in the Discharge of our Duty?
are there more powerful Helps and Assistances
to be found than those promised in the Gospel?
Is not the holy and almighty Spirit of God given
to Believers in Christ Jesus, to renew & strengthen
their souls, to subdue their Lusts, to work in
them both to will and to do, and to train them
under the Means of Grace for Heaven and Glory?
Can any Enemy be too strong, or any Duty too
difficult for him, who has with a powerful
Assistant ever near unto him, both ready and
willing to help in time of need.

5. We see that Life is very short, and the best of
Men meet with many Sorrows and Troubles
in it, and therefore every Man would fain have
a more certain Knowledge of his Existence
in another State, and of the Nature of that
Pain which awaits all those who walk
the Path of Holiness here, than they can attain
to by the Light of Nature. How blind and
deaf were the Nations which the wisest
then had of these things. How miserable
were

their Nations & them mixed with poetical Fictions
and fabulous Stories? Was it not a thing worthy
of God to bring Life and Immortality to Light? Is
it not by the Gospel of Jesus Christ we receive not
only a reasonable Expectation, but even a certain
Assurance of an endless & unspeakable Happiness?
Is not the certain prospect of this Happiness enough
to comfort our Minds and support our Spirits in all
our present Afflictions, for the sufferings of this
Life are not worthy to be compared with the Glory
which shall be revealed in us. Let not your hearts
therefore be troubled, if we believe in God, let us
also believe in Christ Jesus, for there is enough
in him & in his Gospel to remove all our Fears, to
revive our Hopes, and to consummate our Happiness.
For by him we have - a clear Revelation of the
amiable Nature of God - a full Assurance of the
Pardon of Sin - a compleat Rule of Faith &
Manners - the certain Promises of divine Assis-
tance - and the clear Prospect of immortal Glory
and Happiness. from all which, I conceive, it evi-
dently appears how much it tends to our present
Peace and Comfort, that as we believe in God, we
believe also in Christ Jesus.

I now come
to draw some practical Inferences from the whole.
Hence we may see the great Glory and Excellency of
our holy Religion, how wisely it is calculated for pro-
moting the Glory of God, and the Happiness of Man,
surely no other Institution can be laid in the Balance
with it. How ought we to prize, value, & improve it.
Hence we may learn the real Cause of the Enmity
of the Men of this World against the Christian Reli-
gion, it is not because of its contradicting the
Dictates of right Reason, or being disagreeable
to the Wishes and Desires of all covet Men & virtu-
ous, but because it checks their corrupt Appetites
disturbs

disturb them in the pursuit of their sinful
 ways, remove them for their vicious lives, and
 because they cannot bear the light of it, therefore
 they strive to darkness and destruction.

3. That such as pretend to magnify reason, & yet
 at the same time are enemies to the Revelation, & yet
 not convince in their pretences, for every one
 who believes in God, has all the Reason in the
 World, as he regards his own Peace & Happiness
 to believe also in Christ Jesus, for the Gospel of
 Christ Jesus reveals many necessary and con-
 fortable truths, which our Reason cannot teach
 us, and yet nothing is more reasonable than to
 believe every thing which God reveals unto
 us, when we are peacefully persuaded & satisfied
 that such a thing has been revealed by him.

4. We may infer with what care & attention
 we consider and strive to understand the
 our Gospel of Christ Jesus? How much do our
 Peace and Comfort, our eternal Wellfare & Har-
 piness depend on our believing in him? And
 how thankful should we be to God that we enjoy
 the light of the Gospel, and have these truths so
 so clearly set before us, when many other Nations
 and people are dwelling in Darkness, & dozoned
 superstition and idolatry. Surely the Lord has
 shewn unto us in pleasant peace, and we have
 obtained a goodly heritage. This is the greatest
 most valuable blessing any Nation can be pre-
 sented with. Blessed be the people that know the
 joyful sound. Let us thro' grace endeavour to improve
 our priviledges. Let us walk worthy of the high
 vocation, where with we are called, & in all things
 adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by holy
 & well-ordered conversation. Acts. 119. 1-16.

Week September 7th 1761.
 John. 1. 18. No man hath seen God at any time, but the
 only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the
 Father, he hath declared him.

There is no knowledge more useful & excellent,
 which can afford so much pleasure & satisfaction to
 the rational mind, as the knowledge of the Lord Je-
 hovah, who is the first and the best of beings, the
 alone source of all true life & happiness, John 17. 3.
 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee,
 the only true God. And whereas in the present state
 of things, the clouds of darkness do so cover our un-
 derstandinge that we cannot attain to the saving
 knowledge of this great and glorious being by the
 strength of bare Reason, it has pleased the Father
 of Lights to favour us with a clear and full dis-
 covery of his glorious perfections & unsearchable
 Counsels by one in all respects well qualified for
 such a work, who bears the nearest relation to God,
 and has the most intimate acquaintance with him.
 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten &c.
 The sacred Penman of this Gospel was the beloved
 Disciple John, whose writings are very remarkable
 for the sublimity of the matter, and the sweetness of
 his expression, he stands very high in the beginning of
 his Gospel, he boldly asserts and clearly teaches
 that Christ Jesus is the eternal son of God, and the
 true Messiah, that he himself had seen the beams
 of divine glory shining with a charming brightness
 thro' the veil of his flesh, that he had been blessed
 with rich receipts of his unsearchable grace, and
 with the most glorious discoveries of divine pre-
 cious and heavenly truths, for all the knowledge
 we have of God, and of the things of God, by the light of
 Nature is but mere darkness when compared with
 that more clear full and excellent knowledge we
 have by the light of the Gospel of Jesus X. No man &c.

In which words we have these things above
1. The insufficiency of natural Light & Reason
to bring us to the knowing Knowledge of the Being
the Perfections and Will of the one living and
true God. No man hath seen God at any time
The Evangelists Meaning is not, that no Man
with his bodily Eyes ever saw God, or that no Man
was ever able to know the Essence of God, and to
find out the Almighty into perfection, by the
of his Understanding, for he had certainly no
just Sentiments of the Nature & Excellencies
of the Lord Jehovah, that he knew him to be a
virtual and incomprehensible Being, and there-
fore it is, and for ever will be impossible
to see God in his own Nature, with the Eyes
of the Body, or fully and perfectly to compre-
hend all the Perfections of his Being by the
Eyes of his Mind: But his Meaning is, that
no Man by the unassisted Powers of the
hath attained, or ever shall attain to such a
perfect Knowledge of the Perfections & Coun-
sel of God, as is sufficient to direct and en-
courage him in the Service & Worship of God,
and to bring him to everlasting Blessings.

2. For this is the peculiar Glory of the God
and an Honour belonging only to the Son of
the only begotten Son, which is in the Bosom
of the Father, he hath declared him. We
now enjoy a plain and full Discovery of the
Nature and Mind of this great God, the Foun-
tain of all perfection and Happiness, so far as
it is necessary for our Comfort and Happiness
and eternal Salvation, and we know and
well assured of the Truth of this Revelation
being delivered to us by one, who is of the same
individual Nature with God, entirely beloved
by him, & intimately acquainted with all his
Counsels

and Will. No man hath seen God at any time,
the only begotten Son, which is in the Bosom of. &c.
I shall from this Text thro' the divine Assistance
observe a few Things with Respect to the Strength
and Extent of natural Reason, and show You the
Insufficiency of it to be a compleat Teacher and
Guide in Matters of Religion in the present
State of Things.

I. Observe a few Things with Respect to the Strength
and Extent of natural Reason, and show You the
Insufficiency of it to be a compleat Teacher and
Guide in Matters of Religion in the present
State of Things.

II. From the Consideration of the Glory & Abilities
of the blessed Jesus, I shall show You the perfection
and Excellency of that holy Religion which he taught us
III. Then make some Reflections on this Subject.

I. I return to the first Head of Discourse proposed
I. To observe a few Things with Respect to the Strength
and Extent of natural Reason, & to show You the Insuffi-
ciency of it to be a compleat Teacher & Guide in Matters
of Religion in the present State of Things.
Reason is certainly an excellent Gift of God, which
the Father of Mercies, and the Fountain of all Knowledge
has given to Man, by which privilege he is raised
above the Beasts which perish, and nearly allied
to the glorious Angels, and surely they do no Ser-
vice to Religion, they consult not the Honour of
divine Revelation, who would make it pass for an
established Maxim, that we must quit and renounce
our Reason, when we believe the Gospel Revelation,
or we must not act as Men and reasonable Crea-
tures when we become Christians, for God is the Author
of our Reason as well as of Revelation, & it can never
be thought, that he should frame the principles of the
one directly opposite to those of the other: And
therefore it is fit to rectify such a gross Mistake,
and to show You that Reason is a noble & useful
Talent, while it acts within its own Sphere, and doth

do not judge of things above its reach and capacity. And here let me now observe

1. That Man's Understanding in a State of Innocence was so clear, his Knowledge so perfect, his Judgement so unbiassed, and so free from the Influence of all inordinate Appetites and Passions; In a Word he was then such a perfect Creature, that he very well knew where his chief Happiness lay, in what Way he might attain to it, and to pursue this Happiness, for would it not be an high Reflection on the Wisdom & Goodness of God, that a Creature made by him, full of Happiness, and filled with the strongest and most ardent Desires after it, was originally denied these Powers and Abilities by which he might attain to it.

2. Tho' the Powers of Reason were so great in a State of Innocence, yet there cannot be a slower Way of Reasoning than to affirm, that Reason in every State, will prove a sufficient Guide to Happiness, particularly in our present sinful State, in which there are not any things necessary to be known, which the Light of Nature never clear, could never have discovered and found out. Besides such is our present Corruption and Degeneracy, our reasoning Powers are so darkened, and our Judgements so ready to follow the Bent of our Appetites & Passions, that tho' we may do pretty well with Respect to the Affairs & Businesses of a present Life, in which we have the Assistance of Sense, Experience and Observation to direct us, yet when left to ourselves we committ the grossest Blunders, and are guilty of the most fatal Mistakes in spiritual Things, & in the important Concerns of God and Religion. For

the clear Knowledge of God only by Christ come. 22.

For tho' the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy Work, Day unto Day uttereth a speech, & night unto night uttereth and sheweth his Knowledge, there is no speech or Language, where their Voice is not heard. Tho' the stupendous Magnitude, the regular Motions of the celestial Luminaries, the wonderful Structure of the vegetable and animal World, the delicate Frame of our Bodies, and the more admirable Powers of our Souls in a Word, tho' this beautiful System of Things infinitely grand and magnificent, do loudly proclaim the Wisdom, Power and Goodness of the great Artificer, yet are the Bulk of Mankind unable of themselves from these Effects to trace and find out the first Cause? Can they form right Conceptions of the one only living and true God? Can they attain to just Sentiments of his glorious Perfections & adorable Attributes? Do we not find them very ignorant of God, of his spiritual Nature, of his moral Perfections, of the Law of Righteousness he has given us, and that even when they enjoy the clear Light of the Gospel, and how much more ignorant would they be, if they were destitute of all foreign Instruction. But why do I reason and argue from the Bulk of Mankind, who have little Leisure & Inclination or Capacity to reason or consider; let us take a View of the Attainments of our Men of Learning, who have searched into the Nature of Things with much Acuteness, and have pursued a Chain of Reasoning with great Accuracy, and we shall find that as to divine Things, they were guilty of the grossest Mistakes, Blunders & Errors. Alas many of the ancient Philosophers believed the heavenly Luminaries to be so many intelligent Deities, and consequently worshipped the Sun, Moon

and Stars. Did not Polytheism and Idolatry prevail over the whole Heathen World? Was there any Country or City, which had not their peculiar Gods whom they worshipped? Was there any part of Mankind who made greater Advances in Learning than the Athenians? And yet You see what Knowledge had of the true and living God, and what Kind of Worship prevailed in this polite City before 22, 23th. Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill, and said Ye men of Athens, I perceive in all things Ye are too superstitious. For as I pass'd by, and beheld your Devotions, I found an Altar with this Inscription. To the unknown God. Whom therefore Ye ignorantly worship, I declare I unto You. It was not therefore without Ground, that this same Apostle tells us elsewhere 1 Cor. 1. 21, 22, 23. For after that in the Wisdom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the Foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe. For the Jew require a sign, and the Greek seek after Wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jew a stumbling Block, & unto the Greek Foolishness. And says the same Ap. Rom. 1. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, for God hath shew'd it unto them. For the invisible Things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly being understood by the things that are made even his eternal Power and God-head; so that they are fools without Excuse: Because that when they knew God, they worshipped him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkned. Professing themselves to

know clear Knowledge of God only by Christ Jesus. 22. be wise, they became fools: And changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, & four footed Beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to Uncleanness, thro' the Lusts of their own Hearts, to dishonour their own Bodies between themselves. 23. Tho' it can not be denied but Reason may be so far improved as to find out the Being and Perfections of God, yet there are many Things concerning the Will of God with respect to sinful Creatures, which Man by mere natural Light can never attain to the Knowledge of. He cannot know after all his Searches how this God shall be acceptably worshipped by criminal Offenders, upon what Terms he will pardon their Sins, or by what Means they shall recover his Favour & Friendship, he cannot know the Certainty, the Greatness, the Duration of the Happiness which God will bestow on them who serve him sincerely. Tho' he may be sensible of the spiritual Nature of his Soul, yet he cannot be ascertained of its Immortality or perpetual Continuance in Being, since this depends on the sovereign Will and Pleasure of him who at first brought it into Being: These momentuous Articles of Faith among many others, had been for ever wrapt up in Darkness, if the Light of Reason had been our only Guide; for in these Respects no Man hath seen God at any time, or known his Mind, the only begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And lastly 6. It is not fair Dealing in the Enquiries of divine Revelation to make an Estimate of the Strength & Power of natural Reason in the Works & Writings of those who have had the Knowledge and Benefit

Benefit of divine Revelation. Many now and
 have wrote many excellent things of the Attributes
 Attributes of God, have given us very clear and
 consistent Schemes of moral Duties, flowing
 from the moral Perfections of God, and the Nature
 of Things, and have enforced the practice of Virtue
 and Goodness, of Justice and Temperance, of
 and Charity, and every other thing that is con-
 sistent and praise worthy by very proper Arguments
 and powerful Motives, but the most of this
 Knowledge is owing really to the Improvement
 made by the Light of divine Revelation. And
 therefore if we would judge rightly of the Powers
 of Reason, we must consult the Writings of the
 ancient Philosophers, and consider what Pro-
 gress their Reason made in the Knowledge of divine
 Truths, and what Tendency their Doctrines had
 to promote Virtue and Goodness, and to reform
 the vicious Practices of Mankind; Or if any
 should alledge that the Light of Reason becomes
 brighter and more useful by Length of Time
 let us enquire into the Notions and Practices
 of those Countries which have been but lately
 known and discovered, and from very authentic
 Accounts and faithful Histories of them we
 shall see how absurd their Doctrines, how in-
 deculous their Worship, and how abominable
 their Practices were, which plainly demon-
 strates from Facts and undeniable Experiences
 that when Men have had no other Guide but
 the dark Light of Nature to direct them, they
 have in all Ages fallen into the grossest Errors
 and monstrous Corruptions in Religion.
 For as I have now plainly & clearly shewed
 that Reason in an innocent State was suf-
 ficient to lead Men to Happiness. — Yet now

cannot be so in a State of so much Sin, Darkness and
 Corruption. — That not only the illiterate and
 rude part of Mankind — but even those of the
 quickest Parts and deepest Penetration have
 in Fact come short of the Knowledge of the true
 and living God, and become vain and foolish in
 their Imaginations. — And we still of all their
 Searches after God, would have for ever remained
 ignorant of very many Truths absolutely neces-
 sary to our Comfort and Happiness.

How great a Blessing is the Gospel of Christ! How
 This is certainly the greatest and most valuable Bless-
 ing any Nation can be privileged with: Blessed
 is the People, says the Psalmist, that know their joy,
 falsehood Ps. 89, 15. How happy are they who enjoy
 the Gospel of Christ Jesus, who receive & improve
 it, and heartily believe and obey it. — How
 thankful should we be to God that we have the Gospel
 and the Ordinances there of in Purity and in Plenty.
 We in these Islands enjoy many distinguishing Pri-
 vileges above most other Nations in the World
 surely the Lions have fallen to us in pleasant places
 we have obtained a goodly Heritage? — should we
 not gratefully receive and rest in that Knowledge
 of divine Truths with which we are blessed, for
 none of us had ever attained to the saving Know-
 ledge of God more than others, if the only begot-
 ten Son, which is in the Bosom of the Father, had
 not declared him unto us, declared him in such
 a way as he was never before revealed to the World.
 But alas how little have we profited under such
 Opportunities of Grace & Knowledge? Instead of
 bringing forth the good Fruit after being watered by
 the Dew of Gospel Ordinances, we have brought
 forth the evil Fruit. Instead of outshining others in
 the

the Light of a Gospel Conversation, we have had
 short, I am afraid, of many whose Advantages have
 been very far inferior, to those we enjoy. O how affec-
 tingly ought we to bewail our former Barrenness
 under the Use of the Means of Grace & Salvation
 how careful to improve them to better purposes than
 we have former by done, & to express our Thankful-
 ness to God for them by shewing forth the Praise
 of him who hath called us out of Darkness into his
 marvellous Light. — What Matter of melan-
 cholly Reflection is it that so few savingly profit
 under such excellent Means. The same Complaint
 may be made against us, which the Prophet does
 against the Jews of old, who hath believed our Re-
 port, and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed
 Isa. 53. 1. Tho' the Gospel of Christ Jesus is reveal-
 ed with all the Evidence of Truth and Certain-
 ty, yet some dispute, others deny its divine Au-
 thority, accounting the great Truths of it as
 no better than cunningly devised Fables, to
 amuse the World with. Others again who will
 not openly declare themselves in Favour of
 Infidelity, are yet such careless Christians
 that they never express any spiritual Desires
 after the sincere Milk of the Word, that they ma-
 grow thereby, they never study to have any saving
 Experience of its Power and Efficacy in cha-
 nging their hearts, & reforming their Lives. O what
 dismal thing it is to remain without any spiritual
 Light or Life, under the clearest Display of Gos-
 pel Grace. But if our Gospel be hid, says the Ap-
 Col. 4. 3, 4th. It is hid to them that are lost, in whom
 the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them
 which believe not, lest the Light of the glorious
 Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should
 shine unto them. — Ps. 33. 8. 1. 29. 15.

clear knowledge of God only by Christ Jesus. 201.
 Sermon XXIV. Text John 1st Ch. 18th. No man hath seen God
 at any time, the only begotten Son, which
 is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared
 When the valiant Person of the Epistle to the Hebrews
 would set forth the Glory of the Gospel, he tells us in
 1st Ch. 1, 2nd V. that God who at sundry times, and in diverse
 Manners spake in time past unto the Fathers by
 the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken unto us
 by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things
 by whom also he made the Worlds. In the first Age
 of the World, he gradually opened the Way of Salvation,
 but the clear Discoveries of the manifold Wisdom of
 God, and of the glorious Riches of his Grace were
 not perfected, untill this Messiah came, who was to
 declare unto us the whole Will of God, and to tell us
 all things. Yea all the Light and Knowledge which
 the Church enjoyed before the appearing of the Sun
 of Righteousness were but so many faint Beams
 whirling before the rising of this glorious Luminary,
 all the Prophets and holy Men by whom God spake
 in Times past unto the Fathers, were but Organs
 and Instruments of the Spirit of Christ Jesus, Me-
 sengers Qualified and sent by him, for no man hath seen
 God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is
 In discoursing from these Words, I propose
 I. To observe a few Things with respect to the Strength
 and Extent of natural Reason, & shew you the Ineffi-
 ciency of it to be a complete Teacher and Guide in
 Matters of Religion in the present State of things.
 II. From this Consideration of the Glory and Abilities
 of the blessed Jesus I shall endeavour to shew you the
 Perfection & Excellency of that holy Religion, he has
 taught us. Then make some Reflections on this Subject
 I. On the first Head of Discourse I observe
 I. That Man's Understanding in a State of Innocence
 was so clear, his Knowledge so perfect, his Judgment so

is our by-ride, & no free from the influence of all inordinate passions, that know where the true Happiness lay, the way to attain it, & sufficient to direct to pursue this Happiness. — Yet now it cannot be in a state of so much sin & Corruption.

3. That not only the rude, & illiterate part of Mankind — But even those of the quickest parts & deepest Penetration have in fact come short of the knowledge of the true and living God, and become vain and foolish in their Imaginations.

4. Tho' it cannot be denied but Reason may be so far improved as to find out the Being & Perfection of God, yet there are many things concerning the Will of God with respect to sinful Creatures, which Man by mere natural Light can never attain to the knowledge of.

Therefore it is not fair Dealing in the Enemies of divine Revelation, to make an estimate of the strength of natural Reason, in the Works and Writings of those, who have had the knowledge and Benefit of divine Revelation; But if they would judge rightly, they must consult the Writings of Heathen Philosophers, & examine what Tendency their Doctrines had to promote Virtue and Goodness, and what Influence to reform the vicious Practices of Mankind.

I now proceed to the second Head of my Discourse.

II. From the Consideration of the glory and Abundance of the blessed Jesus, to shew You the Perfection and Excellence of that holy Religion which he has taught us, for when the Author of any Art or Science, is well Qualified, and in all respects perfect Master of his Business, he will certainly teach with the greater Success and Perfection. Let us therefore consider how the blessed Jesus the glorious Author of

our Religion was qualified for this high Office: And

1. Let us view the high Dignity and Glory of his Person. My Text tells us that he is the Son, yea the only begotten Son, & in 14th of this Chapter, the beloved Disciple tells us, that the Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God, was in the fullness of Time made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth. — Our Gospel Prophet so excellently in glory and Majesty that he is infinitely superior to all the Sons of Men. Yea he is possessed of the infinite Essence, and of all the inconceivable Perfections of the God head, he is the Brightness of the Father's glory, and the express Image of his Person, the self-existent, eternal, and independent Jehovah, who makes and upholds all things by the Word of his Power. Surely he and none but he is worthy to take the Book of the divine Counsel, & Will, and to open the Seals, can the servant know what his Lord doth and designs to do, so well as the Son must know his Father's Mind & our purpose.

2. As he is most nearly related to the Father, so he is entirely beloved by him, my Text tells us, that he is in the Bosom of the Father, and he was so from everlasting: And this Phrase signifies not only the mutual Complacency, but also the mutual Consciousness, which is between the Father & the Son, as the Son is the Object of the Father's Love and Delight in the highest Degree, so he is a Father with him in all his secret Councils, no Man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Dylth one tell his Mind and his Bosom Councils to his dear friend, and shall not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ open up his Heart, and all the unsearchable Mysteries

Mysterie of his Love to his beloved Son
Behold the Man whose Name is the Branch, and he
shall grow up out of his place; & he shall build the Temple of the
Lord, & he shall bear the Glory, and shall sit & rule
upon his Throne; and he shall be a Priest upon his
Throne; & the Counsel of Peace shall be between us.
3. Let the awful Terror of his Glory and Majesty
had filled us with too much Fear and Dread, and
that we might not suspect he had no Interest in
our Concernes, he was pleased to take upon him our
Nature, to subject himself to all the weakness
firmity of lit. 14 of this Ep. the Word was made
flesh and dwelt among us Phil. 2. 6, 7, & 8 Verbo
Who being in the Form of God, thought it not Rob
bery to be equal with God; but made himself of no
Reputation, & took upon him the Form of a Servant
and was made in the Likeness of Men: Being found
in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and be
came obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cro
so that we may say of him as a Prophet, what the
Penman of the Epistle to the Hebrews says of him
as a Priest, Heb. 4. 15 We have not a Priest and
Teacher, who cannot be touched with the Feeling of
our Infirmitie, but was in all points tempted
like as we are, yet without sin: Being of the
same Make, and mould with our selves, he is
joined with us in the same Interest, he knows
by Experience the Heart of Man, so that we may
apply to him in a free and familiar Manner, we
may hear him without any Fear or Dread.

4. He is filled with a superabundant Measure
of the holy Spirit of God, his Father anointed him
with the Oyl of Gladness above his Fellowes,
his human Nature was filled to the utmost Ca
pacity with all kinds & with all Degrees of Grace
What was it which enabled the holy Prophet
Apostle

the clear Knowledge of God only by Christ's Blood.
Upon the 1st to speak the wonderful Works of God with so
much plainness & boldness? Was it not the holy
Spirit of God? were they not moved with the Holy
Ghost? What enabled that bold Champion of
Christianity, Stephen to speak with such Force
of Reason & strength of Conviction, that his En
mys were not able to resist the Wisdom, and the
Spirit with which he spake? Was it not because
he was full of the Holy Ghost? Acts. 7. 55. And yet
all the Measures of the Spirit which were bestow
ed upon this Son of Men, were but small Streams
flowing from the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the
Spirit of God dwells as Light in the Sun, or Water
in the Fountain, that so he might not only be ready
quick and strong in the Discharge of his own Work
as Mediator, but that he might also be an over
flowing Source of Grace & Strength & Mercy to all
his Members, filling all in all.

5. As a glorious Effect of this superabundant Mea
sure of the Holy Spirit, Consider the rich Variety
of his inward Accomplishments and gracious
Qualifications. What can the Heart of Man
wish or desire in a Teacher even come from God
which is not to be found in him, and that in the
most eminent Degree? Is it deep Knowledge
and a quick Understanding? In him are hid all
the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge Col. 2. 3.
he knows the Father, and all his overabundant Pur
poses of Grace, even the whole Plan of Redemption,
in its Contrivance, Progress and Perfection?
Is Prudence necessary? He is wise in heart, and
wonderful in Counsel Isa. 52. 13. Behold my Ser
vant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted
and extolled, and be very high. he can baffle
all the Wiles, and break all the Power of Satan,
he knows the most proper Seasons, Means &
Instruments

Instruments, he can bind up the broken hearted, he can comfort them that mourn, he can give patience necessary. He is the meek Lamb of God, and did endure the contradiction of sinners, and the Dullness & Stupidity of his Disciples, to understand and believe with an inimitable patience, his mind was never ruffled, his Passions were always subject to the Rules of Reason & Religion. — Must a Teacher bear a sincere Love, and Affection to those he teaches? This blessed Jesus here in excellt shall other Teachers, his heart was so filled, so overwhelmed & covered with the most fervent Love & Affection to the Soule of Men, he so much rejoiced and delighted in their Happiness, that he left his Father, he denied himself the joys and Pleasures of Heaven for a season, he hid his Riches & glory under a Vail, that he might instruct us in the Will of his Father, Yeath laid down his Life a Ransom for Sinners and Enemies. — I might also speak of his Faithfulness and Diligence, of his Zeal and Courage, of his Humility and Condescension, but in a word, all those Graces and Virtues which adorn a Teacher and Qualify him for his Office, were to be found in their greatest Perfection in our great Gospell Prophet, the glorious Author and Founder of our holy Religion.

6. He exemplified in his Life and observed in his Practice all those holy Rules & excellent Precepts he has given us, so far as was consistent with his Condition and Circumstances. He could not repent of sin, or subd us the Force and Power of inward Corruptions, because he was perfectly holy & sinless, he had no sin, neither was there Guile found in his Mouth, but in every thing wherein the Son of God count

to be a Pattern to the Sons of Men, he has in his own Person gone before us. He has commanded us to do the Will of his Father, and to obey his holy Commandments, And did not he himself first learn Obedience and practise it with Delight and Pleasures? John 15. 10. If ye keep my Commandments, ye shall abide in my Love: even as I have kept my Fathers Commandments, and abide in his Love. Has he commanded all his Disciples to deny themselves & take up his Cross? Did not he give them a glorious Instance of Self Denyal and Suffering? 2 Cor. 8. 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. 1 Pet. 2. 21. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that ye should follow his Steps. And Phil. 2. 5, 6, 7. Let this Mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the Form of God, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no Reputation & took upon him the Form of a Servant, & was made in the Likeness of Men, & being found in fashion as a Man he humbled himself, & became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. Has he commanded us to be meek and humble, patient & of a forgiving Temper and Disposition, that we should not render evil for evil, but strive to overcome others evil with our Good? Did not he excell all the Sons of Men in these Dispositions? Learn of Me, says Christ, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find Rest unto your Soules. How did these Graces adorn and beautify his Life and Practice? Search all the Records of Time, all the Writers of the Lives of great and excellent Men, and you will not find any One so holy in his Life, so remarkable in all Virtues and Goodness, whose meekness and Humility were so conspicuous, whose Patience & Courage were so eminent.

As he was thus qualified in himself to declare
 glorious Perfections and deep Counsels of
 unto Men, he had an ample Commission from
 the Lord Jehovah to enter upon, and execute
 high Office Isa. 61. 1, 2, 3. The Spirit of the Lord
 is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me
 to preach good Tidings to the meek, he hath sent Me
 to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim Liberty
 to the Captives, & the opening of the Prison to them
 that are bound: To proclaim the acceptable Year
 of the Lord, & the Day of Vengeance of our God,
 to comfort all that mourn: To appoint unto them
 mourn in Zion, to give unto them Beauty for Ashes,
 the Oyl of Joy for Mourning, the Garment of Praise
 for the Spirit of Heaviness, that they might be
 called Trees of Righteousness, the Planting of the
 Lord that he might be glorified. Tho' his Graces
 were super-eminent, and his Gifts unparalleled,
 tho' he had the strongest Desires after, and the
 greatest Delight in his Office of revealing and
 declaring the Nature and Will of God, yet he
 had intruded himself unto it without any Com-
 mission, he had never been approved of God, nor
 had we profited by his Instructions, but to con-
 vince us that he was sent and chosen to be the
 great Gospel Prophet, not to mention that it was
 the Father's Will, that all his Fullness of Know-
 ledge, Wisdom and Grace should dwell in him,
 have we not his solemn Inauguration into his
 Office on his Entrance upon his publick Minis-
 try, and a renewed Attestation of the acceptableness
 of his Service, when it was near finished, and
 was an audible Voice from Heaven. Matt. 3. 17. &
 a Voice from Heaven, saying this is my beloved
 in whom I am well pleased. & Matt. 17. 5. While
 he yet spake, behold a bright Cloud over shadowed
 them,

...knowledge of God only by Christ Jesus. 28
 them, and behold a Voice out of the Cloud, which said, this
 is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear
 ye him. Witness of all the Miracles, which he wrought
 so many plain Credentials that he was sent of God,
 Jo. 3. 32. Nicodemus a Ruler of the Jews is confessed,
 this man came to Jesus by night, and said unto him,
 Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from
 God: for no man can do these Miracles that thou
 doest, except God be with him. And lastly
 8. He himself was so well persuaded of the Truth
 and excellency of his Gospel, that he laid down
 his Life to confirm the Doctrine, he had taught,
 tho' this is not the only, or the chief End of his
 Death and Sufferings, as the Socinians falsely
 alledge, yet it is one End of them, and here by
 we are assured that he is a true and faithful
 Witness, even a Teacher come from God, when
 he sealed the Truth of his Doctrine by his
 sufferings even unto Death.
 Thus I have endeavoured to give You a View of
 the Perfection and excellency of that holy Reli-
 gion which our blessed Lord and Saviour Christ
 Jesus has taught, from the Consideration of
 his glory and Abilities to be a divine Teacher.
 For Jesus is the only begotten and dearly be-
 loved Son of God — he has a special Concern
 in us, being Bone of our Bone, & flesh of our flesh.
 he has a superabundant Measure of the holy
 Spirit of God to be in him an overflowing Source
 of Light and Wisdom, of all graceful Dispositions
 and holy Actions — Accordingly he has given us,
 a perfect Pattern of Obedience and Sufferings —
 And has assured us of his Commission from Hea-
 ven by the Works which he did, & the Death w. he endured.
 I come

IV I come now to the last thing proposed in the Spectator
To make some practical Reflections on their Subject
1 May not we who are the Followers of Christ
Linger all the other Men in the World to whom
a glorious Author of their Religion
as hamed to name that Impostor Mahomet
at the same time with the ever blessed Son of
As for the Deists every Man among them must
be his own Master, and every One's Reason
his Guide and Leader, a wretched Guide, and
a more wretched Master

2. Let us glory in our Great Gospel Prophet
us receive his Truths, and rejoice in the Doc-
trines he has taught us, and cheerfully stand
to know the Nature, Perfections and Will of
his God and Father, which he hath so clearly
so plainly revealed and declared unto us.

3 How great is the Folly and Misery of such as
refuse to hear him Heb. 2. 1, 2, 3. Therefore we
ought to give the more earnest heed to the things
which we have heard, lest at any time we should
let them slip. For if the Word spoken by Angels
was staid fast, and every Transgression and Dis-
obedience received a just Recompense of Re-
ward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great
Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken
by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us, by them
that heard him. And Heb. 12. 25, 26 See that if we
refuse not him that speaketh: For if they escape
not who refused him that spake on Earth, much
more shall not we escape, if we turn away
from him that speaketh from Heaven
2 Pt. 24. 3. - 19. 9

Sermon XXIth East John 7. 16. My Doctrine is
not mine, but his who sent me.

A true Religion which is of a divine Origine
must have Proof and Evidence nec-
essarily attending it: The Doctrines which it teaches
and the Duties which it enjoines, must recom-
mend themselves by their intrinsic Goodness and ex-
cellency, that is, they must be agreeable to the
Nature of a holy, just and good God, and con-
ducive to the Peace, Comfort and Happiness of
Mankind, And then they must be evident and un-
deniable Matters of Fact, it must be proved
comes directly from God, for as a Revelation con-
tradictory in itself, or wicked and hurtful in its
tendency, can by no Evidence be proven to be from God
so on the other hand, no Degree of Goodness and ex-
cellency in the Doctrines or precepts of a Religion
can make it certain that it is come from God, un-
less it has some direct Evidence of its being actu-
ally revealed; And therefore if we would know &
be assured of the Truth of that holy Religion which
has been taught us by the only Begotten Son of God
we must consider first the internal Evidence
of it, or the excellency of its Doctrines, and the Equi-
ty of its Precepts; And then proceed to the external
Evidence, or the positive and direct proofs, by
which it appears that the Author of these Doctrines
and Precepts had a divine Commission, and was
sent down from Heaven, with Power & Authority
to reveal the Will of God, and make known the Way
of Salvation. My Text leads me to consider the in-
trinsic Goodness of the Doctrines of the Gospel,
whose divine Original is here asserted in the plain-
est Terms; Jesus answered them, and said, My
Doctrine

Doctrines of the Gospel. 240
 Doctrine is not mine, but his who sent me.
 The Occasion of our blessed Lord's speaking these
 Words was briefly this, having gone up to Jerusalem
 at the Feast of Tabernacles, when many of the Jews
 from all Corners of the Land were assembled together
 he goes up into the Temple and teaches publicly
 and his Sermon is not recorded, yet it appears
 to have been very sublime and heavenly, discovering
 deep Knowledge of the Law, and his clear Understanding
 of the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God, for his
 Disciples marvelled at his Doctrine, and what
 increased their Wonder and Astonishment was, they
 very well knew that he had never been educated
 in the Schools of the Prophets, or at the Feet of their
 great Rabbis and Doctors, he had never studied Letters
 in the Schools and Colleges of his own or any foreign
 Country, and yet his Knowledge was
 more extensive, and he was more mighty in the
 Scriptures than any of their Rabbis of the greatest
 Fame and Learning: It is acknowledged by all that
 Learning flourished both in the Roman Empire and
 in the Jewish Church at the time of our Saviour's
 appearing more than in any Age before or since,
 it is no small Evidence of the divine Original of the
 Christian Religion, that it was preached, received
 established in an Age of so great Learning & Know-
 ledge, and certainly his profound Knowledge which
 our blessed Lord and Saviour discovered, made him
 truly great and wonderful, and since he had it not
 from Man, but was taught it immediately from
 Heaven, the Jews might have easily shown, and
 he might wareantly affirm that his Doctrine
 was not his own, but his who sent him, that is,
 Consider him as the Son of Man, it was not a
 Doctrine invented by him, it was not the Product
 of his own natural Reason, nor Thoughts or Power
 merely

Doctrines of the Gospel. 240
 merely human, however much enlarged, or highly ele-
 vated by Meditation Reading or Conversation, could
 have found out the Truths which he taught the World,
 for they were from the Father, who sent him into the
 World, and he learned them by immediate Inspiration
 from him. As he is the same God with the Father, he
 might have affirmed that his Doctrine was his own,
 as well as the Father's, but since he now appeared
 in his State of Humiliation, and clothed with the Na-
 ture of Man, and since as Mediator he did bear the Cha-
 racter of God's Servant, and the Father's Ambassador,
 it was more congruous to ascribe his Doctrine, and
 all the Knowledge he had of divine & heavenly things
 to the Father who sent him than to himself. My Doc-
 trine is not mine, but his who sent me.
 In considering the intrinsic Excellence of the Doctrines
 Christ has taught us, I shall thro' the divine Assistance
 I. Show You that they are worthy of God, most agreeable
 to his Goodness, his Wisdom and all his glorious Per-
 fections, and to the Dictates of sound and uncorrupted Reason.
 II. That every One of them has a natural Tendency &
 powerful Influence to reform the Minds, to correct
 the Manners, to advance & perfect the Happiness of Mankind.
 III. That taken together they form the most consistent and
 comfortable Scheme of Articles of Faith, infinitely
 preferable to all the Schemes of Doctrines formed by
 either ancient or modern Enemies of divine Revelation.
 IV. And then I shall draw some Inferences from the whole.
 I return to the first Head of my Discourse namely
 I. To show You that the Doctrines Christ has taught us
 are worthy of God, most agreeable to his Goodness,
 his Wisdom, and all his glorious Perfections, and to
 the Dictates of sound and uncorrupted Reason.
 I do by no means assert, or intend to prove that Rea-
 son however much improved is capable to compre-
 hend all the Mysteries of the Christian Religion,
 or that there are none of the Doctrines of the
 Gospel above the Reach of Reason, but I affirm that

That none of the Doctrines Christ Jesus has taught us, are contrary to Reason, but very agreeable to the natural Notions we have of God, and of the Nature of Things: I would also have it to be observed, that I speak of the pure and primitive Doctrines of the Gospel, as delivered in the holy Scriptures free from the corrupt Inventions & False Glories of Men of what ever Party or Denomination, and to shew You that these are agreeable to the Nature of God, & to the Dictates of Reason; And here it will be necessary to mention some of the chief and peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel — And therefore, in their place

1. Not to mention the more clear and certain Accounts we have of the Unity of the divine Nature, and of all his glorious Perfections, let us consider that great Mystery of the adorable Trinity, by which we learn that from all Eternity there have been three distinct Persons subsisting in the Unity of the divine Essence, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, equal in all their glorious Perfections. This is a Doctrine which Reason could never have discovered, but now when it is so clearly revealed, will any Man say that it implies any Manner of Absurdity or Contradiction in it. Is it not reasonable to think that when an incomprehensible and infinite Being reveals his own Nature to finite and short-sighted creatures, it must be impossible for them to comprehend the Manner of his Existence, for none can by searching find out God, who can find out the Almighty unto perfection. It is as high as Heaven, what can they do? Deeper than Hell, what can they know? The Treasure here of is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea, Job: 11. 7, 8, 9th. Here if any where Reason must submit to Faith, for when Reason assured us God hath thus revealed concerning his own Nature

the excellency of the Doctrine of the Gospel. Nature; it also enforces our Assent to every thing which God teaches, and obliges us to believe his own Testimony, and thus the Dominion of Faith doth by no Means shake the Foundations of Reason. 2. Another peculiar Doctrine of the Gospel is the Incarnation of the Son of God, tho' this in itself is very mysterious, yet tis not either impossible or unreasonable. Cannot God in the Person of his Son assume the Nature of Man, as easily as he might take a Spirit and a Body in every one of our selves. Tho' it was indeed a most wonderful Instance of Love and Condescension, yet it was no real Dishonour to the Son of God to become Man, when by so doing, he not only purchased the greatest Blessings to Mankind, but also highly glorified all the divine Perfections. Surely even the Sufferings and Death those lowest Steps of his Humiliation are so far from being any Diminution of the Greatness of the Glory of God, that they most clearly demonstrate the Holiness and Justice of God, the Honour and Authority of his Law and Government, so that the blessed God in this glorious Device of saving Sinners, need to be righteous and just, even when he manifests his Mercy. Thus the Apostle Paul argues Rom. 3. 25, 26 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through Faith in his Blood to declare his Righteousness to the Remission of Sins that are past thro' the Forgiveness of God. & that we may take notice of the strong Emphasis of the Word, he repeats it again to declare it just, & the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus. Here is the most surprising Instance of Mercy, surpassing all Knowledge, and at the same time here is the most effectual Warning to deter men from Sin, and to convince them of the Necessity of Holiness and Obedience. And considering the Rational

and the eternal Equity of his Law, was it not reasonable to suppose, that he would appoint some Sacrifice for the Expiation of sin? Doth not this appear from the prevailing Custom of sacrificing in all Ages to be agreeable to the common Sentiments of Mankind? Is it not more reasonable to expect, the Remission of sin, and to be restored to the Favour of God by such a glorious Victim as the shedding of the Blood of Jesus than by the Blood of Bulls or of Goats, or even by humane sacrifices. All these sacrifices and sheddings of blood that were used both by Jews and Gentiles were ineffectual in themselves to procure Pardon of sin and Reconciliation with God, and all the Virtue and Efficacy they had, consisted only in their typical Relation to a better and more perfect Oblation, for Reason itself may easily discover that its impossible for the Blood of Bulls or of Goats to take away sin, therefore our Saviour is introduced Ps. 40. 16, 17, 18. saying, Sacrifice and Offerings thou didst not desire; mine Ears hast thou opened: burnt Offerings & sin Offering hast thou not required. Then said I, lo I come: in the Volume of the Book it is written of Me: I delight to do thy Will, O my God: Yea thy Law is within my heart.

3. Christ's Intercession in Heaven is another Doctrine of the Gospel, and it necessarily flows from the Doctrine of his Death & sufferings, and is not the Mediation of Christ Jesus becoming the glorious Majesty of God. Will he who is glorious in Holiness have immediate Inter-course with sinful and guilty Creatures? It is well known that the Generality of the wisest Heathens thought it agreeable to Reason to employ subordinate Beings to be their Inter-

Interceptors with the superior God, and shall it be thought unreasonable that the eternal Son of God in whom he was well pleased, should by divine Authority be appointed as a Mediator between a thrice holy God and sinful guilty Man. The Promise of the Aid of the Holy Spirit of God to support encourage and comfort us in all our Services and sufferings, is another chief Branch and essential Doctrine of the Gospel of Christ Jesus, and is not this a Doctrine worthy of God, and agreeable to his gracious and merciful Nature Luke 11. 13. If I then being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Had not every wise and virtuous Man from the Consideration of the Benignity of the divine Nature expected such a supernatural Assistance, and from the Consideration of the Corruption and Depravity of humane Nature in the present State of Things, have they not earnestly desired it? Is not such a Promise as that of the Assistance of the blessed Spirit to help our Infirmitie, so clearly revealed, most precious in itself, and a great Encouragement to us, who are so backward to our Duty, and so surrounded with Snarers and Enemies Ezek. 36. 25, 26, 27. Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your Idols will I clean you. A new heart also will I give you, & a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, & cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgements and do them.

5. The whole Doctrine of the Covenant of Grace which contains the sum and Substance of the Gospel is

is so well and wisely ordered in all things, that it gives us a glorious Display of their Wisdom and Grace, the Love and Mercy of the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and at the same time lays the most solid Foundation on which we may safely build the most certain Slopes of Heaven and Happiness. Are not the Doctrines of Repentance towards God and Faith in Christ Jesus the most reasonable Way of saving Sinners? Is it not just that we who have sinned and forfeited the Favour of God, should willingly own Ourselves indebted to the Merits and Righteousness of another? If by Grace we are saved thro' Faith, and that Faith is not of Ourselves, it is the Gift of God. Not of works lest any Man should boast: For we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them Eph. 2. 8, 9, 10. Is it not just that we should repent, and return from our Sin & Folly to God, if ever we would wish to obtain the divine Mercy & Favour? Let the wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, & to our God, for he will abundantly pardon Isa. 55. 7. And doth not this Way of Salvation, secure our Obedience, and Advance Holiness of heart and Life in the most effectual Manner. — & lastly

6. The Gospel of Christ Jesus teaches us the great Doctrines of a general Judgement, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments, and these are Truths in some Measure taught us by the Light of Nature, and surely it tends to the Honour of divine Revelation, that it has brought Life & Immortality to a clearer Light, and opened us it were a Door into the other World, by which we may clearly see the Nature, Certainty & Duration

of that Bliss and Happiness which awaits the sincere Christian, and of that Torment and Misery which will be the portion of all the Workers of Iniquity. 'Tis true indeed there were hardly any Nation that prevailed more universally in the dead World, than that there was to be a future State; that Mankind were to be brought to an equitable and impartial Tryal in it, & in consequence of such a Tryal to be placed in a State of Happiness or Misery, in proportion to the good or evil they did in this World. The vulgar it must be owned for the most part received this Doctrine as it was dressed out in the Fiction and fabulous Representations of their Poets, but this did it diminished the good Effects & Influence of the Doctrine upon them, yet did not hinder their having a firm Belief of it. And as for the wiser Men among them, some of these at least had not only a strong Sense of a future State, but seem'd to have a very rational Notion of the Nature of that State, and of the Justice, Impartiality and universal Extent of the Judgment which Men would undergo upon their Entrance unto it. But this point has received the fullest Confirmation from the Gospel of Christ Jesus. The Gates of the invisible World are there cast open, a Heaven of Happiness, and a Hell of Misery are discovered there, and set before us in a divine Light: The blessed of departed Saints, who see the Face of God, and the agonies and Outcries of the Sinner who lifts up his Eyes in the Place of Torment are revealed to us, and described in the Speeches of Christ, and the Writings of his Apostles. The awful and glorious Scene of the Day of Judgement is spread out at large in the Christian Dispensation in the clearest Language? We hear the Voice of the Arch Angel and the Trump of God, we see the dead arise out of their Graves, some to everlasting Life, and others to everlasting Punishment. We behold

We behold Jesus the Saviour and the Judge upon his Throne, and the glorious Army of Saints and Martyrs, whose Bodies are all bright & vigorous and immortal at the Judge's right hand, vested with publick Honours. We hear the happy Sentence pronounced on them, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World. We behold them as it were reigning with Christ upon his Throne, and ascending with their Lord to dwell forever in his Presence, While the Sentence against the wicked, Depart from Me ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, is put into Execution, and they are confined to Hell with the Devils. If Hope and Fear have any Power in Mankind to awaken them to an Abhorrence of Sin, and engage them to the practice of Holiness, surely these Doctrines of the Gospel concerning a future State & a Judgment to come, which have so transcendent an Influence on our Hopes and Fears, are of the most effectual and constraining Kind.

And thus I have endeavoured to shew You that the Doctrines of the Gospel are in themselves very agreeable to, and becoming the Perfections of God, and that some of them are very mysterious & sublime, so that our shallow Reason cannot comprehend them, yet none of them are contrary to, but very consistent with the plainest Dictates of sound and unprejudiced Reason. O how thankful should we be to God, who hath given us such a clear Revelation of the great Objects of our Faith, & at the same time proposes nothing to our Belief, but what is consistent with our reasonable Faculties. Surely we will be inexcusable, if we believe not the Report of the Gospel of Christ. Ps. 43. 3 — 25. D.

When we take a View of the corrupt and degenerate State of Mankind, how far they have fallen from their Original State of Purity and Innocence, and how much Error and Superstition prevailed over the World, every wise and sober Man did reasonably expect and earnestly desire, that God of his infinite Goodness and Wisdom, would scatter the thick Clouds of Darkness, and enlighten the World with a divine Revelation. This Favour he hath vouchsafed in the most gracious Manner, that Son of God is sent down from Heaven, filled with the Treasures of divine Wisdom and Knowledge to instruct Mankind in all things necessary to their Salvation and Happiness.

My Design from this Text I have now read, was to consider the intrinsic Goodness and Excellency of the Doctrines of the Gospel — In doing this I propose

- I. To shew You that they are all worthy of God, most agreeable to his Goodness, Wisdom & all his glorious Perfections, and to the Dictates of sound & uncorrupted Reason.
- II. That every One of them has a natural Tendency and powerful Influence to reform the Minds, to correct the Manners, to advance & perfect the Happiness of Mankind.
- III. That taken together they form the most consistent & comfortable Scheme of Mysteries of Faith infinitely preferable to all other Schemes of Doctrine formed by either ancient or modern Enemies of divine Revelation.
- IV. And then I shall draw some Inferences from the whole. I have finished the first Head of Discourse & endeavoured to shew You that the chief and peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel; such as, that great Mystery of the adorable Trinity, the Incarnation of the

Heaven; The Promise of the Aid of the Holy Spirit
 to support encourage and comfort us in all our
 Services & Sufferings; The Doctrine of the Covenant
 of Grace which containeth the sum and substance of
 the Gospel, and the great truths & Doctrines of a
 general Judgment, and a future State of Rewards and
 Punishment, these are some of the chiefly peculiar
 Doctrines contained in the Gospel of Christ Jesus,
 and they are in themselves very agreeable to, and
 becoming the Perfections of God, and some of
 them are very mysterious and sublime, so that
 our shallow Reason cannot comprehend them, yet
 none of them are contrary to, but very consistent
 with the plainest Dictates of sound and unpreju-
 diced Reason. — I now proceed to the
 Second Head of Discourse proposed in Method
 II. To show that every one of the Doctrines of the Gos-
 pel have a natural Tendency and powerful In-
 fluence to reform the Minds, correct the Manners,
 and to advance and perfect the Happiness of Man-
 kind. — Certain it is that our Lord and Saviour
 never intended to amuse the World with airy and
 useless Speculations, or to gratify Men's Curio-
 sity, which he did not intend to try how far
 reasonable Creatures could bring their Rea-
 son to yield to the Dominion of Faith, but again
 his Doctrines do highly recommend themselves
 by their Agreeableness to our rational Powers &
 Faculties, so they have an immediate Relation
 to the Practice of Piety and Holiness, and lay a
 solid Foundation on which we may build a va-
 rious Superstructure of all divine and human
 Virtues, this is a noble End of religious Doctrines,
 and any Doctrines which are not fitted to answer
 this End, can really be of no Use or Benefit
 to Mankind.

Necessity of the Doctrines of the Gospel. 20.
 Mankind. From the Doctrines of the Gospel are
 of Use for the following excellent Purposes.
 1. To give us the highest and most agreeing Thoughts
 of God, and of all his glorious Perfections. Just Sen-
 timents of God are of the greatest Influence in Re-
 ligion, when the Heathen imagined that their Gods
 delighted in Acts of Uncleanneſs and other impious
 Practices unworthy to be named, this encouraged
 their Vices in the like vicious Courses, but we
 know by the Gospel that our God is glorious in his
 Justice, a pure and spiritual Being, who for ever lov-
 eth Righteousness, and hateth Iniquity; and to
 our great Comfort and Joy, we also know that our
 God is Love, that he delights in our Happiness,
 and has given us the most glorious Display
 of his rich Graces and abundant Mercy by the Pa-
 tron and Mediation of his only begotten Son.
 Must we not be convinced of this great Love and
 Goodness of God, when we learn by the Gospel
 that all the persons of the glorious God-head have
 been employed in designing and advancing our Sal-
 vation even from everlasting, and that this most
 glorious and admirable Work, which infinite Wis-
 dom ever contrived, or sovereign Graces and Power
 performed, is the Work of our Redemption by the
 Blood and Sufferings of Christ Jesus? Did
 ever any Doctrines taught by Men give such an
 amiable Account of the Nature and Works of the
 God of Heaven? And shall not this Account of him
 given us by the Gospel inflame our Hearts with
 Love to him, and make us cheerful and joyous in
 his Service, and active in doing his Will?
 2. The Doctrines of the Gospel are of Use to di-
 rect us to the proper, and acceptable Manner of
 worshipping God, by discovering that there is
 one only proper Object of religious Worship, and

and thus we are freed from Atheism on the one hand, and from Polytheism, or the Worship of many and false Gods on the other Hand, which Evils overspread the greatest part of the Heathen World. Besides the Wit & Penetration of Man could never determine in what Way a sinful Creature might perform any pleasurable Act of religious Worship, which he might be assured, would be acceptable to God. Yet the Gospel of Christ, Jesus, hath in the clearest and most satisfying manner revealed the Way of Access to a holy God through the Merits and Intercession of his only Son, and by the supernatural Aid & Influences of his Holy Spirit. Eph. 2. 18 For thro' him we both have an Access by one Spirit unto the Father Heb. 10. 19, 20. Having therefore, Brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living Way which he hath consecrated for us, thro' the Veil, that is to say, his Flesh. And when we know that we have such a powerful Agent in us, as the eternal Spirit to embrook and enable us to worship God by our Prayers and Praises, and such a prevalent Intercessor and Advocate in the Court of Heaven to present our Requests, and to plead our Cause, shall our hearts be any more vexed or troubled with anxious and perplexing Fears? Shall we not worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Pleasure and Joy, and draw near unto him with a true heart, in full Assurance of Faith, having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies washed wth pure Water?

3. To discourage the practice of Sin, and to excite us to an entire and hearty Obedience

to the holy Law of God, the Doctrines of the Gospel, are of the greatest Use, it is possible that any thing can give us a deeper sense of the malignity of our Nature, or sin, of God's extreme Hatred of Iniquity, than the Sufferings and Death of the Son of God. Is not the Doctrine of God's willing, and suffering his own Son even unto the Death, and that for the Sins of others, who were Rebels & Enemies to him, the most terrible and effectual Carrot that could be given to Men, not to repeat their Offences? For if these things were done in the green Tree, what must be done to the dry? And when our Sins are expiated in such a Manner, and a full Assurance of Pardon given us, should not the Love of God constrain us, should not Gratitude obliger us, to obey & serve such a gracious God and kind Master better in all things coming? Must not Holiness be a very amiable thing? Must not Virtue and Piety appear with all the Charms of Beauty, when God hath done things so very great and wonderful, to restore them when decayed, and to vindicate the Honour of his Law when it was violated and broken?

4. To support and comfort us in all our present Sufferings and Afflictions, this is an excellent and very desirable End of the Doctrines of the Gospel. It is generally the Lot of the best Men to be most afflicted, and every Man has a larger share of the anxious Care and vexing Troubles of this Life: The ancient Philosophers were at great Pains to suggest the best Remedies they could against the Pressures and Calamities of Life, such as - That they are the common Portion of Mankind - That time may alter things to the better - That at worst Death will put an End to all our Troubles - That Impatience in the mean time will but increase them - These are, as many wise sayings, but can they furnish the Mind with so much Ease

and

and Comfort, so much Patience & Resignation
 as the Doctrine of the Gospel doth, which teach
 us — That every Affliction which befalls the real
 Christian comes from and is managed by the Hand
 of a good and merciful God — That he support us
 under these troubles and Afflictions, or deliver
 us from them, & make them work for our Good
 That they are Marks of his Fatherly Love, & Affec-
 tion to us — That he designs by them to purge
 away our Sin, to wear out our hearts from this
 World & all its empty and fading enjoyments, &
 to raise our Affections to a better World, and more
 durable Blessings — That nothing more endears
 us to God than a patient Submission, & a mind re-
 signed to the divine Will, and — That these
 our light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment,
 worth it for us a far more exceeding and eternal
 Weight of glory, 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.
 1 Cor. 4. 17, 18. These are noble Foundations of
 Peace and Comfort sufficient to make us glory and
 rejoice in the greatest Difficulties & worst Tribu-
 lations, these are things not only beautiful in
 Theory, but they have been effectual in Practice,
 the noble Army of Christian Martyrs have ex-
 perienced in themselves, and evidenced to the
 World the Truth Reality & Efficacy of these things
 I am now representing unto You — Lastly

5. The Doctrines of the Gospel are of great Use
 to quicken & animate our Hopes of eternal
 Life and Happiness, and to make the Objects of
 another World, have their proper Force and Influ-
 ence upon us. Life and Death are Matters
 of the greatest Concern, Heaven and Hell
 now clearly revealed by the Christian Dispensation
 contain

contain in them very affecting Considerations, and
 must work powerfully on the Senses & the Heart of
 Mankind, these two great Principles of Action. Must
 not the joyful Prospect of endless and unspeakable
 Bliss and Happiness in Heaven in the presence of
 God, of his holy Angels, and of the Spirits of just Men
 made perfect, be the most prevalent Argument to
 make us just & virtuous? Must not the Dread of everlasting
 Torments in a dark Prison & dreadful Dungeon
 with Devils and damned Spirits be an effectual
 Argument against Vice and Impiety? How certainly
 in a high Degree. Tho' eternal Life with all its
 Joy & Pleasures, & eternal Death with all its Hor-
 rors, are two Terms in Divinity which mortal Lan-
 guage cannot explain, the Nature of them must be
 taught only by Feeling & Experience, yet so much is
 revealed by the Gospel concerning them, as may in
 the most effectual Manner convince us of the ex-
 ceeding Glory Happiness and Pleasures of the one,
 and of the awful Dread and Misery of the other, and
 consequently have a great Influence & Power on
 Mankind to awaken them to an Abhorrence of Sin,
 and engage them to the Practice of Holiness.
 And thus I have endeavoured to shew You that every
 one of the Doctrines of the Gospel have a natural
 Tendency and power to influence to reform the
 Minds, correct the Manners, and to advance and
 perfect the Happiness of Mankind — by giving us
 the highest and most becoming Thoughts of God,
 and of all his glorious Perfections — by directing
 us to the most proper and acceptable Manner
 of worshipping God — by discoursing in the
 most effectual Manner the Practice of Sin, and
 by exciting us to a sincere & hearty Obedience to
 the holy Law of God — by supporting and com-
 fortting us in all our present Sufferings and Af-
 flictions — And by animating our Hopes of
 eternal

Life eternal, & an everlasting happiness.
I proceed to the third Head of Discourse. **Text**
That the Doctrines of the Gospel taken together
do form the most consistent and comfortable
Scheme of Articles of Faith, infinitely preferable
to all the Schemes of Doctrine formed by either
antient or modern Enemys of divine Revelation.
It is not need only desire You to take a
View of the Articles of our holy Faith, and to
consider their just Dependance, their close Con-
nection, their beautiful Harmony, their close Con-
sistence, and excellent Tendency, and You will
easily see the Evidence of this Head of my Dis-
course; the Doctrines of the Gospel contain the
Doctrine of Salvation for lost Sinners, this great
Salvation is contrived by the Father, revealed
and purchased by the Son, and the Holy Spirit by
a Variety of Means puts us in possession of
it, having first prepared us for it; it was not
just or reasonable to give this Salvation to
them who reject or despise it, and therefore im-
penitent Sinners are left to perish, and bear
the blame of all their Loss and Misery, being
so fairly warned of it, and so earnestly ex-
horted to flee from it, whereas on the other
hand, such as accept this Salvation are in-
debted to free Mercy and Grace for it, so that
the whole Doctrine of the Gospel centers in
this great Design of advancing the Glory of
the Lord Jehovah, of setting forth the Beauty
of his amiable Perfections in Christ Jesus,
and of securing and perfecting the Salvation
and Happiness of Mankind. Is not this a
Design worthy of God? agreeable to infinite
Wisdom and Goodness? Both not this highly
commend the Gospel, and well nigh prove from
its intrinsic Excellency and Goodness with
out

the Excellency of the doctrine of the Gospel.
without any Addition of external Testimony
that it comes from God - I now proceed
to draw some Influence from the whole
of us diligently search the Scriptures, and strive to
attain to a clear & distinct Knowledge of the excellent
Doctrines & important Truths therein revealed, that
we may be able to digest them in our Minds, and give
some reasonable Account of the Glory that is in us.
Let us cordially believe and faithfully improve them
to the Glory of God, and the Salvation of our own Souls,
and let Christ Jesus, whose Person & Mediation is the
Sum and Substance of the Gospel be our chief Study
Phil. 3. 8, 9, 10, 11. Yea doubtless and I count all things
but Loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ
Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered Loss of
all things, and do count them but Dung, that I
may with Christ, and be found in him not having
mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but
that which is thro' the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness
which is of God by Faith: That I may know him, and the
Power of his Resurrection, & the Fellowship of his
Sufferings, being made conformable unto his Death
That is by any Means, I might attain to the Resur-
rection of the dead.

Let us in learning the Doctrines of the Gospel, look
to the great Gospel Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ,
and plead with him to teach us by his Spirit, and to
open our Understandings to know the holy Scriptures
in an experimental and saving Manner. And
Let us pity the ignorant & dark Part of the World,
earnestly desire that they may be brought to the Know-
ledge of the Truth as it is in Jesus. Oh pray for those who
enjoy the Light of the Gospel, but will not open their eyes
to see the Glory of it, but love Darkness & hate the Light.
1. P. 89. 5 - 110. 27.

Religion is in itself of the greatest Importance, & of infinite Concern to every One of us; & since that holy Religion which is taught us in the Scriptures, tend so much to the Peace of our Minds, & to the Perfection of our Natures, since it promises an unsearchable & eternal Happiness, we are oblig'd as reasonable Creatures to give it all due Regard and Attention, to make a fair and impartial Enquiry into the Grounds & Evidence of it, and if we find that it has all the Marks & Character of a Religion coming from God, we must believe it, and hold it fast. That if might assist You in this momentous Enquiry, having set before You the principles of natural Religion, I enter'd upon the Consideration of the Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion; and before that I should take a View of the Strength of the eternal Evidence, by which its divine Authority is ascertained, I thought fit to consider its intrinsic Goodness, and to shew You that such is the Nature & Perfection of the Doctrines and Precepts of the glorious Gospel of Christ Jesus, that in themselves they are worthy of God, and most agreeable to the Dictates of sound & uncorrupted Reason. I have in my last Discourse enquir'd into the Doctrines of the Gospel, and endeavour'd to shew You their divine Original from their intrinsic Excellency and Perfection. And now I proceed to enquire into the Nature of the Christian Morality, and to consider the Equity & Consistency of the Precepts of the Gospel, and we find the Apostle Paul a Man of great Learning and deep Judgement asserting herein my Text that the Law is holy, & the Commandment holy, just & good. The Apostle's great Design in this and the former Chapter is to set before us the many sweet and strong

Equity of the Precepts of the Gospel. The Law of God gives us the clearest Discovery of the most diabolical Nature, and dreadful Consequences of Sin, tho' as a Covenant it denounces a heavy Curse against every Transgression of it, yet this is no Rejection upon the Law, but rather magnifies it, and makes it honourable, and tho' we through the Corruption of our Natures are not capable to give perfect Obedience unto it, and thro' the Grace of the Gospel have the Promise of the Pardon of our Sins, yet the Law of God is still excellent in itself, and very useful unto us as the perfect Rule of our Practice, and the unerring Guide of our Life and Manners, the Law is holy, being a perfect Transcript of the holy Nature of God, and an eternal Rule of Righteousness, flowing from the Will and Pleasure of the most blessed and best of Beings, founded upon his Wisdom Justice and Goodness, and upon the unalterable Nature, and eternal Reason and fitness of things, and the Commandment is holy and just, and good, these three excellent Epithets may be thus distinguished: The Commandment is holy in Respect of the ceremonial Part, it is just in Respect of the Judicial Part, and it is good in Respect of the moral Part of it, for these were the three Kinds of Laws, which obtained among the Jews; Or rather, and which is more agreeable to the Gospel, the Commandment is holy, as it teaches us our Duty to God, it is just, as it teaches us our Duty to our Neighbour, and it is good as it tends to the Perfection of our Natures, and to our personal Peace and Happiness. And in these three Respects I shall I. Consider the Precepts of the Christian Religion

and yet before you the Perfection and Excellency of them, as they plainly and clearly instruct us in the Knowledge of our Duty to God, to others & ourselves. II. Then you know much the Precepts of the Christian Religion are superior to all the Systems of Morality, which have been taught us by the unassisted Reason of Man in ancient or modern Times. & III. Then yet before you the practical Language of this Subject.

I. To consider the Precepts of the Christian Religion, and yet before you the Perfection & Excellency of them, as they plainly & clearly instruct us in the Duties of our Duty to God, to others, and to ourselves. For this, as I conceive, is the intent of our Obedience, and comprehends the whole Duty of Man.

I. And there fore first with Respect to God As the Doctrine of the Gospel do give us the most clear Account of his amiable Nature, & super-excellent Perfections, and of his infinite Kindness & Benevolence to us, so the Precepts of the Gospel do enjoin the highest Esteem of, and the most tender Love to God, that we should worship and adore him with the most profound Fear & Reverence, that we should render the most cheerful Obedience to his Will, & acknowledge him in all our Ways Matt. 22. 36, 37 & 38.

When we consider the Beauty & Glories of his divine Features, that every amiable thing is to be found in God which can claim or attract our Love, and that he is an everlasting source of the most perfect Bliss and lasting Happiness unto us, is it not infinitely reasonable, that we should love him above all things? The more of Love there is in our Obedience, it will be the more sincere and hearty on our part, and the more acceptable and well-pleasing unto him: Is not Love the great spring of the Praises & Services of the Spirits of just Men made perfect? Is not Love the soul, which acts and

animates the Religion of the blessed in Heaven. & I am sure that Religion here on earth which enjoins us to love our Neighbour as our self, must be the most pure perfect and heavenly.

With Respect to our fellow-Creatures, the Gospel gives us two excellent Rules which ought to be written in Letters of Gold, & if well observed, might be of great Influence & Service in the whole of our Conduct, the first is Mat. 22. 39. Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self, & the other Mat. 7. 12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law, & the Prophets. If we would put ourselves in our Neighbour's Case, and think seriously what we would wish and reasonably expect others would do to us in that Case, this in most Instances would teach how to act and behave, and there would not be so much Need of inculcating the necessity of Justice & Honesty, of Truth and Charity! Where is the Man who would wish his Neighbour to deceive him, or to deal injuriously with him? Where is the Man who would not wish to be relieved when he is in Want or Distress? Why then do You deceive others? Why do You deny your Charity and Sympathy to them who stand in need of it?

But let us more particularly consider the Precepts of the Gospel with Respect to Society. Is not our Duty in every Station and Relation very clearly taught us by the Gospel here the Prince and the Word, the Parent and the Child, the Husband & the Wife, the Master and the Servant may learn their reciprocal Duties, here are the best Laws, & the sweetest Bonds of Friendship, here we are commanded to forgive Offences, to bear Injuries, not to render Evil for Evil, but to overcome all our evil with our Good, here we are charged to love our Enemies, to bless them that curse us, to

to do good to them that do spitefully use & persecute us Mat. 5. 44. If these kind receipts of our holy Religion, these sweet and well-natured Rules were strictly observed, and generally practis'd, all Malice and Envy, all evil speaking and backbiting should soon be for ever banished, we should have no Enemies ourselves, we should be no Enemies to others; the strictest Friends and the sincerest Peace, the most sincere Esteem and Affection should have the predominant among all Ranks and in all Stations, for there would be none to hurt or destroy in all the holy Mountain, the Love and Peace of Heaven should descend upon the Earth, and we should have rich Fortresses of the Happiness of the Saints, even before we enter into their Mansions of Bliss and Glory — And

8. With Respect to Ourselves.

The Precepts of the Gospel of Christ Jesus do even to Demonstration tend to secure the Peace of our Minds, and to advance the Perfection of our Natures, and that by rooting up all those Vices of the Mind, and calming all those angry Passions which disturb our Quiet. — By planting in our Souls all those gracious principles and amiable Qualities, the Fruits of which growing up in our Lives will beautify and adorn them — by governing our inward Thoughts, Inclinations and Appetites, as well as our outward Actions — by raising our Affections above this present World, & giving us such a joyful and clear prospect of, and sweetest for the Happiness of a future State, as will make our Obedience easy, our Lives comfortable, and afford us a growing Pleasure and Satisfaction, so that in all Conditions we

we shall learn the divine Art of Contentment, & even in all our Afflictions, we shall practise the great Lessons of Patience and Resignation, Humility and Temperance, those great Ornaments of the Christian Life, shall run thro' the whole Course of our Behaviour, for these are the chief Precepts, which our holy Religion enjoins us to practise with Respect to Ourselves, and surely they are holy, and just and good. Thus I have considered the Precepts of the Gospel of Christ Jesus, as they enjoyn that Love, Fear, Worship and Adoration which is due unto God — as they require that Justice and Charity, that Truth and Equity, and that Goodness and Benevolence, which we owe One to another And — as they command that Sobriety & Chastity, Patience and Contentment, which we must practise with Respect to Ourselves.

And now I appeal to any impartial Judge, if this is not an excellent Scheme of practical Religion, worthy to be established by a divine Revelation. When the World was sunk in Impiety, given up to abominable practices, & allowing in its not proper to be named, Was it not an Act of great Goodness, that God sent his only begotten Son to give us Laws & Commandments so holy, just and good, to give us the whole of our Duty in a way so plain & obvious to the meanest Capacity, wherein what ever things are true, what ever things are honest, what ever things are just, what ever things are pure, what ever things are lovely, what ever things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, & if there be any praise in them Phil. 4. 8. all these things, & these only are recom

mend'd on

recommended to our Practice? — I must here also add that not only the moral Precepts, but also the positive Institutions of the Gospel, I mean the two Sacraments of Baptism and our ordinary Supper, as they are taught us in the holy Scriptures, and freed from the Corruptions and Superstitions which Men, wise in their own Conceit have mixed with them, are very admirably fitted to the great Ends of Religion. Is it unreasonable or superstitious that a Member of the Christian Church should by a voluntary Oath be admitted into his Profession, entitled to all the Privileges, and charged with all the Obligations which belong to the Members of that Society? Or that Members should frequently commemorate with all Thankfulness the Love of their best Friend and greatest Benefactor, & by the most solemn Vows bind themselves to his Service and Obedience. These are the great Ends of these positive Precepts, and surely they are worthy of God, and conducive to the Happiness of Man, & consequently holy, just and Good.

I now go forward to the next Head *viz* To shew you how much the Precepts of the Christian Religion are superior to all the Systems of Morality, which have been taught us by the unassisted Reason of Men in ancient or modern Times. — It cannot be denyed but divine Providence did raise up among the Heathens, Men of great Wisdom and Learning, who have given us many noble Lessons of Morality, the Writings of Socrates and Plato, of Seneca and Epictetus were of excellent Use to the Generations wherein they lived, and are justly esteemed and valued

valued even unto this Day, but all the wise and good sayings of the most refined Morality comes, being far short of the Christian Morality, and that is particularly respect to, particularly The Author of the Christian System excelleth all others in the Majesty and Dignity of his Person, in the Depth of his Knowledge & Wisdom, and in the Innocence and Usefulness of his Life and Practice: If we consider the blessed Jesus as he is the eternal Son of God, he is infinitely superior to all the Sons of Men; if we view him in his human Nature, we see that all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge are in him? How sublime and heavenly were all his sayings and Discourses? How shining & beautiful was every Part of his Behaviour? Was not his whole Life spent in promoting the Ends of Holiness and Charity? Has he not given us the fairest Copy, & the most perfect Pattern of Obedience, so far as was consistent with his Condition and Circumstances? Have ever any of the Heathen Moralists such strict Observance of their own Precepts, so holy and exemplary in their Life and Practice? And thus the Precepts of the Christian Religion are highly recommended from the Excellency of their Author. There is a beautiful Harmony and entire Consistency in all the Laws Christ Jesus has prescribed us, tho' the Scriptures were penned by different Persons, and in different Ages, yet they were all inspired by the same Spirit, and there is no Clashing or Contrariety in the Rules of Life, which they have given us: Whereas the Differences among our Heathen Moralists are endless and irreconcilable. Some asserted that there is no God, others maintained a Multiplicity of Gods, and the most of them agreed in this, that every Man should worship the Gods of his own Country. Some taught that there

is an essential Difference betwixt Virtue and Vice, but others believed that nothing was good or evil, just or unjust, but as the Laws and Customs of every Country determined. Some have reckoned up no less than two hundred and eighty different Opinions among them concerning this one Question: What is the chief Good & final Happiness of Man? These Differences I mention, not as any Reproach to the Authors of them, but to shew You the Folly of those who think to find in their Writings an entire & uniform Scheme of practical Religion.

8. Though they had taught all the Duties of Life in the plainest Manner, yet they had not sufficient Authority to command Attention, and to require Obedience. When there are so many Differences among them, and so many Errors mixed with some Truths in their Writings, (had any one of them more Power than another to determine who was in the Right, and who was in the wrong, or to separate Truth from Error? Had any one of them more Authority than another to impose his own Scheme upon Mankind? Men are but Men who may deceive and be deceived, and he who hears, thinks himself as capable as he who teaches, so where there is no superior Authority and Power, Men must be tossed about with contrary Waves without any Pilot or Compass to direct them; and he some enjoying much Leisure & great Liberty might have clearly demonstrated from the Principles of Reason the ordinary Duties of Life, or have understood them when taught and demonstrated by others, yet it is not to be expected that every Labourer and Tradesman can follow a Chain of Reasoning, or pursue all the Steps of a Demonstration. I therefore ask if it is not the shortest and safest Way that one who gives sufficient Evidence of his Authority, and is clothed with the

Equity of their receipts of the Gospel. The Power of God, should plainly & clearly tell us our Duty. And this is the peculiar Excellency of the Laws of Christ Jesus, they are taught us by one sent from Heaven, and we need no other Proof of the Equity of these Laws, but that they are enacted by him for his Authority & absolute Power is binding upon all.

Our blessed Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus has given the practical Duties of Religion to the highest Pitch of Perfection, and he has taken as much Care to regulate the inward Temper and Disposition of the Mind, as to govern the outward Actions & Behaviours of the Life and Conversation, he hath not only forbidden Murder, but all the Degrees of Anger, and all Desires of Revenge; he not only forbids the outward Acts but the very inward Thoughts and Wishes of Uncleanness Mat. 5. 21, 22, 27, 28th. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill: & whosoever shall kill, shall be in Danger of the Judgment: But I say unto You, that whosoever is angry with his Brother without a Cause shall be in Danger of the Judgment, & whosoever shall say to his Brother Raca, shall be in Danger of the Council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in Danger of Hell fire. It was said by them of old, Thou shalt not commit Adultery: But I say unto You, that whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his heart. We not only commanded to love our friends, but also our most bitter Enemies, we must not only cease to do evil, but we must strive to do all the Good in our Power, and to be still advancing and going forward, untill we attain to Perfection.

XXVIII. & c. Rom. 7th ch. 12th
Expectation. Ps. 119. 96. I have been an end of all Per-
fection, but thy Commandment is exceeding
Broad. I Pr. 19. 7. 119. 97.

Sermon XXVIII. Rom. 7. 12. Wherefore the Law is
holy, & the Commandment holy & just & good.
The Sovereignty of the God of Heaven is absolute,
and his Dominion over us, is founded in our very
Beings, our wise and gracious Creator cannot
require too much Service of us, for we owe our
all unto him, and hope for all our Happiness from
him. It is a very clear Proof of his Goodness, & no
small Encouragement to our cheerful Obedience,
that the Laws which he hath given us are so holy, & all
the Commandments which he hath enjoined us to ob-
serve are so just and good, tending so much to
our Peace and the Perfection of our Natures, & tho'
they had not been enforced by divine Authority, yet
it had been our Interest to have given Obedience
unto them. Wherefore the Law is holy &c.

You may remember that my Design in choosing
this Text, and discoursing upon it, was to shew
You the intrinsic Goodness & Equity of the Pre-
cepts of the Christian Religion. And the Method
I proposed thro' the divine Assistance was this

- I. To consider the Precepts of the Christian Religion,
and to set before You the Perfection & Excellence
of them, as they plainly and clearly instruct us in
the Knowledge of our Duty to God, to others & Ourselves.
- II. To shew how You know much the Precepts of the Christian
Religion, are superior to all the Systems of Mora-
lity which have been taught us by unassisted
Reason of Men in antient or modern Times.
- III. Then to set before You the practical Language of this
I Subject. On the first Head of Discourse
I have considered the Precepts of the Gospel of
Christ

no Equity of the Precepts of the Gospel
Christ Jesus as they enjoy that Love & Fear, Wor-
ship and Adoration which is due unto God alone.
As they require that Justice and Charity, that Truth
and Equity, that Goodness and Benevolence which
we owe one to another. And as they command that
Sobriety & Chastity, Patience and Contentment
which we must practise with Respect to Our-
selves.

I then proceeded to the second Head
To shew You how much the Precepts of the Christian
Religion are superior to all other Systems of Morality.
For they excel in many Respects, particularly
1. The Author of the Christian System excelleth all
others in the Glory and Dignity of his Person, in the
Depth of his Knowledge & Wisdom, & in the Innocence
and Usefulness of his Life and Practice.

2. There is a beautiful Harmony and entire Consis-
tency in all the Laws which Christ has prescribed.
3. In the Power and Authority where with they bind the
Consciences of Men to the Obedience of them.
4. Our Lord and Saviour has raised the practical
Duties of Religion to the highest pitch of Perfection.
These things were the Subject of a former Dis-
course. And now I go for ward
5. Never was the Practice of Religion enforced with
such powerful Motives as are contained in the
holy Scriptures. Many Men have spoken many
things in Commendation of the Beauty of Virtue,
and yet Virtue had not many Cotaries, when its
Reward was so doubtful, & the Difficulties and In-
conveniencies, which attended the practice of it
were so visible and sensible. Virtue and Prospe-
rity do not always, do not often accompany One-an-
other, and therefore it was no Wonder they who
who knew nothing, or at least, but very little of
another World, did not very steadily pursue the
Paths of Holiness and Virtue: But now by the
Gospel

Gospel of Christ, we have not only the As-
 sistance of divine Aid and Support to bear us up under
 all our present Difficulties and Discouragements,
 but we have the sure prospect of a far more ex-
 ceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, and a sensible
 proof of it by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ
 from the dead. Is not this a sure foundation, on
 which the practice of Virtue may be raised to the
 highest Perfection? Here is enough to encourage
 Men to resist the strongest Temptations to sin,
 and to despise the most flattering Exams, & the
 sweetest Treasures of the World; for what should
 not, what may not Men do in Hopes of a glorious
 Crown, of a State of perfect unmix'd & eternal
 Happiness? Should we not hold fast the Profession
 of our Faith in Christ, until we receive the End
 of our Faith, even the Salvation of our Souls?

6. The Practice of Religion as enforced by the Gov-
 ernment, has been more general, and the Laws of Jesus
 Christ have had a more proper Effect upon the
 Hearts and Lives of Men, than ever was known
 or observed in any Age or Country not enlighten'd
 by the Gospel. In what exalted Degree of
 Purity and Perfection did Christianity raise
 many of its first Professors? How great was
 their Contentment of the World? How wonderful was
 their Patience and Courage? How fervent was their Love,
 their Charity and Devotion? And tho' now Alas! there
 is a great Decay of Religion among us, yet bless'd
 be God, we are in a great Measure deliver'd from the
 gross Idolatry, the cruel and impure Rites, the fool-
 ish and abominable practices, which formerly
 abounded among the Heathen Nations, and are
 yet to be found among the savage Africans and
 native Indians. I appeal to my judicious hear-
 ers, if that Knowledge of the true God, that general
 Order

and Equity of the Precepts of the Gospel,
 Order and Decency, that Sense of Duty and Civility of
 Manners which is so found among us, is not owing
 to the Christian Institution & Worship, & if our State
 even as to a present Life is not infinitely preferable
 to those barbarous & unpolish'd Nations, who know
 nothing of Christ and his Gospel? What Cruelties &
 Disorders are to be found among them. Men offering
 up Men in Sacrifice, the Conquerors eating the Flesh
 of their Captives, & sucking up the Blood of the wound-
 ed or dying Prisoners, all of them worshipping false
 Gods, and many paying Homage to the Devil, and
 abounding in all Superstition and Wickedness.
 Upon the whole, I think it can hardly be denied by
 our modern Unbelievers, but there are among us
 many more Persons of all Conditions, who have
 a more distinct Knowledge of the true God, who
 worship him with more Purity of Heart, who more
 steadily and sincerely study the Practice of all
 Righteousness and true Obedience, than ever were
 found amongst the most civiliz'd people in the
 Heathen World. Thus have I shew'd you how
 much the precepts of Christianity are superior
 to all other Systems of Morality, for they excel
 — in the Glory and Dignity of their Author. — in
 the Harmony & Consistency of all the Duties which
 they require — in the Power and Authority where
 with they bind the Consciences of Men — in the
 Strength & Energy of the Motive by which our Obe-
 dience is enforced — in the Degree & Perfection
 to which true Virtue is exalted by them — and
 lastly they have in Effect made a more consider-
 able Reformation on the Minds & Manners of Men,
 than ever all the Instructions of the antient Philo-
 sophers, and all the Attempts of our modern Deists
 ever did or possibly can do. I should

I should now proceed to the last thing proposed
The object before you the practical Language of the
subject, I have been discoursing upon. But
I must first remove an Objection or two, which are very
frequently tho' unjustly made us of against divine Re-
velation — And the first Objection is

1. If the Doctrines and Precepts of the Gospel are
so worthy of God, so excellent in themselves, & so
beneficial to Mankind, if they are so necessarily to
be believed & practised for our pleasing God, & for
our eternal Salvation and Happiness, what Rea-
son can be assigned, why so many Ages, & so many
Nations have known nothing of this divine Re-
velation? Is it consistent with the Goodness of
God, who is the Creator of all the Ends of the Earth,
to withhold the Knowledge of the only Way of Salva-
tion from so many of the Children of Men? And
there for vice, with him there is no Respect of
Persons, what has not been revealed to all Men,
and made known in all Ages, is not needful to any,
and consequently there is no Ground to think any
farther Assistance is necessary to enable Men to
answer the End of their Creation, & to direct them
to Happiness, than the bare Light of Nature, which
the indulgent Author of our Being has made
common to all Men. To this Objection answer

1. Even by this very Argument, natural Religion is
overthrown as well as revealed, for all Men
have not the same Powers and Abilities, the same
Means and Opportunities. Do not we see some of
an excellent natural Genius, of deep Judgment,
and ready Understanding, and others very dull
and stupid, not differing many Degrees from
some of the brute Creatures, and yet shall we
affirm that God is partial, and that he deals un-
justly

unjustly with his Creatures, because he gives
not an equal Measure of Reason to them all? Or
will our Adversaries affirm that the Light of Na-
ture is a sufficient Guide to Happiness, when all
Men have not equal Powers and Means to know
its Direction, and to follow it.

2. No Man can say that God is in Justice obliged
to make a Revelation of his Will & of the Way to
Happiness to any sinful Creature, who by their
Disobedience have forfeited his Favour, & lost
all Title to Heaven and eternal Happiness, &
therefore if he makes such a Revelation it is
an Act of Grace, and surely he is at Liberty to
dispense his Favours, and his extraordinary
Gifts to what Nations and Persons he thinks
fit, and there can be no Doubt, but such Persons &
Nations are bound to receive them with all Gra-
titude, & there cannot be a more flagrant In-
stance of Perverseness than to refuse their Favours
of God, for the very Reason which ought to height-
en our Thankfulness for them viz. that he vouchsafes
them to us, when he withholds them from others
Mat. 11. 25, 26. At that time Jesus answered and said
I thank thee O Father Lord of Heaven and Earth,
because thou hast hid these things from the wise
and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes.
Even so Father, for so it seem'd good in thy Sight.
Ps. 147. 19, 20. He shew'd his Word unto Jacob, his
Statutes and his Judgments unto Israel. He
hath not dealt so with any Nation, & as for his
Judgments they have not known them. Praise ye
the Lord. And then

3. The Revelation of the Gospel was twice made to
all Mankind, first to Adam immediately after the

the Fall Gen. 3. 15. The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Head of the serpent, and then to Noah who was a Preacher of Righteousness, and no doubt taught the knowledge of a Messiah to his Family, which was the only surviving Family after the Flood, and there is no absolute Need of a new Revelation in every Age, or to every single Person, since Men are bound to propagate the Knowledge of the Truth, and every Man is oblig'd to believe such Evidence as is abundantly sufficient to satisfy an ingenuous & unprejudic'd Mind, and this is the Case with a Gospel Revelation, it is attended with so strong Evidence even of Matters of Fact, that he will not believe it, is pig of against all Argument and Conviction. Luke 16. 31. If they hear not Moses & the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, tho' one rose from the dead.

2. Some of the Precepts of the Christian Religion lays too great Constraints upon Mankind, and imposes Duties upon us too difficult to be observ'd, it is not easy for Flesh and Blood to attain to such high Degrees of self Denial, of Meekness and Patience, of Submission and Resignation as the Gospel of Christ Jesus requires of us. To this it may be answer'd. It is indeed very true that some have painted Religion in such black Colours, as might readily frighten Men from embracing it, but I am very certain that Religion doth not forbid us the moderate Use of the innocent Pleasures of Life. Whose heart can be cheerful, and whose Countenance can appear pleasant and joyful, if he cannot who is the Object of the Love of God, whose

Heir of Heaven, and whose Conscience is pure and undefiled. No doubt many Duties are required of the sincere Christian very difficult and unpleasant, but is not this occasioned by our own Corruptions, & our vitious Customs and Habits? Are we not often oblig'd to swim against the Stream, and to undo what we have done, because we did it amiss, but were we freed from that woful Byass we have to that which is evil, we should find a growing Pleasure and joy in the Discharge of all the Duties of Christianity, and the precepts of the Gospel would be regarded holy just and good. Having thus removed some Objections, which are very frequently, tho' very unjust made use of against divine Revelation.

I come now before you the practical Language of this Subject. 1. And in the first place from what hath been said, we may justly infer that there is no Religion in the World which can be laid in the Balance with the Christian, either for the Glory and Dignity of its Author, or for the Excellency of its Doctrines, or for the Equity and Goodness of its precepts. The different Religions that have prevailed in the World may all of them be reduced to these four. The Heathen, the Mahometan, the Jewish, and the Christian. We have already seen the Idolatry and Superstition of the Heathen Nations, and surely the trifling and ridiculous Doctrines, the impious and inconsistent precepts, the vain and sensual Rewards of Mahomet will never have any Weight with any thinking or considerate Man; and as for the Jewish Religion,

The first and imperfect Draught of the Christiane
an, and contained in Types, Figures, and Sacri-
fices what the Gospel now exhibits & sets be-
fore us in substance Ro. 1. 17 For the Law was
given by Moses, but Grace & Truth came by
Jesus Christ. The Gospel is the best and the last
Dispensation of Grace to Mankind, not to be suc-
ceeded by any other. It is established in the Hands
of Christ Jesus the Mediator of this better Cove-
nant, who hath obtained an unchangeable Pries-
hood, and lives for ever not only to make Intercesi-
on, but to perform all the other Offices of a conti-
nual High Priest

2. Hence we may see the great Goodness of God
his supreme Law giver to Angels and Men,
not by no means hater the part of an austere
or cruel Master, but delight in the Happi-
ness of his Subjects, and makes a sweet Con-
nection betwixt their Duty and their Happi-
ness, and the Work and service he requires, has
a rich Reward wrapt up in the Obvium of it
Ps. 19. 10, 11. More to be desired are they than
gold, yea much finer Gold: sweeter also than Ho-
ney, and the Honey-comb. More over by them is
his servant warned, and in keeping of them
there is great Reward. Psal. 119. 166. Great
Reich have they which love thy Law, & nothing
shall offend them.

3. We may hence see that Christianity is no
enemy to true Morality, and that the Doctrine
of the Antinomians is most opposite to the
Spirit of the Gospel of Christ Jesus, surely
he who came to save us from our sins, is by
no means the minister of sin, and he who
doth not sincerely study to keep the holy Law
of God, and to make it the Rule of his Life

no Equity of the Precepts of the Gospel.
Life and Manner, cannot be a Disciple of
Christ, or expect Salvation by him Heb. 10. 5.
and being made perfect, he becometh the Author
of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey
him. We are not indeed under the Law as a Co-
venant of Works, neither can we ever expect Sal-
vation by our Obedience to it, yet the holy Law
of God being an eternal Rule of Righteousness
must for ever continue to be a Rule of Life
and Manners unto us.

4. There is an excellent Mark and Evidence of a
gracious and renewed Heart, when it consenteth
unto the Holiness of the Law of God, and com-
mends the Equity, and Goodness of every Com-
mandment of the Law. This you see was the
Frame of the holy heart of thy Apostle Paul,
tho' he found much Carnality and Corruption
in him, yet he was well assured of the Equity, &
perfection of the Law of God, the Law, says he, is
holy, & the Commandment, holy & just and good.
And says the Psal. 119. 127, 128. Therefore I love
thy Commandments above Gold, Yea above
fine Gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts
concerning all things to be right: and I hate
every false way. And on the other hand there
is no better Evidence of the Prevalence and Do-
minion of sin in the Heart, than to spurn at the
Holiness of the Law of God, and to entertain secret
Wishes and Desires, that it might allow more
Liberty and greater Freedom to us in gratify-
ing our vicious Appetites & corrupt Inclinations.
5. As the Law of God is holy, and every Command-
ment of it so holy and just and good, then every
Transgression and Act of Disobedience

must be attended with a very painful guilt, and
 the more clearly the holy Law of God has been re-
 vealed unto us, and our Obedience enforced & en-
 couraged, our Guilt must rise in proportion, &
 this is an abating Consideration to us
 who enjoy the clear Light of the Gospel; how
 much more careful should we be than others
 to live up to the good Lawes God has given us?
 And that thro' the divine Assistance we may do so.
 I shall conclude with a few Directions in some things.
 1. Let us study to attain to a thorough Knowledge
 of the spiritual Nature of the holy Law of God, as
 it reacheth to the Heart as well as the outward Life,
 as it respects our Thoughts as well as the Actions.
 2. Being sensible of our own Weakness, let us strive
 near to Christ Jesus the Head of all saving Influ-
 ences, and improve him for Wisdom & Righteous-
 ness, & Sanctification and compleat Redemption.
 3. Considering our many Breaches of the holy
 Law of God, let us very highly esteem and
 prize the precious Blood of Attonement, and
 make frequent fervent & important Application
 to it for pardoning Mercy. — Lastly
 4. Let us still be aiming at Perfection, forgetting
 the things behind & reaching forth unto those things
 which are before, let us press towards the Mark
 for the prize of the high Calling of God in Christ
 Jesus, and be longing for that blessed and hap-
 py Day, where in we shall never wander from
 our Duty, or weary in our Obedience. Now unto him
 that is able to keep us from falling & prevent us
 without spot & Blemish, to God Father Son and
 Holy Ghost be glory & Praise for ever Amen
 S. P. 119. 9. 119. 129.

This first Volume of Sermons
 was begun at Avoch the 27th
 Day of October 1760 Years
 And finished the first Day
 of October 1761 Years
 By me Thomas Simpson
 Min^r of the Gospel at Avoch. &
 Deo Juvante.


 The Longman

