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PRACTICAL DISCOURSES ON SEVERAL Important Subjects.

In Two VOLUMES.

By the Late Reverend DANIEL WILLIAMS, D.D.

Published singly by Himself, and now collected by the Appointment of his Will.

To which is prefixed, Some Account of his Life and Character.

VOL. I.

LONDON;

Printed by John Wilson, at the Turk's-Head, in Gracechurch-Street.

MDCCXXXVIII.
TO THE

READER.

N an age of so much speculation and debate, and where mens enquiries and contention about religion have been sometimes made an occasion of unsetting their minds, and breeding indifference and neglect; any rational attempts to revive and promote the practice of religion, can never be thought either improper or unseemly. Among the many bad symptoms upon us, and the visible decay of serious religion among all parties, nothing has a better aspect, or gives a more agreeable prospect, than the close application to the study of the scriptures, the many

* A 2' excellent
excellent discourses upon practical subjects, as well as some noble de-
fences of religion, which have been lately published among us.

The following sermons were all preached upon special occasions, and were heard with great accept-
tance and regard; and with some allowance sometimes for the disad-
vantage of the style, will be al-
lowed by equal and impartial judges, to be exceedingly fitted to convey a great deal of excellent instruc-
tion, and to make good impressions upon the minds of men: though perhaps every sentence, or every sentiment, may not exactly agree to their own: A candor, I believe, is found, requisite in read-
ing over any human writings what-
soever.

The Memoirs of his life are put together, partly from the ac-
counts already published *, and partly

* By Dr. Evans in his Funeral Sermon, and Dr. Calamy in the Second Volume of his Continuation.
partly from what was remembred from his own mouth, and the information of his family and intimate friends; and I believe they will be allowed, when taken together, to make as considerable a character for understanding and judgment, for honesty and integrity, for wisdom and conduct in affairs, for courage and zeal, and for usefulness and beneficence, as almost any man's, of his order, in the time in which he lived.

That they may be serviceable to the excellent purposes to which they were originally directed by the Reverend Author, and are designed by his Trustees, in this collection of them, by his appointment; is, I doubt not, the sincere desire of every one concerned in it.

W. Harris.
SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE of Dr. WILLIAMS.

SECTION I.

R. D. A N I E L W I L L I A M S was born at Wrexham in the county of Denbigh in Wales, about the year 1643 or 1644. It appears that he laboured under some disadvantages in his education, which would have cramped a common genius, and hinder'd it from ever rising beyond a vulgar pitch; but the natural vigour and strength of his mind, improved by uncommon diligence and application, made up the want of such helps which many others enjoy in their early years. His rising to so great a capacity of usefulness under so few advantages, must be allowed, instead
instead of detracting from him, to add considerably to his real worth. This disadvantage appeared in nothing so much, as in the want of ease and purity in his style, which is commonly formed in younger life.

He was a lover of serious religion from his youth, and was one of the first of the rising generation, who entered into the ministry, after the ejectment in 1662. He says of himself, "That from five years old he had no employment but his studies; and that by nineteen he was regularly admitted a preacher." He freely owned himself a Nonconformist at a time when he knew it must expose him to great straits and hardships: Whereas if he could have satisfied himself to submit to the terms of the national establishment, his intellectual furniture, joined with his uncommon sagacity and dexterity, and unwearied diligence, would have given him as fair a prospect of preferment, as almost any of his contemporaries could pretend to.

When he had spent a few years in preaching occasionally in several parts of England, and found the times so frowning and discouraging to Dissenters, that he had little prospect of pursuing his ministry without great hazard; Providence very seasonably opened him a way for service in Ireland: where even in those times, the government thought fit to treat men of his principles, amidst a swarm of bigotted Papists, in a very different

* Preface to the Defence of Gospel Truth.
different manner from their brethren in England, and from the difficulties brought upon them in Ireland since. As he made an occasional visit to the pious Lady Wilbraham of Weston in Salop, he received an unexpected invitation to be chaplain to the countess of Meath in that kingdom: He readily accepted it; and here he found a refuge from the storm, and a considerable opportunity of service.

After some time he was called to the pastoral office in the city of Dublin, in a congregation of principal figure, who used to worship God in Woodstreet. In that kingdom he had an opportunity of publick service, for near twenty years, by his labours in the pulpit, by his prudent advice, by improving the interest he obtained in persons of the highest rank, and by several other methods, in which providence chose to make him a general blessing. Here he filled his station with unusual acceptance, in great harmony with his brethren in the ministry, and respected by most who were hearty Protestants in that kingdom. Here he married his first wife, who was not only a lady of distinguished wisdom and piety, but of an honourable family, and considerable estate; and so, by the bounty of providence, he came to be in a more plentiful circumstance than most of his brethren, and a greater capacity of usefulness, all his life.

In the troubles of Ireland in the latter end of King James's reign, he was driven from thence,

† See her exemplary character, in her Funeral Sermon, by Dr. Calamy.
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thence, after escaping some threatening dangers by the tyrannical and violent proceedings of a popish administration. The Romanists at that time were more insolent there, than here; and his warm opposition to Popery did not a little expose him. When he could not continue there any longer in safety, he came over to England in 1687, and made London the place of his retreat, where he was soon observed and esteemed. Here he was of great use upon a very critical and important occasion. Some of the court agents did at that time endeavour to bring the Dissenters in this city, into an address, upon the King's dispensing with the penal laws. In a conference at one of their meetings, upon that occasion, in the presence of some of the agents; Mr. Williams bravely declared, "That it was with him past doubt, "that the severities of the former reign upon "the Protestant Dissenters, were rather as "they stood in the way of arbitrary power, "than for their religious dissent; so it were "better for them to be reduced to their for- "mer hardships, than declare for measures "destructive of the liberties of their country; "and that for himself, before he would con- "cur in an address which should be thought "an approbation of the dispensing power, "he would choose to lay down his liberty at "his Majesty's feet." He pursued the argu- ment with such clearness and strength, that all present rejected the motion, and the emis- faries went away disappointed. There was a meeting
meeting at the same time of a considerable number of the city clergy, waiting the issue of their deliberations, who were greatly animated and encouraged by this brisk resolution of the dissenting ministers.

He was of great use to such who came after him from Ireland into these parts, when things were carried to extremities, and they were in constant danger of being sacrificed to the cruelty of Tyrconnel, and his army of cut-throats. He not only gave them considerable assistance himself, but stirred up compassion towards them among his acquaintance, which was large and extensive, to the utmost of his power.

After the glorious Revolution in 1688, in which none more heartily rejoiced than he, he was not only sometimes consulted by King William about the Irish affairs, with which he was well acquainted, but was often regarded at court on the behalf of several who fled from thence, and were capable of doing service to the government. He received great acknowledgments and thanks upon this account, when, in the year 1700, he went into Ireland to visit his old friends, and to settle some affairs relating to his estate; and even from several who at first had been apt to censure his quitting Ireland too hastily, for want of courage, or too great a concern for his own safety.

After he had spent some time in preaching occasionally about the city of London, with general
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general acceptance and great esteem, and not without several motions made for a settlement, at length, about the latter end of 1688, upon the sudden death of Mr. John Oakes, he was chosen to succeed him, in his numerous congregation at Hand-Ally, in Bishopsgate-street. The call being unanimous, he accepted it, and continued with them in the service of the gospel twenty-seven years. He was then in the vigour of life, and used to say, "He de-
" fired a station in which he might have a " great deal of work, and a little wages."

From the time of his coming to London, he conversed much with the eminent Mr. Richard Baxter, by whom he was greatly esteemed; and sometimes preached for him in his turn at the Merchants Lecture at Pin-
ners-Hall, when he was indisposed. Upon Mr. Baxter's decease, he was chosen into that Lecture, in his room, 1691. A consider-
able interest was made against him, in favour of Mr. Woodcock, who was a learned man, and had been a noted tutor in the university. It happened that the electors were equally di-
vided; and it was immediately agreed to ap-
peal to providence by a lot, which fell upon Mr. Williams, and there was a general ac-
quiescence in him. Upon this occasion it was said by one, who was a good judge of men, and not prejudiced in his favour, "That tho' " he had served Mr. Woodcock as his friend, " and who exceeded him in learning, yet he " thought providence had clearly determined " the
"the matter, and that Mr. Williams was "a man of the best natural parts of any "man in England*."

It was not long after, that there were fre-quent clashings in the discourses of some of the Lecturers; and the supporters were divided. And tho' frequent attempts were made to pre-vent misunderstandings, yet in a little time the heat was revived again. At length a design was formed to exclude Mr. Williams out of the Lecture, for preaching against some An-tinomian points, which began to be openly espoused by some. This being discovered, was vigorously opposed by far the greater number of the subscribers to the Lecture, who, at length, when no proposal for peace would be admitted, raised another Tuesday-Lecture at Salters-Hall. Three of the old Lecturers, Dr. Bates, Mr. How, Mr. Alsop, accom-pa-nied Mr. Williams; and two more were added to them, Dr. Annesly, and Mr. Richard Mayo: But this occasioned a great deal of noife and clamour.

It was about this time that Dr. Crisp's works were reprinted in one volume, with some additional pieces by his son, with an at-ten-sa-tion prefixed by some ministers of London, to the genuineness of those additions: But the matter was managed in such manner, that it was apprehended that an ill use would be made of their hands, and which they never intended. Upon this occasion Mr. Williams, at

* Mr. Jer. White.
at the desire of several of his brethren, wrote his Gospel Truth, stated and vindicated: In which he reduces the controversy to certain heads, and distinctly states the truth and error, under each of them: then he proves the latter to be Dr. Crisp's opinion from his own express words; and shows distinctly what the difference is not, and what it really is; and then confirms the truth opposed, by proper reasons, and by the testimony of the Westminster Assembly, the New-England Synod, and the Congregational Elders at the Savoy, and of particular writers who were most generally esteemed. And, lastly, he gives the grounds of the Doctor's mistake. Of this book Mr. Altop gives the following character, "That it was fairly written, rationally argued, exactly methodized, and piously designed."

It was first published in March 1692, with an approbation annexed of several principal ministers in London. The second edition had a larger number of hands; and to the third, was added a postscript, for the clearing several truths and facts. He wrote his Defence of Gospel Truth, in answer to Dr. Chauncy, who first attacked him with great heat. This answer was allowed by the best judges, and some who were not of his opinion, to be writ with great strength of judgment, and with a christian temper. The point of the gospel's being the law of Christ, is nervously argued and supported. Some time after,

* A Faithful Rebuke, &c.
after, he wrote his Man made righteous, upon the subject of Justification, in which he had a particular sentiment peculiar to himself; with a large Appendix, in answer to Mr. Mather. This was written with a great compass of thought, and with great vigour and force. There was some debate between him and Mr. Stephen Lob, who had charged his Gospel Truth with favouring Socinianism. This occasioned an Appeal on both sides, to Dr. Stillingfleet, then Bishop of Worcester, and to Dr. Jonathan Edwards of Oxford, who had written with great learning, and were esteemed great masters of that controversy. They both honourably acquitted him of the charge, with many expressions of great respect to him. This debate was closed with a small tract entitled An End to Discord; in which he distinctly states the opinion of the Orthodox, the Socinian, and the Antinomian, about Christ's satisfaction. He disclaims the Socinian notion; and afterwards drew out a Renunciation of Antinomian errors, from several principal congregational ministers. Tho' this controversy drew a great deal of trouble and opposition upon him, he had the satisfaction to see his labours give a mighty check to the spreading of Dr. Crisp's opinions; and cheerfully submitted to the disposal of providence, which allots to every man his work and his treatment.*

* See a further account of this Controversy in Mr. Nelson's Life of Bishop Bull.
It cannot be denied but he had hard measure from some violent spirits of those times. There was a terrible assault upon his reputation with respect to his Morals. Some were for strictly canvassing his conduct and behaviour, in all places where he had lived, even from his younger years. Hereupon he threw himself upon the body of the dissenting ministers, in and about the city, who chose a committee on purpose to hear any thing which could be alleged against him, and what he had to offer in his own vindication. The committee took a great deal of pains, heard all pretensions, and spent about eight weeks in the affair, and then made their report to the body of the ministers, who were expressly summoned for this purpose, April 8, 1695, and met to the number of sixty. They declared, "That 'tis the unanimous opinion of the united ministers, upon the report brought in by the committee, and the further account of those of the committee present, that Mr. Williams is entirely clear and innocent of all that was laid to his charge".

Tho' great prejudices were raised against him in the minds of many, by the violence of this prosecution, yet his own Congregation stood firm by him thro' the whole course of this trouble, and he had many hearty friends all over the city, who pitied and prayed for him, and did all they could to assist and comfort

* See a more particular Relation of this matter in the Postscript to the third Edition of Gospel Truth.
fort him, while the malice of his adversaries was so violent and impetuous. It was observed by many that God gave him that calmness and sedateness beyond his natural temper, and that presence of mind under all the injury and provocation of this eager prosecution, as redounded greatly to his honour, and effectually defeated the designs of his enemies against him. He lived to see the minds of many softened who were most incensed against him; and to convince not a few of their mistakes in the doctrines contended for, and in their opinion concerning himself. This affair in all its circumstances, was as remarkable an instance, in its kind, as perhaps the age produced, of the violence of a party spirit, and how far an intemperate zeal for a favourite opinion, will sometimes transport men beyond all the bounds of reason and prudence, and all the laws of religion and humanity too.

The Doctor's second marriage was in the year 1701. to Mrs. Jane, the widow of Mr. Francis Barckfhead; a lady of a considerable fortune and great worth *, whose father left a noble

* Mr. George Guill, Mrs. Williams's father, has left this memorandum under his own hand, in his Family Bible; "On Thursday, October 11. 1685. French style, "We set out from Tours, and came to Paris on Monday the 15th of the said month. On the 17th came out the king of France his declaration to drive out the Protestants, who had notice in Paris in four days, which falling out the 21st was just the day whereon our places in the waggon for Calais were retained; and the day before I was warned by letters from Tours, by several " friends,
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a noble estate at Tours in France for the sake of his religion. He lived with her about fifteen years with great satisfaction to himself, and an high value for her. She is yet surviving, and retains an high honour for Dr. Williams’s memory, and is waiting in hope for the heavenly felicity.

Tho’ he was a constant preacher, and diligently attended to the proper duties of his station, yet he was not so confined to the pulpit, or the study, as not to mind how the world went about him, or to be an unconcerned spectator of the treatment of the body of the dissenters, whose interest he had much at heart; or of the state of the nation with respect to religion and liberty. He was active to the utmost of his power in the reign of Queen Anne, when a bill was depending in parliament against occasional conformity. It gave him no small pleasure to find it twice thrown out; and when it was at last carried in the third attempt, and by the help of those very persons, who strenuously opposed it before; he could not help laying it to heart. This affected him so much the more, because he well knew

“friends, that upon false accusations I was sought out by the Intendant, and other magistrates; and that they had written to the Chancellour of France to send after me and arrest me: But it pleased God, that immediately after his signing and sealing the declaration for the open annulling the Edict of Nants, he fell sick and died, while we were on our journey. So I have extraordinary occasion to take notice of God’s providence towards me and mine in such eminent dangers, out of which he hath miraculously saved us”.
knew the dissenters deserved other sort of usage from those to whom they had upon occasion, done good service; and apprehended there was but little likelihood of any publick benefit, from such a step, especially in such a juncture: Nay he could easily foresee that the forward agents in that affair would themselves be despised by those they so officiously courted, at the expense of their friends, who had never deserted them in any critical exigence.

It was yet a greater trouble to him to find that in the year 1704, the most strenuous applications which could be made, could not prevail to prevent the imposing the sacramental test upon the dissenters in Ireland, who till that time had been free from it. It was inserted as a clause in a bill with the specious pretence of securing the Protestants of Ireland from the great numbers and infolence of the Papists there; which surely in all good sense was a strong reason the other way. The clause was added clandestinely, tho' it would be no difficult matter to tell by whom it was done; for the matter was concealed till the blow was given; and there was not the least suspicion of it till it was too late to prevent it. The bill being read in Ireland after it was returned from England, they must either take or lose the whole. But even this turned to the honour of the dissenters in the issue; for such was the posture of affairs some time after, in the reign of King George, that the Irish House of Commons
Some Account of the Commons thought fit to resolve nemine contradicente, "That such of his Majesty's Protestant dissenting subjects of this kingdom, who had taken commissions in the militia, or acted by commission of array, have there- by done reasonable service to his Majesty's person and government, and the Protestant interest in this kingdom." And, "That any person who shall maintain a prosecution against a dissenter, who has accepted, or shall accept of a commission in the array or militia, is an enemy to King George and the Protestant interest, and a friend to the pretender."

He was very much in his judgment for the Union with Scotland in 1707, being convinced that it was the most effectual way to secure the Protestant succession, and the continuance of their ecclesiastical establishment in North Britain, against the attempts of such who were bent to oppose it, or might be tempted to betray it. He recommended with great earnestness the forwarding of the union to his friends in Scotland; and greatly rejoiced when it was settled and ratified, and hoped the good effects of it would be both considerable and lasting.

In the year 1709, he had a diploma sent him from the university of Edinburgh and Glasgow, at the same time with Dr. Oldfield, and Dr. Calamy. This was an honour he no way affected, or desired, but as circumstances stood, he could not decently refuse
refuse it. He always shewed a great regard to the religious interests of that part of Great-Britain, and by his good-will would have had all who were designed for the ministry among the Dissenters, in South Britain, to have a part of their education at least, in one or other of their universities. He encouraged the drawing up a scheme, for that purpose, which could not be brought to perfection for want of a general concurrence.

In the latter end of the Queen's reign, he had very dark apprehensions of the state of affairs, and great fears about the Protestant Succession. He dealt freely about this matter with the great man who was then at the head of affairs †, with whom he had been long acquainted; and warned him of his own danger, whether he was engaged in those designs, or had kept himself out of them. If he was really engaged, he pressed him to consider, how dishonourable a thing it would be to have a hand in the misery and slavery of his country, and which would not fail in the issue to be ruinous to himself and his family. If he was not engaged himself in such a design, but aimed at shewing his art and dexterity in keeping things in a pendulous posture, that he might base the honour at last of turning the scale; he begged him to consider, what hazard he run, if things went a little further, of their rising to such an height as would be out of his power to retrieve; and

† Earl of Oxford.
of being over-ruled and born down by those with whom he was embarked. The freedom he took was not well relished; but he satisfied himself with discharging his conscience, and with his own good intentions.

Some time after he was served a scurvy trick by one whom he had endeavoured to oblige, and whom a small degree of honour and gratitude would have kept from so base and inhuman an action. The case was this: The Doctor was wrote to, with some earnestness, by his friends in Ireland, to communicate his thoughts to them, as to the posture of affairs at that time, and the designs and views of those at the helm. He drew up an answer with great frankness, and sent it into Ireland by a safe hand, only keeping a copy of it. He had this copy in his pocket when he waited upon a certain gentleman of the long robe, and pulling it out with a number of other papers, at his lodgings, he happened to leave it behind him, tho' he brought away all his other papers. The gentleman finding it contained a great many free thoughts concerning publick affairs, and some remarks on the great man before mentioned, thought he should merit his favour, if he communicated the letter to him, and accordingly went and left it with him. He was incensed to that degree against the Doctor, that he would never forgive him. The action was the baser, because the gentleman was under particular obligations to him, who had advanced a sum of money by way
way of loan, at a moderate interest, when his credit was sunk so low, that he was utterly at a loss to raise it any other way.

No man in the nation more heartily rejoiced at the blowing over the storm by the accession of King George to the British throne, and the taking place of the Protestant Succession; which he hoped would be a spring of many lasting blessings, not only to this land, but to the whole Protestant interest. On September 28, 1714, he presented an address to the King, at the head of the dissenting ministers of the several denominations in and about the city of London, congratulating his Majesty's peaceful accession to the throne, and his own and the Prince's safe arrival, which he owned to be the merciful return of many ardent prayers, &c.

SECT. II.

He was blest by nature with an unusual genius: He had a penetrating judgment, a copious invention, a faithful memory, and vigorous affections; these were cultivated by much thought, and diligent reading. His mind was capable of the closest application. When he was engaged in a debate, or to resolve a case of conscience, he would immediately fasten upon the main hinge on which the thing turned, take the argument in its full extent, represent it distinctly in all its different views, and with a quickness and force that
that few men were ever able to do. To this make of mind was added a strong and vigorous constitution of body, which continued with him till the infirmities of age grew upon him in the last years of life: the distemper which his friends apprehended might be peculiarly dangerous, from his natural make, who was janguiine and corpulent, viz. the small-pox, he escaped to the last.

As to his pulpit performances, tho' he never affected much politeness, yet he had a depth of thought, and compass of mind, which few polite men are capable of; and they had a great aptitude to answer the ends of preaching, and were very instructing and affecting at once. His subjects were always practical and weighty; his thoughts were solid and copious; he went over the whole compass of a subject, and took in an uncommon variety of what was pertinent to it. His manner of managing it was plain and scriptural, with an intermixture of the doctinal and applicatory parts, with great propriety and life. Light and heat were joined together in his discourses; and he seldom closed a sermon without a particular address to good and bad men, according to the tenor of the subject; or putting some close questions to them, which were peculiarly adapted to send them home in a serious frame. His success was remarkable as well as his labours, and he was owned of God to do abundance of good to the souls of men, to convert some from the error of their way.
way, to improve and confirm others, and to direct and comfort many. He preached for many years every Christmas-day to a vast audience of younger people, from various quarters of the town, and was the instrument of awakening and impressing the minds of great numbers, upon those occasions. I have known many who have spoken with great affection and pleasure, of the advantage of those opportunities, in their younger years. The vanity of Childhood and Youth, is a specimem of his judicious lively manner of preaching at those times, and his earnest pathetick pleading with men about the concerns of their souls. He was a constant preacher for about fifty years; and in a fit of sickness, seven years before his death, he said, That he had not been obliged wholly to omit preaching above five Lord's-days, from his first entrance into the ministry.

He was a great friend and encourager of young ministers: no man was a more candid bearer of their publick performances, or more glad of an opportunity to help them forward into usefulness; and yet no man was a more faithful friend by kind and necessary admonitions, when there was occasion for them. Nothing was more disagreeable and offensive to him, than conceit and rashness in younger persons; and he would often inculcate upon them the necessary disadvantage of inexperience.

He was remarkable for his courage and boldness in owning and defending the truth, which
which he thought of importance, whatsoever censure or opposition he might have reason to expect; and whatsoever he thought the present truth, or that branch of the Christian scheme, which was most struck at, in any particular juncture, in which he apprehended the honour of God, and the welfare of mens souls were concerned, he was always forward to appear in its defence. He argued strongly for the truth, without unkind or injurious insinuations of other men: He detested so mean an artifice.

He was great in prudence, and had a head admirably turned for business, which was observed by many of the highest rank, and made him frequently consulted by many in matters of the greatest difficulty and importance. Sir Charles Wolefey who was a wise and learned Gentleman, and had been himself employed in publick affairs, declared, upon a conversation he had with him, in his journey to Ireland, that he was surpris'd at the compass of his knowledge of the interests of Europe, and the state of the nation; and that he seemed to him to talk like a privy counsellor. But he was always inflexibly honest, and abhorred any wisdom of the serpent, which could not consist with the innocence of the dove. He would never suffer himself to come into any court trick, or political doubling, nor could be affrighted or allured, into any measures contrary to the interest of his country: And quickly gave up an intimacy, or
or friendship with the greatest, when they ventured to make any such attempt upon him.

He governed himself steadily in all the stations he was called to, by the dictates of his conscience; and when he was determined in his own mind, he was immovable by any temporal considerations. He pursued what he thought right with a blunt integrity, and unshaken resolution: It was a little thing with him to be judged of man's judgment. And what was his own beloved character, viz. simplicity, and godly sincerity, did above all things recommend others to his esteem, though it was found in the meanest people, and attended with very weak abilities, or discerned in those of different sentiments from himself: He truly loved an honest man, in whom there was no guile, wherever he met him.

He had an unusual readiness to forgive his worst enemies; and few men had ever greater occasion to exercise it. He rejoiced in their welfare, sympathized with them in their afflictions; willingly did good offices for them afterward, and seldom or never cared to speak ill of them, or to hear others do it, without important reason for it. The testimony of his conscience gave him sufficient satisfaction. However free some people made with his reputation, he was conscientiously tender of that of others, especially of ministers; as knowing how nice a thing a good name
name is, and of what consequence to mens
service in the world.
It were well if such men would seriously
consider how much guilt they contract, and
what mischief they are doing, who take li-
berties with the characters of useful men,
without any proper call, or perhaps any suf-
ficient ground, whether it be from wanton-
ness, envy or spite, to prejudice the minds of
men against them, and weaken their influ-
ence and usefulness in the world.
Tho' he was a steady Nonconformist upon
principle, yet he had a charitable temper to-
wards the established church. This induced
him at the revolution to be very desirous of a
comprehension, on condition of a free tole-
ration to such dissenting Protestants as could
not be included. And tho' the temper of the
prevailing part of the clergy at that time,
made him apprehend that little good was to
be expected that way; yet he often expressed
a firm persuasion, "That God would in time"
"bring all sober and moderate Protestants"
"nearer together, and find some way of je-
"perating them more entirely from the loose"
"and the violent."

His estate was chiefly used in doing good.
He exercised a frugality as to his own per-
son, possibly to an excess; but it was with
this design, that he might be more useful to
others: So he expresses himself in his last will;
"As for the estate with which God hath
blessed me, I have used it with moderation
"as
as to myself, that I might be the more useful to others, both in life, and after my death. And accordingly the blessing of many who were ready to perish came upon him. Besides, a number of ministers and students, who were in necessitous circumstances, received frequent and liberal exhibitions from him. Though he was naturally of a provident temper, and might not go so far as some others, upon a mere principle of generosity; yet where a sense of duty, or prospect of service, called him, he would distribute freely, and was ready to any good work. There were no small sums of money which he lost among some to whom he charitably lent them, for their support and assistance, upon the apprehension of their good character, or the hopes of promoting some useful design.

He had an extensive care for the interest of Christ in all parts, and was ready with his advice, and purse, and influence to give his assistance for its support in remote quarters. Not only England, but Scotland and Ireland, and the American colonies, had a large share in his concern; so that it might be applied to him as truly as to most ordinary ministers, that he had upon him the care of all the churches.

He continued in the exercise of his ministry to the end of his days, tho' his strength visibly declined the last two or three years of his life, and he gradually decayed by the growing infirmities of age, till he sunk under the
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the weight of them. After a short confinement by an asthmatick disorder, with a firm and steadfast faith and hope, he committed himself to God, and fell asleep in Jesus, January 26, 1715-6. in the 73d year of his age. He was interred in a new vault of his own in the burying-ground near Bunhill-fields. His Funeral Sermon was preached by Dr. Evans, who had been eleven years his fellow-labourer, and afterwards his successor. The Epitaph upon his tomb-stone was drawn up by a learned and skilful hand.
Life of Dr. Williams.

M. S.

DANIELIS WILLIAMS S. T. P.

wrexamiac in comitatu denbigensi
inter cambro-britannos nati

qvi a primis annis
pietate aeqve ac bonis literis feliciter imbvtvs
divini verbi praeconis mvnvs admodvm ivvenis
in mvlts angliac partibvs non fine lavde peregit
dem apvd hibernos praecipve eblaneae
vbi media aetate confvmptra magnvm fvi desiderivm
inter omnes reformatae fidei cvltores reliqvit
tandem pontificia tyrannide londinum fe conferre coactus
magna ibi celebritate fame per mvlts annos
ad mortem vsqve florvit

vir amplissima mente
in qvo acvttissimvm ingenivm cvm ivdicio svbaetissimo
qvod pavcis contigit conivmctvm videbatvr

in omnibus theologiae
partibvs si qvisqvim alivs versatissimvs
concionator vehemens idem et acer gravis et copiosvs
affidvvs et felix ad docendvm probandum permovendvm
provt res povlvlabat aeqve accommodatvs
pastor dbivm peritior an vigilantior
ad christianam fidem promovendam opera re gratia
non in patria solvm fed etiam apvd externos
femper paratissimvs

ad consilia fve danda
fve exeqvenda pariter instruettissimvs
idemqve in ardivs atqve difficillimis rebris tvm publicis
tvm privatis peragendis non minori prvdentia
et diligentia qvam integritate confpicvvs

in omnes caritate
atqve candore animi singulari
fibi in re amplissima parcvs in alios vero pavpers
praecipve ac rem publicam vt femper alias
ita testamento mvnsicentissimvs

deniqv omnis virtvts
qvantvm mortalivm capitim conditio
dvm vixit fvdiosissimvs eorvm qvae illa non admittit
annis iam et lavde plenvs in coelestvi coev
particps factus vii. kal. feb.

anno
aetatis svae lxxii. christi mdccxvi.
As he had spent much of his life in benefactions, as God had prosper'd him, so it was plain he designed the same at his death. He consigned the body of his estate to the greatest variety of excellent charities, for the glory of God, and the good of mankind, which will be easily met me, in the designs of any one man. Besides the settlement to his wife, and legacies to his relations and friends, he left a donation to the society for Reformation of manners; for the education of youth in Dublin, and for an itinerant preacher to the native Irish; to the poor in Woodstreet congregation, and in that in Hand-Ally, where he had been successively minister; to the French Refugees; to the poor of Shoreditch parish, where he dwelt; to several ministers' widows; to St. Thomas's Hospital, and the London Workhouse; to the college of Glasgow; to the society of Scotland for propagating christian knowledge; to the society for New-England, to support two persons to preach to the Indians; to the maintaining of Charity-Schools in Wales, and the support of students. He ordered a publick library to be purchased or erected, to which he left his own books, and Dr. Bates's curious collection, which he bought for that purpose. It is now erected in Redcross-street without Cripplegate; and has had considerable additions made to it since by several legacies, and gifts of money and books. He has ordered his sermons to be collected together, and that the following tracts, Gospel Truth,
Truth, Man made righteous, Answer to the Report, End to Discord, and Ministerial Office; should be turned into Latin for the use of foreigners: And that the Vanity of Childhood and Youth, should be translated into Welsh for the use of the schools, and printed oftener for the benefit of the poor. He closes his will by this awful and solemn clause: "I beseech the blessed God, for Christ's sake, the head of his church, whose "I am, and whom I desire to serve, that "this my will may, by his blessing and power, "reach its end, and may be faithfully executed: Obtesting in the name of this great "and righteous God, all who shall be concerned, that what I design for his glory, "and the good of mankind, may be honestly, "prudently, and diligently employed to those "ends, as I have, to the best of my judgment, directed by this my last testament."

* A more particular account of his will may be found in Dr. Calamy's Continuation, &c. Vol. II. p. 983.
Tracts and Sermons not contained in this Collection.

Gospel Truth stated and vindicated, 1691. 8vo.

A Defence of Gospel Truth, 1693. 4to.
An Answer to the Report, 1698. 8vo.
An End to Discord. 1699. 8vo.

A Letter to the Author of Freethinking, 1713. 8vo.

Some Queries relating to the Bill for preventing the Growth of Popery. A Half-Sheet. Folio.

The Vanity of Childhood and Youth, 1691. 8vo.

Man made righteous by Christ's Obedience, 1694. 8vo.

The Ministerial Office: Two Sermons at the Ordination of Dr. Gravener, and Dr. Wright, 1708. 8vo.
THE CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

1. THE Kingdom of God in Power: A Sermon before the Lord-Mayor, Nov. 20. 1687.


5. The Excellency of a publick Spirit: A Funeral Sermon for Dr. Annesly, 1696.

6. A Sermon
6. A Sermon preached at Salters-Hall to the Societies for Reformation of Manners, May 16, 1698.
The Kingdom of God in Power.

A

SERMON

BEFORE THE

LORD-MAYOR,

Nov. 20. 1687.
To the Right Honourable

Sir John Shorter, Knt.
LORD-MAYOR
OF THE
CITY of LONDON.

HEN your Lordship desired me to preach before you, the improvement of it to the greatest usefulness was my concern. To this end it was needful to fix on subjects suitable to an auditory so promiscuous; none occurred to me so conducive to my purpose as this; which led me to deal with all men in things most important to their eternal condition, and yet to mind your Lordship and brethren of somewhat referring to your present office.

The
Epistle Dedicatory.

The second subject I preached on, was pursuant to this, viz. The dedication of our lives to Christ and his interests, from Phil. i. 21.

After I had preached the second time, I was surprised with a request of your Lordship's and some of the Aldermen to publish both these discourses; but there wanted not many reasons which prevented any design of compliance with that desire, tho' enforced by your undeserved respects to one so much a stranger.

But finding some few days past, that after all my care to obviate any such surmises, some passages in that second sermon are misrepresented, as irritating of the church of England; I am inclined to publish very soon that second discourse, if I may prevent or remove any such offences, which are now at least more fatal than any imprudent propagators thereof do apprehend.

Being thus disposed to publish the last, I am obedient to your Lordship's
ship's repeated intreaties in sending out the first sermon in its order.

Tho' two days being all the time I had to prepare either of these discourses, and absence from my library limiting me to the use of no book besides the bible, are my just apology for some defects in them; yet I must say, that I have delivered nothing but what I believe to be the will of God: and had my helps or abilities been more considerable, I would not debase matters of so great concernment, by vain sallies of wit, nor deaden their common use by laborious periods, or a lighter stile. The institutions of God have their proper decency, and are best managed by a tendency to spiritual ends, and general edification.

The substance of the account of the nature of the kingdom of God, I give in scripture-words; tho' chiefly for greater conviction, yet also that none may arraign it as cant, without ridiculing the divine oracles, which surely
Epistle Dedicatory.

surely must command dread in all who esteem themselves by a christian name.

I believe your Lordship, in calling us Nonconformists to preach before you, and we in undertaking that labour, can have no turn to serve besides the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, and the revival of the power of godliness, so much degenerated into formality among all parties. We value capacious places no otherwise than as an opportunity for this; and now we enjoy such, we desire no attempts for more splendid ones, to the offence of any.

Perhaps your Lordship may share in our wonder at the silly descants of some on our persons and performances in this liberty: We must needs be tradesmen, because we have preached so long without publick salary; Our sermons are cant, because we use scripture-expressions, tho' in their proper sense: We are enthusiasm-
Epistle Dedicatory.

tick, if we say any thing of heart-work, or the Spirit's influence: We do nothing but whine, and make faces, if we appear in the least moved by what we say, and believe, or seem concerned to prevail with our hearers: We do ill to preach now we do not suffer by it; tho' they know we thought it our duty when we paid so dear for it. Or at best, that contingent events should supersede our labours, as a prudential act; when we are under a solemn dedication to the work of Christ as ministers; and our labours to bring the souls of men under the power of truth, will prove the best security to the profession of it; when great offers, and awakening fears, will trample on the clear-est notions of an unregenerate heart. But I enlarge too far.

Your Lordship's acting the part of a christian magistrate, is recompence for whatever censures you undergo; the world is not yet of the temper to speak well of all that do
well; and Christ exempts not the usefulest from hardships on this lower stage. Peace of conscience in having performed our duty, and the testimony of Christ to our faithfulness in the great judgment, is all the comfort a christian can now be sure of, and what be ought to be contented with.

There are many prayers sent to the throne of grace for your Lordship, that you may want neither wisdom nor steadiness in a place so eminent, and circumstances so perplexing. That promise (which hath somewhat of a rule in it) is applicable to you. The integrity of the upright shall guide them.

That you may find this accomplished to publick conviction, and a comfortable event of your present employ, is the unfeigned desire of,

Your Lordship's most humble Servant,

Daniel Williams.
For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

He, not only vindicates himself, but threateneth an enquiry into these plausible pretences of theirs; resolving, on that enquiry, to determine whether that extraordinary profession was expressive of the power of godliness, or only a dead image; and whether the improved doctrines they boasted of, were the great essential truths of the gospel, and those delivered in a manner conducive to the advancement of God's kingdom. This is the sense of ver. 19.
All this noise may be without any substance; the power of religion lies in somewhat above these pretences; the kingdom of God, which is the only valuable concern, consists not in externals, but in the power of religion; and it is most suspicious that these censorious pretenders (who obstruct my ministry) are little sharers in, or friends to the kingdom of God, after all this fair shew in the flesh.

On these accounts the apostle's search, in order to a judgment of these men's profession and doctrines, was justifiable and necessary; and his practice, with the reason of it, calls all christians, tho' not to busy or uncharitable surmises, yet to a prudent examination of men that deal with them in the concernment of their souls: and more especially if they challenge the graces and truths we have received, and pretend to outdo and blast the labours of such we have profited by, as if none but they could be instruments of conferring grace, or investing us in the privileges of the church.

This examination is frequently enjoined, 1 John iv. 1. 1 Thess. v. 21. God hath given us a rule to judge of men and doctrines by, and some degree of abilities to judge of them by that rule.
It is true, Paul, as an inspired person, had an extraordinary spirit of discerning, which ordinary christians cannot pretend to. Nevertheless God hath appointed private christians to try all doctrines by the scriptures, Acts xvii. 11, and directed our judgment of men by their fruits, Matt. vii. 16, 20. As men, we are not utterly incapable to compare and judge of these; as believers, there is an additional fitness for it by the life and anointing they have received. This spiritual life is not so void of sensation, but that the ears can try words; and God's promise is a security, that the anointing shall prevent their finally erring in fundamental truths, 1 John ii. 27.

These things must excuse any christian from blindly giving up his faith, or hope, to such who can most daringly pretend to dominion over them. He ought to plead a judgment of discretion as his right, in what concerns his own faith and practice. And tho' some (whose designs are thereby justly suspected) decry this private judgment, let not us be discouraged from the use of it: For it is a more publick judgment, if true, than the mistaken sense of a whole council: It is what distinguisheth us from brutes in our deliberate acts; yea, they that condemn it, are forced to use this private judgment in the choice of their church and guides.
The Kingdom of God in Power.

But I shall wave any further regard to the connection of the text with the rest of the chapter, and improve it as a rule; to judge our own state by, under this plain position,

Doct. The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

With what concern ought we to attend to a truth which is designed to discriminate the very professors of Christianity; and which implies, that many such professors are deceived in their chief concerns in religion, as being content without that power wherein the kingdom of God consisteth? Yet what is more usual with fallen man, than to debase religion to what his own lusts and fancy will prescribe? He is scarce persuadable that God will exact more from him than a carnal idle spirit is disposed to allow. We are content that some external homage be paid to the Almighty; and that some slight attempts and attainments are intended; but we confine our religious endeavours within those limits, not regarding that real godliness consists chiefly in such dispositions and acts as express the supreme interest of God in the soul, and the effectual energy of his grace and power in a renewed mind.

The text tends to awaken deep convictions in you, that God hath not admitted vain man into the consult about the nature
The Kingdom of God in Power.

or standard of his kingdom; nor will he model the statutes of it according to a sinner's judgment and hopes: But whether they will be his subjects, or continue their rebellion, his kingdom truly is, and will shortly appear to be, not in word, but in power.

S E C T. I.

I shall give you, 1. Some account of what is intended by the kingdom of God. 2. I shall under the same heads explain, how it is not in word, but in power; and evidence the truth of the doctrine.

I BEGIN with some account of the kingdom of God. This hath various acceptations in scripture, and denotes several things more than is designed by this kingdom in my text. As,

1. God's providential government over all things.

>This is that kingdom which ruleth over all. He hath not so left the creatures to their own conduct, but that he secureth his blessed ends by his management of them. This is that dominion, to be subject to which no man's consent is asked; to which all are obedient against their repugnant inclinations and deepest contrivance. Sinners in their utmost neglects of the revealed will of God, yea, in their most notorious violations of them, are subject

Psal. ciii. 19.
Serm. subject to this providence, and serve its purposes: Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder thereof thou shalt restrain. By this kingdom's influence it is, that blessed effects do oft proceed from dismal causes; and what seems very destructive, doth contribute to the best event. We may well say of this kingdom, it is in power, it being the irresistible execution of what the divine will hath decreed; yea, is the effective will of the supreme disposer of all things.

2. The glorious state, rewards, and privileges of God's subjects in the highest heavens: That's the kingdom of glory, and compleats the things begun in this kingdom of grace. There God ruleth, and is obeyed in a manner incomprehensible to us: We shall be subjects, and yet kings.

Rev. i. 6. We must always pay our homage, but in princely robes. Bodies and souls will bear an amazing resemblance of Christ our head. And tho' the divine essence, whose glory all the mediatorial contrivances of Christ's kingdom referred to, will be all in all; yet we shall behold in the human nature of Christ, as great manifestations of God as men or angels were capable of.

The divine glory shineth in the face of Christ above all other things; and he seemeth designed to be a mediator of fruition, for the improvement of the glory of angels, as well as the other glorified subjects...
subjects of that kingdom. The glory of God doth lighten that heavenly city, and the lamb is the light thereof. By all our present improvements, we labour for, and hasten to that kingdom; and therein terminate all the blessed methods we are under in this our lower state.

But the kingdom of God, which my text refers to, is the moral government of God among men on earth, especially as he is King Redeemer, in and by the Lord Jesus.

There are three things belonging to this kingdom, which are severally called by this same term, the kingdom of God, and each of them may well be intended by the Holy Ghost in my text.

I. The gospel, which containeth the laws, institutions, and charter of this kingdom.

II. The graces and actings which qualify men as subjects of this kingdom, and express God's authority over them, and their loyalty to him.

III. All true believers, who are the real subjects that make up this kingdom.

I might insist on some other things, but these will be of greatest use to us, and are principally intended.

I, The
The Kingdom of God in Power.

I. The kingdom of God is the gospel, which containeth the laws, institutions, and charter of our King Redeemer.

So it is taken, Matt. xxi. 43. The kingdom of God shall be taken from you; that is, the gospel. But when I use the word gospel, I do not mean the gospel in opposition to the Mosaic dispensation, as it is oft used. The gospel administration, in this sense, is often called, in the evangelists, the kingdom of heaven, as being a fairer, more full, and powerful edition of the institutes of this kingdom, than was published before; tho' yet the kingdom commenced, and had its essential laws and rules long before Christ's coming. But I mean the gospel as a law of grace, in opposition to the law of works delivered to man in his innocent state.

To direct your conceptions in this important truth, you must consider, 1. That God had, and exercised a supreme authority over men, as he was their creator; he enacted laws, for our observance, well-becoming his nature to injoin, and our condition to obey. For some time we continued loyal in Adam, our common head; but, by his fall, mankind became rebellious against God; and, by the penal sanction of the law of works, and the rule fixed for man's propagating his condition with his nature, we lost our original power to obey, and forfeited our right to all that good
good which was promised to perfect obedience; yea, are exposed to the utmost misery in that curse denounced against the least sin. This is the condition of all men as related to God as our creator; though he has lost nothing of his right to command, or punish his rebellious creatures.

How justly might our injured Lord have confined our state to these methods? Who might complain, if God had finally executed that judgment which past on all men unto condemnation? The irremediable state of devils, on their rebellion, may awaken mankind to ascribe all new overtures for happiness to the riches of the grace of God: yea, every part of that curse which exerts itself by any degree of misery in soul or body, should convince us that it is of mere mercy we are not bound in chains to the judgment of the great day.

2. Immediately after the fall, God erected a new kingdom in and by Christ as Redeemer. In the curse denounced against the serpent, he opened a door of grace to sinful man. He treats with us in order to our recovery, and resolved eventually to save the elect; yet this was to be in no other way, but by becoming subject to the rules of this new kingdom. This kingdom is owing to Christ as the procuring cause; and the management thereof was deputed to him. He ma-
SERM. naged it in a variety of successive admin- 

istrations; as lawgiver he enacted terms 
of life, rules of practice, directions for 
worship and discipline among his subjects. 
He published blessed promises, and de- 
nounced threats against the unpersuade- 
able.

No man was ever saved but by the 

rules of this new kingdom, and owes it 
to the grace and merits of Christ; tho' 
every dispensation did not give equal no-
tices of him, or that explicate knowledge 
of God-man Redeemer, notwithstanding 
that sacrifices pointed to him, and sundry 
prophetick revelations foretold him.

3. All mankind are under all the laws 
of this kingdom, as far as they can attain 
to the knowledge of them.

They are obliged to obey the terms of 

life, which are enjoined by the Redeemer 
in their respective age and place. Life is 
offered to them, and they are saveable on 
those terms. Sinners now act a new re-
bellion, as well as bind the first curse on 
themselves, when they refuse obedience to 
the remedial law. Yea, they aggravate 
their ruin by their wilful obstinacy, which 
is a great part of the undoing impotency 
of mankind. Awful is that complaint of 
Christ, wherein he leaves the blood of lost 
man on their own heads: Ye will not 
come to me, that ye may have life. Refu-
sers of Christ add to their rebellion against 
the

John. v. 40.
The Kingdom of God in Power.

the Creator, most notorious disloyalty Serm. against the Redeemer, who hath an ad-

ditional claim to dominion over us: For, \( \text{I.} \)

We are bought with a price, and therefore \( \text{I Cor. vi.} \)

should glorify him with our bodies, and our

souls, which are his. And he had a re-

spect to this new-acquired authority in his
death; for, to this end he died, and rose \( \text{Rom. xiv.} \)

again, that he might be Lord both of the

dead and of the living.

All of us are further engaged to ob-

serve all the laws of his house, the rules

of worship and practice, yea, every insti-
tution of his. There is an amazing so-

vereignty in the different promulgation of

these to the world: But to give my sense

thereof, would exceed the limits of one

discourse.

II. The kingdom of God denotes the

graces and actings which qualify men as

subjects of God’s kingdom, and express

God’s authority over them, and their loy-

alty to him. Thus you must understand

that scripture, The kingdom of God is not \( \text{Rom. xiv.} \)
in meat and drink, but in righteousness and

peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; q. d.

the dominion of God over christians, and

their loyal state of obedience to God,

lieth not in your poor differences about

meat, or such low matters. Therefore

judge not others, who may differ from

you; nor be you satisfied with your own

usages
Serm. usages in these less momentous things, as an evidence of your christian state: God's kingdom is in far higher matters, even in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. How can any man, after so plain a signification of the divine will, place all his religion in trifles, or sacrifice the undoubted concerns of God's kingdom, to disputable things of far less moment? Peace alone, by this text, is more valuable than all the things for which some have long divided the church. This is the kingdom of God as erected in the heart, and is inclusive of whatever denotes sincere subjection to Christ. To this belongs every grace which is essential to a real christian, and all those acts which are necessary to express the prevalency of such graces over all opposite vices and defects.

This kingdom is advanced to the degrees of men's improvement in the divine life, and the dominion of God over their designs and actions.

III. The kingdom of God is used for all true believers; who are the real subjects that make up this kingdom. These are they, in whom the former graces abide, and do acknowledge the authority of the Lord Redeemer: They are all translated into the kingdom of Christ. By their consent to the terms of the gospel, they who were
The Kingdom of God in Power.

were aliens, are naturalized; and the out-

lawry is reversed which stood against them as rebellious subjects. This kingdom is of the same extent with the church mystical; and as these subjects multiply, it is enlarged.

It's true, that all who credibly profess subscription to Christ, are parts of this kingdom, as it is visible and external; they are subjects in the judgment of charity, and as to external privileges. This Christ asserts in that parable, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which when it was full, they drew to shore; and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. You see that hypocrites and sincere believers are of the kingdom; but hypocrites belong to it, as they wear the visage of the sincere; and therefore the name of subjects belongs to them only equivocally; whereas, in the most proper sense, it is confined to men heartily devoted to Christ. He is eminently King of saints, even of such who have unfeignedly subscribed his covenant, Psal. 1. 5. All such are esteemed by him for his people; and they, yea, only they, can say concerning God, The Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us.

I can hardly forbear to bewail the dangerous condition of many men professing christianity: Crowds will be found rebels in
The Kingdom of God in Power.

Serm. in heart, dead as to a spiritual life, whilst they have a name to live; and obeying their lusts, when they bow the knee to Jesus.

Having finished this account of the kingdom of God, I proceed to explain how it is not in word, but in power: And with the explication I will insert the proof of the doctrine, That the kingdom of God, in the three fore-mentioned instances, is not in word, but in power.

Whatever mens conceits be of this kingdom, it will be found to consist not in weak appearances, but in effectual realities. It attaineth the ends of the constitution; it is expressive of a divine and supernatural virtue, and is not a dead image, and carnal matter.

1. The gospel of Christ our Redeemer is effectual, by the Spirit, to recover fallen men, and to govern and improve them unto eternal life.

This is not an empty sound, it consists not in low or weak matters, but is life and power: Every command is enstamped with the authority of the Lord of heaven and earth, and is not the faint advice of poor mortals. Men disobey them at their utmost peril: Life and death is annexed to them by a sovereign, who is able, and resolved, to execute his royal sanction. They have a virtue in them to dispose us
us to obedience, and are holy, spiritual, and perfect.

The matters revealed by the gospel are not vain conceits, but glorious realities; they are beyond the light of nature to conceive; they shine in a light fit to illuminate the darkened minds of sinners; and when they are apprehended, they must inspire with the highest resentments, and make lasting impressions on the soul.

The promises are not doubtful words, but great and sure; they contain all that is good; they are founded on the veracity of God, who cannot lie; and on the virtue of Christ's undertakings and death, which cannot be disappointed. Yea, they are mighty to dispense the grace contained therein to needy souls, and are the effectual instrument to invest men in all the blessings of the covenant, when the condition is performed by them.

The sacraments, and all institutions of Christ as to worship or discipline, are powerful to improve our graces, mortify our lusts, maintain our converses with God, and dispense joy and comfort through the operation of God by them.

The arguments urged by the gospel, are fit to move, and have all in them necessary to an instrument of moral government.

The presence of God is promised, and the efficacy of all these means argue the Spirit's
The Kingdom of God in Power.

Serm. Spirit's operation by them; they are the vehicle of the Holy Ghost; and therefore when we are profitable to the souls of men, our gospel cometh to them not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost.

This gospel is called the arm of God revealed, the scepter of his kingdom, and rod of his strength. This affords those weapons which are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, and bringing every thought to the obedience of Christ. God hath appointed it to raise dead souls, and subdue rebellious sinners to his government. In the institutions of the gospel God meets us, and blesseth us; he communicateth light and strength, whereby the weak christian is enabled to persevere.

What trophies of its power are in heaven and earth? How many great sinners hath it changed? Every age and place where it cometh, yield a testimony of its energy; restraining some, turning others from idols, to serve the living God; from a carnal life to a spiritual. This hath made the ambitious and covetous to postpone all to the concerns of an invisible world, and sacrifice their former idols to the profession of truth.

How many weak christians hath it strengthened to do, and suffer, unexpected things? What joy hath it infused into fadned hearts? On these accounts the
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Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.

2. The graces and actings which qualify the subjects of Christ, are so spiritual, real, and sublime, as to argue a divine life, and the dominion of God in the soul.

What this kingdom requireth and effecteth, are not bare pretences, weak attempts, flight attainments, or external performances; these are too mean for God to injoin or accept.

He doth not paint a dead carcasse, but raise it to life; he createth a new heart, wherein his laws are prevalent dispositions, and communicateth a nature too divine to derive its birth from a lower original than regeneration by the Spirit.

Hence all real christians are said to be born of God, and partakers of the divine nature. Our crying, Lord, Lord, and all external alterations, signify little in this new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness. I will hint at some particulars which have the chief place in this kingdom, and you'll see that none of them is in word, but in power.

Faith is not a faint assent to the truths of the gospel, but such a realizing of invisible objects, reliance on Christ, and consent to him the Redeemer, as purifieth the heart, worketh by love, and derives from Christ fit supports in the way of truth and holiness to eternal life.
Gospel repentance is not a bare sorrow for sin, but a true hatred and forsaking of sin on gospel motives.

Our love to God is not in a few kind or sleight thoughts of God, but a prevalent esteem of God, and delight in him, as the supreme good; and this expressing itself in sincere obedience to his strictest laws, and zeal for his interests when most despised. If a man love me, faith Christ, he will keep my words. If we love any thing equal to him, it is a hating of him by the rules of this kingdom.

The worship which Christ insisteth on, and disposeth all his subjects for, is in spirit and in truth; it is no sleight performance, nor by human inventions. Prayer must be a fervent pouring out of the soul to God, and not lip-labour. Hearing the word is of no esteem with him, unless the heart be obedient to the word, Jam. i. 25.

Baptism is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God: that is, baptism lies in the soul's true correspondence to, and performance of our baptismal profession and vows, and not a mere sprinkling of water in an external act of the minister.

Receiving the Lord's-supper is not the bare partaking of the consecrated elements; but communion with our crucified Christ, by faith and love, under the quicknings of the Spirit. We see that chiefly
chiefly regardeth the inward worship of the soul, and not bodily performances.

The same power extends to every thing, wherein religion is concerned. If this kingdom of grace obtaineth in the soul, God's authority is set above our wills, humours, and lufts; Satan is dethroned; sin hath no dominion over us; spiritual things are relished above sensitive good; we are brought to live to God, and not to carnal self; and there is an impartial respect to all God's commandments.

To finish this particular, this kingdom consists of holy inclinations in the heart, and implies a degree of strength to act those inclinations. Here are not faint vel-]

dities, and uneffectual desires or complaints; but a spirit of power, of love, and a sound mind, whereby temptations are in a good measure resisted, and holy actions performed.

This is the model of the kingdom, this his gospel enjoineth, this his grace effecteth, and any thing below it would not improve a sinner to the holiness our Redeemer designed reconciled sinners to. God's kingdom never hath place, where any of these essentials are wanting, or where there is only some dead form of them.

3. Believers who are the subjects of God's kingdom, are not mere professo-}
sors of christianity, but truly regenerate and practical christians.

They
SERM. They are of another spirit than what they once were, or the rest of the world continue yet to be; their extraction is higher, being born not of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of the will of God. They have far different apprehensions of spiritual objects than a carnal mind is capable of. These practically know the great things of God in a spiritual evidence, being taught by him as the truth is in Jesus. They are a people made willing in the day of God's power. Then a mighty arm subdued their obstinacy without violence, silenced their prejudices, and made them obedient by agreeable inclinations to the law, and powerful convictions of God's authority and goodness. Their religion is not in empty speculations. As every truth tends to practice, so they feel the power of truth. The objective glory of Christ transformeth them into the same glory, in their measure. They walk with God, whom the world knows not; they live above what sinners doat on; to please and honour God is their governing aim; to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and men, is their exercise; and working out their salvation is their chief business; while, as pilgrims here, they are waiting for the expected inheritance: These live the life of Christ, are acted by his Spirit, which dwells in them by an abiding relation, and are appointed for his glorious purposes.
The Kingdom of God in Power.

They are not hypocritical pretenders, tho' censured as cheats by such men whose corruptions represent all better pretences as hypocrisy. How much do the conceptions, designs, experiences, attainments and actings of these men exceed the rest of mankind? There is more piety in many of their common actions, than in the religious performances of others. These are they whom the apostle describes as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, fit and design'd to show forth the praises of him, who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Can any of you doubt these express characters of all sincere christians? Of these, and only these, Christ's kingdom doth consist. There are such persons in the world, or God hath no kingdom in it. Such as are wholly otherwise in their temper and actings, are rebels and aliens in God's esteem, and declared incapable of eternal glory.

Perhaps some of you may profanely scoff at this account, as if it were impossible to be thus sincere and spiritual; or it were needless to be thus pious, just, temperate, or heavenly-minded: but be it known to you, that you will shortly be convinced, yourselves ought to be such men; and passionately wish all this could have been truly said of you.

I have
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Serm. I. I have designedly given the character of the subjects of this kingdom in scripture-expressions, left any should esteem it a fancy, which they owe not that regard to, as to judge of themselves by it. But I hope you cannot shut your eye against the testimony of God, nor put any gloss on those scriptures which can prevent your suspecting your own condition. Must not you think now, how few are members of this kingdom? How unlike am I to these subjects of Christ, when I never found any of these things, nor proposed them to myself as things necessary to be attained by me? What a change must there be in my heart and life, before such a wretch can be meet to be partaker of the inheritance with the saints in light, as every real christian is?

Sect. II.

It remaineth that I apply more particularly such things as you have heard of the nature and power of this kingdom.

1. What you have heard of the gospel may direct us in our judgment of a gospel-ministry.

We ministers are appointed by Christ to persuade sinners both to yield submission to God Redeemer, and then to walk in all due loyalty towards him. All our administrations
nistrations must be managed by those laws which respect our office, otherwise we affront the Lord Jesus, in whose name we act, and become useless to men, for whose good we are designed.

The matter of our preaching ought to be the gospel, even the kingdom of God, and the things which concern our Lord Jesus Christ; the manner ought to be such as most conduceth to render it effectual to those ends for which it is published. Ministers are to do their utmost, that this gospel may come not in word only, but in power, and that all may be brought to a compliance with it.

Therefore we ought not to make state-affairs, human conceits or dictates of men, the matter of our preaching. The rules of the covenant of works, nor the law of nature as under a respect to that covenant, are not to be urged by us; tho' the law of nature, as a rule of our actions, is still of force in this kingdom of God Redeemer, and so must be insisted on.

The great things we ought to persuade, are the things God hath made the terms of life to redeemed man. The methods of reconciliation must be intended; for God now dealeth with men not only as his rational creatures, but as fallen sinners, under new overtures for life. Sinners must be directed by us to Christ, as
Serm. he on whose shoulders this new government is, and in whom there is grace, strength, and pardon, which our apostacy made impossible by the law of works.

The great doctrines of regeneration, repentance, faith in Christ, love of God, and sincere obedience (as explained by the gospel-standard) are the things to be urged as conditions of salvation. Should we mistake these terms of life, or neglect to persuade your compliance therewith, other things would be vain, and leave you dead in your sins. What profit is it that you learn and do all things else, if you submit not to the terms of the gospel? For this is the lowest rule of God's judgment by which the salvation of any sinner is possible: He will judge the secrets of all men by the gospel.

The manner also of a minister's preaching of these truths is considerable. We should publish these in the greatest evidence; and in a way most probable to be attended with the influence of the Spirit. Much of that divine power which persuades you, is exerted in fitting the preacher to plead with you. Ministers of the gospel are therefore to avoid the enticing words of man's wisdom, and must preach in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power. We must represent things in the greatest plainness, urge gospel-arguments with the fullest evidence and importunity, approving
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ing ourselves to every man's conscience to the utmost, for their conviction and persuasion. It is not unavailable to you, that the minister in all his work is under the power of what he preacheth, and doth all in a humble dependance on the blessing and power of the Holy Ghost.

This ministry answers the gospel description; this hath a tendency and fitness to subdue souls to Christ; this is that the Lord Jesus (who ordinarily works according to the aptitude of means) doth usually bless. Such a ministry is a sign that God intends the enlargement of his kingdom; and according to what appears of it among us, we may expect proportionable effects. The Lord bring the vain minds of hearers to approve this sort of preaching, and convince us ministers of all levity and mistakes in our ministration.

2. What you have heard of the nature of grace, and loyal actings towards Christ, may sharply reprove all such who seem by principle to place religion in any thing short of this power. Its needful they lock up the scriptures (those royal statutes of Christ) who dare place christianity in external rites, tho' the heart and life be unsanctified. Its disloyalty to Christ to exchange his institutions for human inventions: Yea, its disloyalty to exclude internal worship for external; and define graces and spiritual acts by no more than C a dead

Col. ii. 18, 19, 23.
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Serm. I. a dead image of them. How must they debase religion, who commend pomp for spiritual devotion, and make carnal observances serve instead of gospel faith and love? Surely they little regard the authority and constitutions of Christ, who account attrition to be repentance, and represent pilgrimages, confession, penance, and blind obedience to the church, &c. too like an atonement for the absence of the essential terms of life. What can more expressly contradict men's pleasing God by mere external acts or profession, than my text doth? But, alas! the doctrine of opus operatum is too natural to a dead sinner, to be confined within the walls where first avowed. All are too apt to throw off duties as a penance, and think the eternal Spirit is satisfied with bodily homage. Many judge that ordinances edify them as a mere charm, without any due exercise of soul in them. A mistake in this essential point, is the reason also why many jeer at the graces of God, promise life to a just and civil demeanour, and scoff at holiness as preciseness. The like effects of a carnal spirit is men's esteeming regeneration to be no more than external baptism, when that is but a visible representation of the nature of it, and a seal and instrument of investiture in gospel blessings, on supposition that we are inwardly regenerated. What a gross conceit is it, that conversion
is but a turning from a gross infidel's state, by a bare external profession of christianity, tho' the mind be still unrenewed, and the heart unimpressed by a divine principle? From these sentiments men ridicule all pretences to those things which the scriptures expressly declare concerning every believer, as praying in the Spirit, communion with God, union to Christ, spiritual joy, &c. tho' the things are intelligible by any that are judicious, and experienced by such as have any converse by faith with God and spiritual things. Its pity that a profane spirit should arraign the matters peculiar to a life so far above its self; especially when God hath told us, A natural man cannot know the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned. But whilst they must be foolishness to them, wisdom will be justified by its children, as better advocates and fitter judges.

Nevertheless the devil attains a destructive end by these notions; for his dominion is supported, and poor sinners are secure in a state of rebellion against Christ, whilst they flatter themselves as subjects to him, because they do a few trifles which neither Satan nor their lusts forbid, and custom, interest, or natural conscience persuade to. How will any soul among you, who stands guilty of this charge, dare to look the blessed Redeemer in the face? What terror will surprize you, when you are
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Serm. are accused by him as disloyal in your very principles, and asserters of that for religion whereby God's sovereignty over the heart is excluded, and all real actings of grace unprovided for? You have reproached that which God lays the greatest stress on, which his kingdom chiefly consists in, and his saints most value themselves by.

Before I proceed to the exhortations I design, its needful to insert two cautions that may obviate our abuse of this subject.

1st Caution. Do not deny this power of religion, concerning any person or party, without manifest grounds.

Charity binds you to think all are truly religious that profess to be so, unless their defects or works palpably blast their pretences, or their profession be nullified by a direct contradiction. As the power of religion should not be sacrificed to a ceremony, so lesser faults do not warrant us to accuse men as wanting the power of godliness. Whatever is consistent with the habitual subjection of a soul to Christ, cannot justify our excluding that soul out of Christ's kingdom. We may say, yea must affirm of men differing from us in many things, the same Christ is their Lord and ours. Peace and love are essentials in Christ's kingdom; and shall we challenge our own interest by being censorious; or enviously narrow the dominion of our blessed Redeemer?

2d Caution.
The Kingdom of God in Power: 37

2d Caution. Despise not the external Sermon institutions of Christ under pretence of this power; the power and spirit of Christ concur with his ordinances, and the life and vigour of our graces are exerted in those ordinances, and nourished by them.

That spirit is a delusion which puts men above divine appointments; and the guilty are as truly superstitious as the greatest formalist. Whilst we are subjects of Christ's kingdom here below, we must attend the ordinances of the lower state of this kingdom; and divine institutions are parts of this kingdom; which though it be not in word, so as to exclude the power, yet it lies in power as inclusive of a christian profession and external ordinances.

The next improvement I shall make of the text, is by way of exhortation; wherein I shall regard the kingdom of God, as the power thereof lies in graces, and acts expressive of a divine life, and the governing authority of God in the soul. This includes the two other particulars; for these are the effects of the power of the gospel, these answer the spiritual rules and demands of the gospel; and because of these the subjects of Christ's kingdom are not hypocrites, but truly regenerate, and practical christians.

1. Be thoroughly convinced that the kingdom of God is in these graces and vital acts, and can consist in nothing lower,
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Serm. lower. I have given you undoubted proof of this, if you will believe the gospel beyond your own fancy, or satan's suggestions. And whether you will enlarge your judgment to God's decision or no, the time is near when this great King will judge the secrets of your hearts and lives, by this very gospel rule.

Rom. ii. 16.

Its undoing to most professors of Christianity, that they fondly persuade themselves the demands of God are not so high and exact, as truly they are: Its true, indeed, he makes no legal perfection to be the condition of a right to life; but yet he injoins a spiritual life and faith, (extensively taken) in order to our interest in Christ, and to salvation on his account.

Methinks you can hardly, in a serious frame, conceive how any thing below real grace and vital acts should serve your turn. Consider the glorious nature of God, and can mere external performances be suitable to him, either to injoin or accept?

John iii. 36.

Would Christ have died to raise dead sinners to no more conformity to God than an unholy heart, and hypocritical actings, amount to? Are the designs of the gospel, and the attested influences of the Spirit, answer'd by a dead soul, or formal duty? Judge you whether an ungodly, stupid, graceless professor of Christianity, can, either here or in eternity, serve the purposes for which God erects this kingdom among men?
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men? What delight can his holy nature take in such? What service or glory can he and his Christ have by such? Yea, what satisfaction can such men have in God or heaven? These, and the like considerations, may well awaken you to juster apprehensions of this matter, and convince you that the kingdom of God must lie in this power. And if it be needful to add more, consider wherein can the kingdom of satan and dominion of sin consist, but in the want of these gracious qualities, neglect of those acts, and the prevalency of what is opposite to them?

Set therefore this standard before the eye of thy soul, as that which thou must examine thyself by, and be conformable to, if thou desirest to belong to this king-
of the Redeemer.

Labour industriously for, and rest not contented till you have attained, this power of religion.

I do, in the name of your Redeemer, press you to get the graces, and perform those acts which argue a spiritual life, and the restauration of God’s image and au-
thority in your souls. Be christians in truth as well as in name; let no external performance or profession content you; see that your wills be subject to God, that your lives be regulated by his laws, and all your religious acts inspired with a divine power. This is the principal mat-

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**The Kingdom of God in Power.**

SERM. ter. We are to treat of with you, and what you are chiefly concerned to attend to. To accomplish this, it is, that you are entrusted with the means of grace, and yet spared, after so long provoking obstinacy, which is more aggravated by your treacherous pretensions.

That I may enforce this exhortation, I shall desire you to apply to yourselves these few motives.

**Motive 1.** You pretend and *engage* to no less than this power of religion by your christianity. What you despise in others, and neglect in yourselves, even this you pretend to, and have solemnly promised. Do not you profess to be the subjects of Christ? Have not you renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil, and covenanted to fight under Christ's banner? And ought you not to be, and do all this truly? Renounce all these rivals with Christ, and he must then reign in power. Can you think that the covenant you have sealed so oft at the Lord's table, engageth you to no more than external profession? When you stipulated with Father, Son, and Spirit, was no more intended, than that you would pay them a slight bodily worship? Sure you profess as much sincere subjection as the strictest, in professing yourselves christians; and are not you hypocrites then, whilst your souls are unregenerate, and your lives not governed by the laws of Christ?
Christ? Oh! tremble to think that you profess to know, and yet in works deny him. Your hearts breathe rebellion against God, whilst you seem loyal to him. What agreeableness to thy name, doth a covetous, intemperate, carnal, irreligious spirit and life bear? Renounce the name, or else be and do what that name is designed for.

How sad will the thoughts of thy state be, when thou findest thyself branded by the heart-searching God, as one that hath a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. The word we render form, is ἰμορίω, q. d. they have the visage or appearance of true piety: thou wilt be found a virgin, without oil; at the feast, without a wedding-garment; the son that said to his father, I will work in the vineyard, but faileth to do so. Surely what induceth thee to profess to be a devout christian, should encline thee to be so.

2. Any thing short of this power of religion, will avail you nothing, but greatly damage you.

You are enemies in God's account, whatever you perform, and he will treat you as such when the time of retribution cometh. How wilt thou, Oh rebellious christian, endure that sentence? Bring these my enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, and slay them before me. What a loss wilt thou sustain, when thy gold becomes dross, when thy know-
knowledge, duties, yea, all thy religion, is vain? Oh! that so much should be attained in vain, and done to no purpose! You will find, that if your graces be not sincere, they will not save; yea, and if they partake not of this power, they are but gilded vices: Your feigned faith is but unbelief; your pretended love is enmity; your partial obedience is rebellion; and will God reward, nay, must not God severely punish, unbelieving, irreconcileable, rebellious professors of christianity, and give you a portion with the most profane? Nay, your guilt is aggravated, and your woes will be the greater. What profit will you reap by orthodox principles, while you are hypocrites in heart? Church-membership will expose to the forest rebukes; for if the children of the kingdom perish, they are cast into outer darkness.

At least pity yourselves. Why should you be at any pains, if you will not do enough to bring you to heaven? Can any thing on this side glory be the reward you intend by being religious? Why then will you not be so religious as to obtain that glory? Oh! mock God no longer, delude thy own soul no more; thou art almost a christian, be altogether so; or the convictions and helps that have almost persuaded thee, will aggravate thy ruin when thou fallest into hell, from a pitch so much
much higher than the Atheist and Pagan.

3. Very plausible appearances of religion may be without this power.

Men may appear sincere to others, yea, to themselves, and yet be hypocrites. There is a very probable form, without the power of godliness. Every living grace hath its dead image; thy heart may be hard when groans abound; thou mayest cry loud, and oft to God, and thy soul never pray; thy affections may be on earth, when thy eyes are lifted up to heaven. So inward is the life of grace, and so deceitful are our hearts, that we can say, of the seemingly greatest christians, but as Peter did of Silvanus, a faithful brother, as I suppose. (For the supposition may regard that, as well as the uncertainty of his being Peter's messenger:) Yea, we are so subject to deceive ourselves, that we have need to pray, with David, Lord, search me, and try me.

Alas! how many, with Alexander, may have great zeal, and want integrity; promise much, and perform the contrary? You will be found virgins with lamps, and yet want oil; seem lively saints, and be dead sinners. We may, with bleeding hearts, consider, that very many have been not far from grace, and yet never attained it, because some one lust opposed it, or some one idol prevented it. It is a great thing to be truly religious. The best
best natural temper, the most plendid acts, the exactest profession, are not infallible evidences of a man's being truly pious, but are separable from saving grace.

You have need therefore of the strictest care and jealousy in dealing with your hearts. Oh! look to it, that your religion hath in it the undoubted characters of a spiritual life, and of God's kingdom being set up in you, in its very power. The hardest task is to arrive at this power of godliness, to get carnal self dethroned, and the government of Christ cheerfully submitted to. This kingdom, in its duties and privileges, hath been long preached to you; now God is importunate that you exclude not yourselves from the rewards of it, by rebelling against the laws and terms of it. Were you acquainted with the nature of Christ's kingdom, it would soon be desirable. The King is our rightful Lord, and not an usurper; he hath the tenderness of a father, is infinitely wise and good; he admits all his subjects to the state of children, yea, the dignity of kings. All the laws of it refer to our good, and tend to our perfection; and whatever is required of us, he is present to assist us in; yea, ready to forgive all weaknesses consistent with sincere endeavours: And can you refuse this easy yoke of Christ from day to day? Will you refuse this, that you may continue slaves to the devil, and
and servants to your lusts? Oh! that even now you were made willing, and able, to submit to Christ, and inspired with that divine nature which agrees to this state; that is, even the heavenly kingdom begun. Oh! perish not in your misconceits and wilful disobedience, after all these pleadings.

3. Improve in the power of religion, if you have attained to any degree of it.

There are remains of weakness and disloyalty in the best of us, and so there's place for our utmost endeavours to become more suited to this happy state in our temper and behaviour. How much are we short of our fellow-subjects in light, strength, and love? We are come to mount Zion, the city of the living God; to an innumerable company of angels, to the church of the first-born, and the souls of just men made perfect. We serve the same Lord, we partake of the same nature, are admitted to the same relation, and we expect the same glory which our King doth design us to, as well as them. And must not these things cause a blush in us, that we are so remiss in our improvements? Can they fail to awaken our souls to proceed from strength to strength? Therefore let mortification be your work while any lusts remain. Be more spiritual in every duty, more renewed in your minds; and let all your works be more perfect. What should
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Serm. 1. should be so much your concern, as that the laws of Christ have a more absolute authority in you, that God's image impress the whole man, and your souls be more enlarged and lifted up in all the ways of this kingdom? Rest not till you find Christ rules alone, and that you entirely live to Christ under the very constraints of love to him. How happy will you be, when the very peace of God rules in your hearts, yea, so rule, as that it restrains all that may interrupt it, and command to all that can express and maintain it? When this is your frame, your delights will be more refined; you will now live much nigher to God, your exceeding joy, and have an abundant entrance to his palace above, when a few days are over. Resolve then that you will still grow up into Christ, till nothing inspires you but his life, and nothing be done by you but what is loyalty to him.

4. Visibly express the sincerity of your subjection to God, and the efficacy of his grace in your souls. This is incumbent on all christians; but I shall apply myself more especially to you that are magistrates, and the occasion of this assembly. You do profess yourselves real subjects to Christ; evidence then that real christians are more fitted to serve their generation than other men. Let Christ govern by all your power, and his interests be advanced by you to the utmost.

Psal. xlili.

2Pet. i. 11.
utmost of your talents. Convince the world, that nothing can allure or affright you from exact obedience to Christ's laws, and fidelity to his concerns. Christ's eye is on your hearts and behaviour in your present circumstances: The eyes of many of very different sorts are on you; yea, the credit of religion is concerned in your behaviour. And it is but a few days, when you must, with awakened spirits, review your present actions; it may be under afflictive dispensations, when thrust off your present stage: But, certainly, when you come to die, and appear before the tribunal of the Lord your judge. Therefore create not bitter reflections by selfish aims, sinful neglects, or unbecoming deviations. A tormenting conscience in that day, will not be countervailed by any present advantage. You are employed in a time that may evidence the utmost which a christian can do or endure. But whatever may be your exercise, let it be seen that you serve Christ with the same honourable thoughts of him, and devotedness to him, as ever. You have the same Lord, whose laws, authority, and interests, do not vary with the uncertain motions of this lower world, and whose concerns are of an infinitely higher nature than the poor and perishing toils of mortals.

That I may improve and enforce this exhortation, consider,
Serm. 1. As christians, and as magistrates, you are the subjects of Christ, and so owe the utmost fidelity and serviceableness to him. If you are real believers, you are of his kingdom; and that admits none that will not serve him without limitations. Duty and gratitude bind you to act with a supreme regard to Christ, and to all others only in subordination to him: You must, with Joshua, follow him fully. It ill becomes you to consult with flesh and blood: For did not you covenant thus with Christ, 

Joh. xv. 8.

Gal. i. 16. Lord, do but save me, and I solemnly surrender myself to thee. What tho' his service may expose you to some acts of self-denial, doth not he deserve that from you? Shall a dying Christ endure so much for you, and will you think a little contempt too much to bear for him? Doth not he, in the midst of his exalted glory in the heavens, intercede for you? and can you, in a little painted honour, forget to plead his cause? Shall your mite (which also is his) be unemployed for Christ, who daily lays out his power, wisdom, and fulness, for every believer's use?

As you are magistrates, you are appointed to the service of this Redeemer. All power and judgment is committed to him; magistracy is his ordinance, and should be executed, in Christ's behalf, as well as the ministry: He is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and hath appointed the rulers
rulers of the earth work in his kingdom, whether they attend it or no. Magistrates have the sword, as ministers have the word; they have the coercive power, we the persuasive; and Christ will as truly bring the unfaithful magistrate to an account for his neglects and mistakes, as the unfaithful minister.

2. Your sovereign Lord will prosper you, according to what he designs to effect in your day, and by your hands. You serve him who manageth all by his providence, and hath chalked out, in his purpose, what shall be executed in every age. De jure, the kingdoms of the earth are his from the first; but from age to age he is advancing men's acknowledgment of his dominion, and erecting a holy government in the world on the ruins of Satan's kingdom. He hath a kingdom which all the powers of hell shall not extirpate the ruder beginnings of, nor prevent its utmost growth. This kingdom lies in the dominion of light over darkness, truth over error, holiness over sin, pure gospel-worship over corrupt worship, and the interests of Jesus over all rivals. It includes the dutifulness of earthly powers to Christ's service, and a national dedication to him as supreme Lord. This kingdom he enlargeth in set times, and towards the latter days more eminently, upon the desolations of Paganism and Antichristianism. This happy
happy time I live expecting, and rejoice in some hopeful, tho' awful, prognosticks of.

It pleaseth Christ more eminently to employ his real subjects as his instruments to advance his interests by; and they shall not want an anointing to fit and succeed them, let the work seem never so hard, and the success never so improbable.

It's not in you or me to allot ourselves our day or work, we must take that as our great Disposer hath allotted. This only is incumbent on you, that you fill up your places, and see that Christ wants no service he calls you to, and qualifies you for.

It's not without his counsel that you are at this season in the magistracy; this he appointed you to, and hath some design to serve by you. And tho' it now appears not what may be the influence or event of this surprize, leave that to him whose counsels are a great depth, and doth nothing in vain; yea, hath ordinarily some great things to do by such, whom he signally calls to an opportunity of service. You ought therefore to do what good your hand finds to do from day to day, and that with all your might. Resign up yourselves to his conduct, and be faithful in present trust, within the bounds of your places. Keep innocent in all your ways, suppress all sin, and advance righteousness. Whilst you are thus exercised, you may expect the presence of God with you, and have a considerable
considerable influence in whatever work Christ hath now in hand. Others may little esteem any usefulness of this kind; but what to a discerning Christian can be more pleasing, than contributing any thing to Christ’s interests? What can be more honourable than to be one of them whom Christ designs in that account; *They that* are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful?

3. **The kingdom of glory** is reserved, and will be certainly bestowed on all such as are loyal to Christ in all their present trust. *They that follow the Lord,* shall reign with him. Will you repent present hardships when you stand about the throne? Can you grudge him a few days service, who hope to be ever with him? Will you not, in those rivers of pleasures, even relent that your service was no greater? You will wish, Oh that I had exceeded the utmost which I did best perform! that I had been entrusted with opportunities for more difficult work! Its no such wonder the damned should have lived to themselves, and guide their course by secular interests; but that the heirs of glory should be afraid, or ashamed of their fidelity to Christ, would be strange.

*Must* not these things, realized by faith, endue you with new vigour. *Oh!* therefore gird up the loins of your minds; be prepared to endure reproach, and any evil that
that may attend you. Be fortified against all allurements; be not of them that are corrupt with flatteries, which sometimes are more ensnaring than frowns. Whatever others chuse, see that, in all your perplexing doubts, you be most solicitous, what now would Christ have me to do? And let your determinations be fixed by the light you gain through that enquiry. Examine your duty as under the eye of Christ, and resolve in it as men persuaded that your happiness or misery depends only on his favour or his frowns, and that he will deal with you according to your faithfulness to him. He will not put you off with vain hopes, or an imaginary kingdom, if his grace rule in you, and you express it in your station, by a carriage becoming the living subjects of this kingdom of grace.
The Advancement of Christ's Interests, the governing end of a Christian's Life.

A SECOND

SERMON

BEFORE THE

LORD-MAYOR,


D 3
To the Right Honourable
Sir John Shorter, Knt.
LORD-MAYOR
OF THE
CITY of LONDON.

PRESENT to your Lordship the second sermon, and the bookseller is accountable for the late publication of it.

By the first sermon, I endeavoured a real subjection of hearts to Christ as King; in this I call men to the utmost serviceableness to him, as the governing aim of their lives. No service to Christ is possible, but with respect to his interests; and by our devotedness to these, he determineth our regards to himself.

If we consider that part of the world called christian, we shall find
that nothing is more pretended than the advancement of these interests of Christ, even when they are most dis-served. These are made to patronize the great weaknesses of some, and the grossest villanies of others. This induced me to explain and state the interests of Christ, as far as one discourse would admit.

Natural religion is not so much opposed, as the additional and more peculiar concernsments of Christ as mediator: the innate enmity of mens hearts, and satan's attempts, are more directly level'd against these; the former, because they are less advan-taged by those remains of light preserved by God in our apostate na-ture; the latter, because the devil well knows, that natural religion will not be improved to any saving purpose, if these additional interests of Christ prevail not. This con-consideration led me to insist on these medi-atorial concernsments of our Lord Jesus, and persuade to a more spe-cial
cial regard to such points, which Christ is gradually advancing in the world in our day; and the rather, because the testimony of Christ, and the mighty influences of the Spirit in any day, are much confined to those points, which at that time he designs the advancement of.

I am express and large in proving that the dedication of our lives to the service of the interests of Christ, is an essential duty of all christians, because it is the great security to our holy profession; its the spring of all endeavours whereby God is glorified, and a common good promoted; and without it, truth will be betrayed by men that make the greatest noise.

The hints I am confined to, may be subject to various inferences; to direct which, I do declare, that in general I do intend the persuading christians to do all that is lawful in their places, to promote true religion and godliness, and their cautious forbearance
forbearance of whatever is a certain detriment or hazard thereto.

In particular, I would have none in this crisis (if duly called) scruple offices from uncertain events; much less employ them to lower ends than the advancement of truth, and that with all prudence and meekness.

I would persuade all nonconforming ministers not to neglect the present opportunity of exercising their ministry; their obligation and license to it, is from Christ's prior commission, and not the present removal of a physical obstacle; and woe to us if the undoubted interests of Christ gain not by this liberty. I think I have more comfort than seeming caution or idleness would afford, when I reflect, that from the 20th year of my age, I remember not three Lord's-days, wherein I have not preached in one place or other.

A subsistence to these ministers I also aim at. How sad is that narrow and unjust spirit in men of estates,
Estate, which restrains the gospel for want of maintenance? I am sure none that know me will suspect a selfish design by this.

The only thing I can foresee the need of an apology for, is my plainness with some persecutors that are members of the church of England, and lately monopolized the name even from all others of their own communion. These I call to repentance for their great opposition to the interests of Christ. Some part of the two days allowed to prepare this sermon, was spent in debating with myself the expediency hereof; and I judged, at last, it was my duty, and conducive to the publick good, on such grounds as these.

The crime is too notorious to be palliated, when they have silenced 2000 ministers, because they durst not lie, &c. and with such rage persecuted their quiet neighbours, for worshipping God according to all the instituted rules of the gospel, their enemies being judges.
The effects of their severities, are visible in the danger, that not only the power, but the very probable form of religion, is reduced to.

The repentance of these very men, is necessary to divert the judgments which hang over our heads. That temper continued, makes all healing methods for accord impossible. If they repent not, its of little moment if they be irritated by a call to it; being disowned by all serious men of their own party, who indeed were hated and wounded by them as well as the dissenters.

Yea, God by his present providence seemeth to design these mens repentance, while he is blowing on them from that very point, where their faces and regards were directed in all their mischievous attempts.

I hope no pious men of that party, who approved not these mens practices, will think themselves concerned in this reproof; their credit and serviceableness I am tender of. Yea, I would
would persuade a forgiving of the most guilty, tho’ I call them to repentance: And providence directs the sufferers not to exert their resentments, by the damage it will expose to.

I find it convenient to explain somewhat in my first sermon.

By conditions, I mean the things which the gospel injoineth indispensably on all men, that shall partake of the saving blessings of the new covenant, which are owing to Christ only as the meritorious cause. By spiritual life, I intend that inherent vital principle wherein all graces are comprehended. By remedial law, I mean the law of faith, published for the recovery of apostate sinners; and by which God will judge the secrets of men.

But yet the objectors are very weak or uncharitable, and little consider what fatal influence their distempers have on the interests of Christ, whilst they sacrifice the serviceableness of others
others to their own little aims and fancies.

It may be added, that I managed my first text without much reference to the extraordinary power of aposto-

lical administrations, as not so suitable to our day, nor yet principally intended.

Your Lordship is concerned, or I would not preface your name to this apology. I believe its your aim to serve Christ in the world. Many of your actings may convince the envious, it is not a selfish interest you serve. That you, and your brethren, may entirely dedicate yourselves, power, and advantages, to the real advancement of the interests of Jesus, was the design of this plain discourse, and is the prayer of,

Your Lordship's

most humble Servant,

Daniel Williams.
For to me to live is Christ.

The apostle was in a happy strait, from his fitness to live, and readiness to die. He knew not well how to fix his choice, because both life and death had a desirable tendency. There was service to Christ by his life, and great happiness to himself by death.

Affection to Christ swayed his inclinations both ways; he loved Christ, and therefore must desire death, that he might fully enjoy him; he loved Christ, and so might incline to a longer life, that he might more advance his interest. Rational self-love would move to the former, yet regard to Jesus and his members oversways him to the latter. He is content to expect the crown, rather than quit his work: And though heaven was the better state in itself, and happier for him, he prefers his stay on earth, as better for the church, which could not bear his absence. A wonderful instance of a publick spirit! How enlarged is this soul, that was assured of glory
Advancement of Christ's Interests.

Serm. glory in heaven, and of very sore trials on earth, and would yet tug longer at the oar for publick good, rather than be at rest!

The great purposes he resolved to live to, are manifest from his contentment with the delays of glory. Had sensual enjoyments, and trivial employments, been the advantage proposed by a longer life, how impatiently must he have endured a moment's absence from heaven? He that knew death could not lay his soul asleep, but that it immediately passed into a state of the highest activity and receptiveness; yea, and would be admitted to a near converse with Christ, and other glorious objects, which must fully employ these active powers of the soul, and fill it with good to the utmost of its capacity to receive. Could he (I say) desire an abode on earth, to relish carnal or animal delights, which with him is a being dead while one liveth? By no means.

But my text represents to us the design and tendency of the apostle Paul's life. To me to live is Christ.

I know there are many things to be inferred from the words, besides what I think is their principal scope. As, 1. Christ is a believer's happiness while he liveth; q. d. life were worse than death, were not Christ known, and enjoyed by me, in this life. 2. A christian's life is a mere dependence on, and a manifest discovery of the power
power and grace of Christ. Emanations of his power supports it, and his grace is displayed in our lives, when useful to any valuable purposes, or employed in any momentous actions. But I pass by these to the chief design of the text, which may be expressed under two heads.

I. **An entire dedication of Paul's life to Christ, exclusively of any carnal designs of his own.**

As if he should have said, I devote my life to the glory of Christ, I propose the advancement of his interests; my design is to be instrumental in his work, and the propagation of his concerns: There is no base selfish turn of my own intended, nor shall my life waste in idle uselessness. I will be active, and that for him, to the last moment, and the utmost of my abilities. This my judgment dictates as my duty, to this I am devoted, and on this only I am intent.

II. **A persuasion** that Christ had been, and still would be, advanced by his life and labours. This he expresseth in **ver. 20. As my expectation and hope, that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death;** q. d. I have by his grace promoted his interest, I fear not but the same aids and blessing will still concur to the like serviceableness; and so the issue of my living will be his gain. This is the **ἐξάκτω πρέπει,** in **ver. 22.** Its no secular inte-
Serm. rest of my own is like to be advanced:

II. The building of my house, or erecting trophies to my name, I expect not. Nay, I am sure poverty, contempt, and hardships in those respects will attend me; but Christ, in his gospel-interests, will be contributed to, and he will over-rule my sufferings and labours to his own advancement.

The text may also include an hint at the reason of this confidence, as to this described success, it being introduced under such a respect; For to me to live is Christ. Sincere devotedness to Christ, is ordinarily successful; and upright designs, duly managed, prove not abortive. When the best endowments of a man indisposed to the service of Christ, produce not equal fruits to the lower gifts of a soul engaged for his concerns.

The first of these will be the subject of my discourse; viz. The dedication of the life to Christ. This was no duty peculiar to the apostolical office; and tho' its predicated of St. Paul, in his own person, yet he affords us an example which binds our imitation: Yea, it is the fundamental duty resulting from our baptismal vow, included in all our christian profession, and supposed in all acceptable service. So that the obligation is universal; its the duty of all here, even of such who least regard it, yea, live in greatest repugnancy to it.

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By living to Christ, must be meant living to the promoting and defence of the interests of Christ in this world. This his designed endeavour had a respect to, and to this he devoted his life; that is, all the opportunities for acting which life includes, all the abilities which life imports, and all the good things he possessed, which are comprehended in the word life, as being less valuable than life is: Even all these he designed to lay out for the interests of the blessed Jesus. He valued living for no meaner uses, and determined to live to no lower purpose.

When the advancement of Christ’s interests governeth our time and abilities, then to live is Christ: For herein is our living to him within our reach; by this it is expressed, and the evidencing thereof in this instance, is what he hath appointed, and still expecteth from all his members and servants.

I need say no more to introduce the doctrine I purpose to insist on; which is this:

Doct. It is the duty of all christians to dedicate and employ their lives to the advancement of the interests of Christ in the World.

It's not sufficient to be religious in contemplation, or mental acts; our Lord expecteth, and real piety enclineth to, a vigorous
gorous activity in our holy profession. He will be served by his members, as they expect to be served by him. They must imitate him in his communicative goodness, and express their resentments of his grace to them, by these powerful acknowledgments. They must not grudge his service; tho' he redeem them freely, they shall sacrifice all to him; and while he is managing our interest in heaven as intercessor, he will have us employed in his concerns on earth, as instruments dedicated to the advancement of his name, and enlargement of his kingdom.

To do thus, is agreeable to the inclination of every holy christian; love to Jesus fills with zeal in this enterprise: Therein they are employed; nothing delighteth them more than any visible success; yea, they bemoan their uselessness when their industry seems greatest. A hermit's cell, for rest, is not esteemed by them as an opportunity for service; tho' the service is difficult and dangerous.

I shall manage this subject in this method:

I. I will lay down some preliminary propositions.

II. Acquaint you more fully with the nature of this duty, of dedicating our lives to the interests of Christ.

III. Offer
III. Offer plain reasons, to put it out of doubt, that to dedicate our lives to Christ, is the indispensable duty of all of us: And then apply these things more particularly.

Sect. I.

Prop. 1. Satan, the world, and the flesh, have an interest among men; in the overthrowing whereof, much of the interests of Christ consisteth.

The interests of the former are one, and principally stated, and managed by the devil. He set up the world as an idol, and the flesh as a ruler, by introducing sin into the world; so that the whole may be called his interest; the inclinations of the flesh affording him advantages, and the world yielding him means to advance that interest by.

This interest of Satan is fixed, 1. In opposition to the original dominion of God among men. 2. To the attempts and successes of Christ in restoring of God's dominion, and advancing some additional interest of his own, with respect to fallen man.

1. The interest of Satan is fixed in opposition to the original dominion of God among men.

Man was made upright, loyal to God, glorious in the image of God on the soul, and
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and expressing the nature of God in light, love, justice, purity, &c.

Satan hastily engageth in a design of overthrowing the authority of God, defacing his image, and introducing his own temper and power in the hearts and practices of men. He soon effected this by the compliance of our first parents with his snares; and pursueth it from one age to another, still working in the children of disobedience.

Hence you may easily conclude, that his interest lieth in man's rebellion against his maker, darkness of mind as to divine matters, injustice, cruelty, irreligion, blasphemy, uncleanness, intemperance, wrath, earthliness, and all things which render men devilish, or brutish. His great concern was to dethrone God, whom he hated; and to destroy man, whose happiness he envied; tho' he concealth the latter, that he may the better effect it.

2. Satan's interest is in opposition to the attempts of Christ for restoring of God's dominion, and advancing some additional interests of his own with respect to fallen man.

Satan hoped, from the sanction of the law, and God's dealing with himself, that his design, so far accomplished by the fall, would never miscarry; but that such rebellion and misery begun so to be executed, could never be retrieved. He enjoyeth the
the prospect of a quiet throne but a small moment; then a curse (which affects him, tho' spoken to the serpent) seized him as a tempter, and Christ set up as his antagonist, to recover the elect, revive the trampled interests of God among rebellious sinners, and erect to himself a glorious name and body, as the mediatorial head.

S A T A N endeavoureth the blasting of these attempts of Christ, and the support of his own interests thus threatened: And hereby we see there is an interest of Satan's, which, tho' to the same ends, is yet managed more directly in opposition to Christ, as redeemer.

This lieth in obstructing the gospel, hardening the heart to impenitency, 

1 Thess. ii. 13. 

blind-ing mens minds, left they should believe; advancing idolatry and superstition, in opposition to the worship of Christ; perverting the mind with errors, contrary to the truths revealed; persecuting the members of Christ, silencing a faithful ministry, dividing the church, destroying godly discipline, causing backslidings and apostacy; with whatever else may hinder the attempts of Christ, or blast the successes of our Redeemer in any place, person, or matter; that by all he may obviate the gracious purposes of Jesus towards men, and make his enterprise abortive.

How vigilant, subtil, and unwearied is Satan in managing this interest? He engageth
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Serm. engageth all instruments, he takes advantages of all tempers and circumstances; oft influenceth good men to serve his purposes; transformeth himself sometimes into an angel of light; at other times, as a dragon, poureth out a flood of persecution.

Mark viii. 33. 2 Cor. xi. 14. Rev. xii. Innocent things he oft abuseth; by things seemingly indifferent he propagates his designs, as well as by groffer matters. He waits every age to obstruct the points Christ seems designed to gain, (called by the Spirit the truth of the present time) as if he were content to endure past instances of Christ's conquest, which he could not hinder. He refineth his interests according to the light that growtheth, that they may be the more likely to be complied with; tho' every step he gaineth is but a degree, which he would improve to the utmost villany, by a gradual process.

The more eminently any thing, constitution, or party, expresseth his prevalence, or serveth the devil's purpose, the more his interest is staked therein, and his power exerted thereby. Thus after Rome Pagan failed his design, he begins an idolatrous apostasy in the christian church, and giveth the head of that apostasy (under the emblem of a lamb with two horns) wonderful skill and power: By him he corrupts the church, and encounters the growing kingdom of our Lord, as the great antichrist. By him satan's interests are
are kept up for many ages over many na-
tions, wearing a christian name; and the
remains of his infection disturb the inte-
rests of Christ in churches relieved from
groser pollutions; which is effected by
customs and officers uninstiuted by Christ;
by errors eclipsing the authority, operations,
merits, and free grace of our blessed Lord,
wherein many departed from Babylon are
too deeply engaged. In every one of these
satan's interest consistseth, either as a means
which satan makes use of, or as it stands
in opposition to any truth and institution
of Christ.

Much of the interests of Christ consists
in opposing each of these, and blasting
those counter-designs of satan. Wonderful
will be the scheme of Christ's counter-
acting, and baffling these various efforts,
when the methods and seasonableness of
all shall be at once made known.

Prop. 2. All men, by nature, are dev-
oted to the interest of satan, the world,
and flesh.

Satan executeth his purposes by men
as slaves in chains. Its true, this is gene-
 rally by uniting his interests with theirs,
and so serving himself by them, while
they are acting their own lusts, and con-
sulting a fleshly interest. They are bribed
by advantage, engaged by grandeur or po-
litick reasons, whereby they seem to justify
the devil's drudgery. They favour some
errors,
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Serm. errors, as the lufts of the mind; others, as leading to licentiousnes, or countenancing them therein. Their corrupt hearts are under the government of luft; and the world being their idol, the devil may thereby gild over any pill, and employ them in most undertakings. *The God of this world* wants not means to hire, affright, or allure them by; and these seldom are unsuccessful, unless when God over-acts their inclinations, or in his providence prevents the gainful offer; or when he chaineth some loss, shame, or such sensible evils, with their serving Satan's turn at present.

But with most sinners, in most of his concerns, the devil gains concurrence, and that by means grateful to the flesh. Ecclesiastical grandeur supporteth uninstituted officers in the church; vast incomes, and exorbitant power, tempt to idolatry, to an universal headship, and a world of vile appendants. Ignorance must be countenanced, lest these emoluments be exposed to hazard. Superstition will be contended for, as its pomp is pleasing to a vain mind; dead forms are abetted, as lulling conscience asleep; which is needful to the quiet of an unregenerate heart, where the gospel-light is by Christ forced on them.

Mahometism and Pagan idolatry were introduced by methods adapted to mens lufts,
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lufts, and are maintained by reasons from worldly interests.

This way usually satan attains his ends by miserable men; but sometimes he doth by strong delusions hurry them without apparent motives; yea, by his service, expose them to hardships ungrateful to nature, tho' vicious. A strange impetus reconcileth them to torments, yea, and death, in the devil's work; God permitting him to impress their imaginations, and act their souls in an amazing manner. Thus many errors are suggested and propagated.

One way or another, all ungodly men willingly serve the devil's interest.

How are most of mankind employed in this slavery by satan? Yea, their lusts often carry them to intemperance, impiety, violence, &c. when unsolicited. Oh dreadful aspect of an apostate world!

Prop. 3. Men are naturally disposed to resist the interests of the Lord Jesus, especially as far as they are opposite to their own carnal inclinations, or interests.

Christ is sure of an enemy, where a carnal mind prevaleth; and no endowment short of grace, prevents the opposition. The wise resist his doctrine as foolishness. Its a stumbling-block to the Jewish church, tho' entrusted with divine oracles; and a long-expected Messiah is rejected by them, because he appears void of pomp, and to purposes more spiritual than a carnal mind.
Serm. mind could relish. The best natures be-
come cruel from a blind zeal, and the very
devout turn persecutors of religion, as abo-
minable to their unrenewed minds. Satan
paints the servants of Christ as factious,
turbulent, and dangerous, and so engageth
the powers of the earth to the higheft vi-
gour in their extirpation. The rules of his
house are oft opposed as inconsistent with
some maxims of policy. Ignorance and
strong delusions cause many to sacrifice the
real interests of Christ, even from seeming
regards to him, where providence hath
forced some reverence to his name, tho'
emnity against his laws and nature do still
abide.

It's true, that ungodly men may bear
with the external profession of religion,
when education hath familiarized it, and
they find it can consit with the dominion
do a carnal heart; nay, they greatly like a
dead form of christianity, because it suits
all men to be of some religion; and no
other can quiet their conscience in its
awakened foresight of eternity, when en-
lightened at all by the gospel; but still their
enmity vents its dislike against the inwards,
and power, of religion; though the form
thereof is become thus necessary.

They despise worshipping God in the
spirit, as unintelligible, because unfelt. A
lively minisiry is hated, as disquieting their
feared conimientos: They loath the strictly
pious,
pious, as a reproach to themselves. A Serm.
progress in reformation in the church, is
obstructed from inward antipathy to any
further advance to Christ, and hazard to
secular interests thereby; or it looks too
trivial to be contended for by them, to
whom all religion is indifferent, further
than as rivited by long custom. Yea, they
oppose it from a proud conceit that it
would reproach their former usage as er-
roneous and imperfect.

Indeed sometimes the profane 'grow
zealous for some cause of Christ, but ne-
ever for the sake of Christ: Applause, secu-
ritv to their own interest, or long custom,
awaken their concern. God, by his pro-
vidence, supports his own cause by evil
men; their estates, honour, emulation,
quarrels, and the like, influence their en-
deavours in that which proves a service to
the truth. They are often zealous for a
lower degree of reformation, in opposition
to a greater; not seeing that that lesser de-
gree ceaseth to be the interest of Christ,
when it becomes an impediment to, or
rival with, reformation in greater instances.

But however the ungodly may be thus
over-ruled to comply with any thing which
belongs to Christ, their prevailing inclina-
tion is to betray all of Christ which they
profess, when damage to their fleshly in-
terests attends it: Yea, in a quiet season
their religion dwindles into an empty form,
the
II. 

Serm. the truths of the gospel are supplanted by encroaching errors, and christianity so clogg'd and eclipsed in evil mens management, that it hardly retains what deserves that name. To this opposition in the nature of man to the interests of Christ, must be ascribed the wonderful degeneracy of christian churches. And as far as the remains of corruption influence the best men, Christ shall suffer by them in his concerns; his name shall endure reproach, and his ministers damage; his church is divided, love destroyed, the conversion of sinners hindred, advances in godliness obstructed; and many such ways our sinful natures deserve, yea oppose the interests of our blessed Lord. This should make the pious watchful, as not ignorant they have lusts which the devil may improve to the damage of Christ. And it should make the ungodly suspicious, when they contend with many good men, that it is not the interest of Christ they are engaged for, which they are so far likelier to mistake and oppose, than those more holy persons are.

Prop. 4. Obligations, and a call to service, result from, and are measured by, mens different places and capacities for the advancements of Christ's interests. All should be devoted to it, but all are not equally capable of it, nor called to express it in the same instances. None should
should usurp another's station, under pretence of service; yet all must be diligent to the utmost of their own talents. God hath wisely ordained variety of callings, with a tendency in their nature to his use; providence disposeth and fitteth men to these several offices: the faithfulness of the meanest is regarded; servants do serve the Lord Christ, when their meaner employs are clothed with an obediential respect to him. Two mites from the poor's stock, is Luke xxi. a commended offering; and a book of remembrance treasureth the concerned thoughts, and edifying discourses, of them that fear the Lord, when disabled from performing more.

But Christ will not accept a faint endeavour from a man of strength, nor a bare advice against sin, when we are invested with authority to restrain it; as you see in Eli's case. A few pence are not fit layings-out to a good use, for him who hath a great estate. Woe be to him that, in any respect, hath a male in his flock, and gives to God the blind and lame. Not discerning this, keeps so many useless and ill-employed. All may be useful to Christ in their own place, by doing or suffering; none may neglect the greatest service which their callings and gifts give opportunity for. Magistrates, ministers, parents, are, by their place, servants to the Lord Jesus, and for him should they be employed.
Serm. II.

No station is so high, as to plead exemption by its dignity; not any gifts so eminent, as to allow remission. To forbear the utmost service of Christ in the ministry, when dedicated to him in that office, is sacrilegious; yea, a degree thereof is chargeable on men in any other office wherein God hath placed them.

No man may refuse any office or work, to which Christ manifestly calleth him; a call to service, or suffering, ensureth sufficient aids; and we know not what we can do, or suffer, till our work or trial discover what supplies Christ will afford. Zerubbabel is called to build the temple, when visible abilities render’d the success improbable; but he attempteth it, and succeedeth under the influence of that: Be strong, for I am with you. We must attempt what Christ makes our duty, and he will take care his interest shall not suffer by our weakness.

Prop. 5. The success of all faithful endeavours to advance the interest of Christ, depends on the influence and blessing of God thereon.

Zechariah viii. 3. He buildeth the temple, and must bear the glory, whoever be the instruments. He that planteth, tho’ it be a Paul; and he that watereth, tho’ it be an Apollo, are nothing; but God that giveth the increase.

There is an hidden energy and disposition of circumstances which do effect what we otherwise
otherwise vainly attempt. No concern-
ment of Christ would prosper in the world,
if left to the sole management of them,
who are most fitted or devoted to it; their
power being so incompetent to the oppo-
sition which every design of Christ meets
with. The interest which a subtil and
mighty devil hath in men, the abject state
and vile inclinations of mankind, the sui-
tableness and power of sensitive things,
the enmity of the heart against Christ, the
incapacity of a dead blind world to relish,
and perceive the nature, glory, and advan-
tage of all the designs of Christ, are all such
obstacles as might cause us to despair, if a
divine power were not at hand to execute
this purpose.

To set up God's throne, cast down Sa-
tan's kingdom, and convert sinners, was an
enterprise becoming only an almighty Sa-
vior to undertake, and possible only for
him to effect: Therefore we should, in all
our endeavours, rely on his help, and in
every success humbly acknowledge him.

He is pleased to secure this honour to him-
selves, by blasting often the most probable
means, and giving the greatest lifts to his
interest, by instruments too contemptible
to conceal his arm.

It's enough for us, that our work is 11. xii. 4.
with the Lord for reward, when our up-
right labours are in vain as to the event.

Yea, he may hereafter prosper our attempts
Advancement of Christ's Interests,

Serm. beyond what their present influence can promise.

Prop. 6. I hope I need not add, that the doctrine of merits receiveth no support from our greatest services.

Our forfeitures are too many, our performances too imperfect, our engagements too strong, divine aids too arbitrary, and the rule of righteousness too strict, to allow us to plead our service in bar to eternal life as a gift; or to the atonement of Christ, as the only meritorious cause of all the good we hope for. Whatever evidence our faithfulness gives to the sincerity of that faith, whereby Christ is made ours; whatever encouragement the promises may yield to the diligent soul, no upright heart can be puffed above subscribing his hearty amen to that caution of our Lord's, When ye have done all, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do: No, not that, Lord, so as not to need forgiveness for many faults cleaving thereto.

I shall now proceed to explain the nature of this duty of dedicating our lives to the interests of Christ. This will be done under these two enquiries. 1. What are the interests of Christ? 2. What is it to dedicate our lives to the serving these interests?

Quest. 1. What are the interests of Christ, to serve which our lives should be dedicated?

Answ.
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Answ. All the declared designs of Christ in his mediatorial office, in opposition to the devil, the world, and the flesh.

To this must be referred all the ends which he pursueth; and to effect which, his heart is intent on, and enjoineth our concurrence in. They may well be called his interests, considering they are things undertaken by him; all his institutions, laws, and providences, refer to them; he died, sent his Spirit, and still intercedeth, as means of their accomplishment. His glory and truth, as Mediator, is concerned in them. These things may be referred to these three heads.

1. The restauration of God's original dominion and image among men, against the usurpations and defilements of Satan, and vile apostasy and rebellion of sinners.

His design is to destroy the works of the devil, and advance that purity and order, which the entrance of sin expelled. His interests under this head consists in the conversion of sinners, obedience of men to all the laws of God; their resemblance of his imitable perfections, and utter renouncing of all that is devilish or brutish. His concern is to enlighten the ignorant mind, subdue disorderly appetites to the dominion of grace and reason. Sound knowledge, fear of God, love to God and one another, justice, temperance, chastity, discharge
Advancement of Christ's Interests,

Serm. discharge of relative duties, divine worship
II. in opposition to idolatry, and all godliness,

truth, and goodness, are parts of his interest, which men should studiously promote, that God may be the portion and supreme end of men.

2. Such things wherein the peculiar glory and influence of Christ, as Mediator, consists.

Under this are included every doctrine, institution, and matter, which relate to Christ, and are superadded to what concerned mankind before the fall.

Rom. xiv. 9. John x. 15.
He died to be Lord both of dead and living. And his interest, which we must serve, is in these things; gathering to himself a body of all that belong to the election of grace; the improvement of every believer to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that he prevail, and be acknowledged as Prophet, Priest and King; all pardon and favour with God ascribed to his merits, all grace derived from his fulness, and all duty performed in his name. That his people, who are his members and heritage, be succoured, his churches have their due privileges, all worship managed by gospel-rule, a gospel-ministry encouraged; no officers imposed, but whom he hath appointed in his house; and none of them neglected: Love and peace maintained among his followers, and they admitted to the privileges of his sanctuary, on his terms.
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It belongs to him that there be a godly magistracy, a gospel discipline, and whatever else he hath either appointed as means, or declared as instances of his triumphs as mediator; and also that the gospel terms of life be truly stated, and complied with.

3. The interests of Christ may be considered as they stand in an opposition to such errors, parties, and practices, wherein the attempts of Satan against the glory and influence of the mediator consist.

The devil sets up his standard at every point which Christ gaineth; no truth escapes his assault; and he never wants men of wit and power to abet his opposition; yea, generally the crowd have been of his side, when the witnesses of Jesus have been few and contemptible. Satan hath his stated sects and parties; and though many truths of Christ be owned by some sects, yet in whatever respect they are denominated from their contests against Christ, the interest of Jesus lieth in opposition to them. Under this head I shall be sparing, because I fear no party hath all the interest of Christ, and nothing else. And I hope God is about some great things, which will be attended with such a light and spirit, as may end in a name comprehensive of all that is Christ's, and exclusive of all else. He hath promised his church, Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Christian is the best
Serm. best we yet know; but how much opposite to Jesus is pretended to under that name? However, I must not fear to say, the interests of Christ consist in Protestantism, in opposition to Popery in all things wherein it is antichristian, (which are too many.) The interest of Christ is in non-conformity, in opposition to the imposing, sinful, and doubtful terms of communion of saints, or exercise of the ministry; and sacrificing the great things of God to a constitution uninstituted by Christ, and incapable of promoting real religion to that degree, as I hope many of its abettors desire.

Ques. 2. What is it to dedicate our lives to the service of the interests of Christ?

I must suggest to you, that under the word life (by a synecdoche and metonymy) are included our time, talents, opportunities, all enjoyments, yea, life itself, as an offering, whenever the service, or testimony of Christ require it. Having premised this, I answer,

Answ. 1. It implieth a solemn offering of ourselves, and all in our power, to Christ.

This is enjoined; Present your bodies a living sacrifice, &c. This ought to be expressly done in our first conversion, and oft repeated, especially at the Lord's-table. Engrave the stamp of Christ on all you possess, and acknowledge his propriety. Lord, myself, and all that is mine, I offer
to thee, and will serve thee with. This Serm. vow, in thy constant observation, will keep thee from a supine neglect, when opport-
unity of service is given; and silence all repinings, when his service is hard or ex-
pen-sive. He that neglects this, will soon find matter of excuse in his holy profession.

Answ. 2. The service of Christ and his interests, must be the governing end in all deliberate acts and contrivances.

Men are devoted to what they chiefly intend. Paul expresseth that his life was indeed dedicated thus, when, amidst all dissatisfactions from a dangerous duty, he afferts, I count not my life dear, so I may fi-
nish my course, and the ministry which I have received. Woe to them whose cons-
ults still terminate in some selfish matter, and are concerned for Christ only by the by. Providence may serve itself by their sins, as well as by their chance services, which they hardly intend. Christ accounts none faithful to his concerns, who provide for them laft, but chiefly contrive for things that are none of his. Which prevail when in competition? for what are we most in-
dustrious? about what are we most follici-
tous? that our lives are dedicated to, whe-
ther they be the interest of Christ, or other
things.

3. There is an actual and stated em-
ploying our lives and all our abilities for Christ.
Serm. This dedication consists not in saint
acts of the mind, but extends to, and ex-
presseth itself in the doing all we can to
promote Christ's interests.

Thy heart cannot concur in this dedi-
cation, when thy performances do not con-
duce to exalt him. You must be fervent
in spirit, serving the Lord. To live is
Christ; when our parts are engaged to
plead for truth, our power subserveth his
claims, our time and estates are employed
to uphold his gospel, advance piety, and
abed the testimony of Jesus; striving toge-
ther for the faith of the gospel. He dedi-
cates his life and talents to Christ, who
useth them for Christ in all opportuni-
ties of doing, and willingly parts with them,
rather than renounce his interests. Moses
yields an instance, when he esteemed the
reproach of Christ greater riches than the
treasures of Egypt, renouncing all tempo-
ral hopes, to give a specimen of future
service.

This living to Christ imports also a
stated course of life. It's not enough to
serve Christ by starts, or occasional acts.
It must be our ordinary employ, and the
scope of our lives. Our abilities must be
still on the altar, and our ears ever open to
the voice of God on all occasions, however
frequently they return. Happy they, who
early engage in this; and the longest life
gives no period to it. Yea, all we do, and
every
every moment we spend, should mediate the interest of Christ, or immediately serve the interest of Christ.

4. We live for Christ, when we value our lives and talents, as they be serviceable to the interests of the Lord Jesus. Men live to themselves, and their time is dedicated to their lusts, when they esteem their estates, as they afford fuel to carnal inclinations; and are fond of long life, as an opportunity of pleasing their senses and appetites. To such all is despicable and uneasy, which yield not flesh-pleasing contentments. Thus, brutishly, they express their sentiments, *Let us eat and drink,* for to-morrow we shall die.

But he that dedicates his life to Christ, is glad of an estate, that he may be useful by charity in employing it; and express lively hopes of heaven, when called for Christ's sake to relinquish it. What is esteem with men farther than as it may add to his influence? or parts, or power, than as they qualify him for greater services? A good soul (assured of heaven) would gladly resign his spirit, when he ceaseth to be useful.

What is more awful to such a man, than to be cast by as an useless vessel, whom God disdaineth to employ? And nothing yields them greater delight, than capacity for the service of Christ, and success therein. Every convert by their ministry, is their joy, and their crown. How cheerfully do they
they own divine goodness, when their hearts are enlarged to any useful act, and they enabled for it? Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? are the words of David, when his people had joined with him in so liberal an offering for temple-work.

It's a curse, in a holy man's thoughts, to have talents without a heart to use them for God; and much more to be abused in spending them on his lusts. How contemptible in their eyes are the Nimrods of the earth, whose greatness is merely for oppression, foolish grandeur, and the devil's service? They would prefer the condition of a beast, to the greatest monarch's thus brutishly satisfied and employed. The saints would not change their persecuted state, for that of the greatest prince's, unless they bring the honour and glory of their nations to the new Jerusalem; that is, to the church of Christ fully reformed and enlarged.

Herein you have an account of the dedication of our lives to Christ; thus do all they to whom to live is Christ.

Perhaps you may say, these are mere contemplations; but to do thus is not the duty of all, nor the attainment of any, whatever they pretend.

I shall therefore undertake next to prove, that it is the duty of all of you thus
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to dedicate your lives to the service of the Serm.
Lord Jesus, and his interests. I shall offer reason to convince you, which refer to us as men and christians.

That supreme love and regard to God, Reason 1.
which is the duty of all men, must dispose them to this dedication.

Can you doubt, whether you ought to love the Lord your God with all your heart, 
and with all your soul, and with all your mind? Must not God be loved above self, by every rational creature? Is it not the appointment of God to every man, Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave? These are duties resulting from our relation to God as our maker, and due to him on the account of the transcendant excellency of his being; yea, the very order of the universe directs to it; the first cause of all should have the supreme regard and interest among all beings.

Now know that it is impossible to love and regard God in this supreme manner, if you dedicate not all to his interest. Can any man regard God above himself, and yet serve himself above God? Or can any man serve God above all, and neglect the interests of God? These are the occasions he gives men to express their regard to him by: His essence is above what our Psal. xvi. goodness can be extended to; but his saints, his honour, his truth, his image, and cause, are
are his concerns on earth; and as these are regarded or neglected, he esteems himself valued or despised by us. To each of these the saying of Christ is applicable, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me; and inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it unto me.

The relation God hath to, and concern he hath in, these interests, transfer the respect of all to himself.

So that it is a duty to dedicate all to his service, and, as far as he calls us to it, to employ all to that end; or it is no duty to love and regard God above all: yea, it must then be a duty to despise God, and prefer self, Satan, and other rivals, to the infinitely blessed God; which a reasonable soul must tremble at.

Reason 2. God's absolute propriety in men, and in all which they possess, makes the sacrifice of all to his interests a duty, by all the rules of justice. Notions of just and unjust are preserved by God in the conscience, above most others. Principles of justice are the strongest in that natural habit, which we call συντάγματα; and these require that every one receive his own. Now what hath any man, which he hath not received at the hands of God? Is it not he that made us by his power, endowed us with gifts intellectual? Hath any man an estate or honour, but he to whom God
God hath given them? And is not all at Serms his disposal? God did not release his own right, when he entrusted us with the use of any talents; and as to him we are stewards, Luke xvi. not proprietors, and therefore accountable for all.

God had a respect to his own glory and service, in his creating of all things; be made all things for himself. Yea, he hath dispensed all under this rule, that they be employed for him. This law every brute creature, and inanimate being, observe; yea, the glorious angels do not deny, or disdain, this homage: They are mini- Heb. i. 14.

string spirits, whose utmost abilities are consecrated to the execution of God's will, tho' it be often us poor sinners in whose behalf they serve.

And must not the same justice be observed by men? Can any thing be denied God equally, when all is his, and he asketh service by nothing but what's his own? Paul is but righteous, when his labours and sufferings for Christ were most abundant: this he suggests, as well as his privilege by it, when he faith, The angel of God, Acts xxvii. whose I am, and whom I serve, stood by me. David, in his large offerings, acquits God from being a debtor, and himself of being more than just; All things come from thee, and of thine own we have given thee. God chargeth the man who improved not the one
one talent, not with unkindness, but unjustly; and so will he reprove all that deny him any thing which his interest requires: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchanger, and then I should have received my own with usury. You may as well accuse God of injury, when, by his providence, he brings you to death, poverty, or decay of parts, as deny him the utmost service in his concerns. In the former, he asserts his own right without your leave; in the other, he yields you opportunity for consent, to your own benefit. He offers you an occasion to trade for yourselves with his stock. If the testimony of God requires any thing to be laid out for it, which is not his, you have some pretence to plead; but that can never be, unless when men do wickedly for God, which he abhors.

3. The Lord Jesus hath an additional right to all of us, and our utmost services by purchase.

The interests of God and his claim, as creator, are in the hands of Christ: But, as redeemer, his title is added too, and our service more strongly demanded: For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are his. He may justly serve himself of us, and by us, as his redeemed captives. We cost him dearer than our utmost service can amount to. All our graces and gifts are
are from him by a new dispensation, and held by a new tenure. You have an emblem of it in the redemption of the first-born, and in the ransom of all souls.

How much more may Christ use the words to Philemon, which Paul uttered only as an instrument of his conversion? *Albeit, I do not say to thee, how thou owest* ver. 19 *me even thine own self besides.*

Doth he wrong us, if he calls for our gifts, our estates, yea, our lives, when he continues them to us after our manifest forfeitures; and gave them to us, if believers, as he is head over all things to the church?

So that if it be a duty to be just to God as creator, or just to Christ as redeemer, all our lives and abilities must be devoted to his interests.

4. *No man is a christian indeed,* that dedicateth not himself, life, and all, to Christ. And so if it be a duty to be a christian, this devotedness is a duty, as it is essential to our christian state.

It's true, you may bear the name, but you cannot be the thing designed by that name, if you devote not all to the honour of the Lord Jesus, and design it as the chiefest purpose of your life, to propagate his interests. Can any man be his subject, who contributes not to his affairs what in him lieth? Consent to be his, is the greatest fundamental of religion; and this includes a solemn
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Serm. a solemn surrender of all to him. Union betwixt Christ and his members, makes their interests common; his interest is their interest; and they are to submit to his conduct as their head, in what their usefulness must consist. Their character is, They follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth; their motto is, I serve the Lord Jesus.

Religion is not a state of freedom, to live to ourselves under the covert of gospel-pardon, but an obligation and inclination to live to our blessed Lord; being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. Therefore you must account christianity a crime, or you must profess the true faith, and plead Christ's cause to the utmost.

Reason 5. It is as much mens duties that profess to be christians, to dedicate their lives and all to the interest of Christ, as it is to avoid perjury, sacrilege, and hypocrisy.

These crimes are too horrid to necesitate arguments to prove that forbearance of them is a duty. Your conviction, that to neglect this dedication is thus criminal, I hope will suffice. To this end let me reason with you. Is it not perjury to violate your baptismal vow? Yea, sure the greatest. And did not you then vow to fight under Christ's banner, renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil; and that you would never be ashamed of Christ's cross? Is not your neglect of dedication of all to Christ, an
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an express violation of this vow? When you fear, or grudge, performing a christian's work, dare not profess the true faith and worship of Christ, nor engage in the supports of his gospel and truths, are not your estates and abilities dedicated to the devil, and your lusts? Is not Christ deserted, is not his cross refused, when you prostitute the concerns of your Saviour? None can do more for Christ, than the baptismal vow includes. What perjury then lies at your doors, who are no way concerned for him? Is it no sacrilege to alienate duly-dedicated things to common use, without divine allowance? Were not your souls, bodies, gifts, and all you have, dedicated to the Lord Jesus, when you were baptized in, or into, the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit? This surrender was professed, and God's propriety and disposing acknowledged: All past under the Ez. xx. rod; and God's name was enstamped on all thus devoted to his use.

Now when you neglect to honour Christ, and serve his interest with your substance, time, and gifts, do not you withhold what was consecrated, and apply it to your own carnal ends and use? Every idle cowardly christian, keeps back what is God's, and not his own. Every apostate doth the same more grofsly; every enemy to any concern of Christ, employs the consecrated things of Christ against him.
So that here is sacrilege at your door, if you improve not all for Christ's interest in your places: And this perjury and sacrilege is double in any ministers or magistrates, who are under vows and dedications, additional to what is common to all christians. Is it not hypocrisy solemnly to profess to intend, do, and be, what we neither do, nor are? Now can you deny that you profess to intend Christ's service, to advance his name and interests, and be for his praise, as witnesses to him in the world? You appear, and would be thought such, in professing to be his followers; for on these terms he admits men to wear his name;

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. There he enjoins, that self have not the disposal of us, or ours; that we follow him in his testimony and designs which he is carrying on in the world, and abet these still, tho' the cross be our daily associate. All this thou pretendest.

And now when thou refusest to dedicate thy life to Christ, dost not thou betray Christ with a kiss, affront God, and abuse men by delusive mockery, and wearest that title of hypocrite, which thou brandest the upright with? Oh! think of this, you who spend your time and estates as fuel to your lusts; not once laying to heart any engagement on you, to employ them to higher ends.

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Serm.  II.

23.
6. All living christians are chosen ones, appointed by Christ to advance his interests in their day.

Great are the purposes our Lord is accomplishing. And tho' his immediate power, or the ministry of angels, would be effective of them, yet he honours mortals as instruments therein. He overturns satan's throne, erects and propagates his own kingdom, leads men into truth and holiness, by the ministration of men like ourselves; tho' the effective virtue be from him.

All are obliged to concur; but living saints are under a more peculiar anointing for it, and more especially entrusted with it in their respective stations. He faith of every godly magistrate, This is the son of man, whom I have made strong for myself. 17. Of every holy parent, as of Abraham, For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. Its true of every upright minister, that he is set for the defence of the gospel; yea, every private christian is among them, who are an holy nation, a peculiar people; that they should show forth the praises of him, who called them into his marvellous light. The weakest christian hath some influence, and is furnished suitably to what Christ intends by him.
Is it not a great duty to discharge this glorious trust, and observe these precepts which connote our excellency as well as duty? In this respect, we are they of whom he says, *These are the people I have formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise.* If you are believers, you have a greater aptitude to serve Christ; and devotedness to his designs, is directed to you above the rest of the world.

This is but keeping up our holy profession, which Christ is so intent on. And what engagements had other saints to transmit to us Christ's truth and worship, which we are not under to imitate in our day, for the good of following ages?

What good do we enjoy? What advantage doth the cause of Christ now reap by the expence and labours of christians in former days; yea, by the blood of many faithful martyrs?

Shall then any thing dear to Christ, be so trivial with us, as not to command the utmost service or suffering? We owe Christ as much as others ever did; we cost him as dear; he hath forgiven us as much, if not more; we hope to be possessed of the same glory; and his interests in our day, are likely to be attended with more glorious success.

If your hearts be not obstinate against what God enjoineth, you must engage in this duty, which is so apparent by these reasons,
reasons, to which many more might be added. Can you, after all I have said, let any gasping concern of Christ want the utmost aid, which you are able to afford it duly, and in your places? Or, dare you do any thing fatal to it, whatever be your temptations? I am led to the application of this truth, which I shall attend under these following particulars.

S E C T. II.

1st Exhort. I would call such of you to deep repentance, who have employed your lives and abilities in opposing the interests of Christ.

What I shall say under this head, is not designed to upbraid or reproach any man; much less to hinder peace with, and love to the most guilty, when you become sensible of the provocation God layeth to your charge: And least of all would I be interpreted to impeach the innocent, to whom the things perpetrated by men under any distinguishing character with them, must needs be afflictive.

My aim is only to bring you to repentance, if so be your hearts are not so desperately hardened, as to bind on yourselves those woes, which so unchristian a behaviour hath exposéd you to. I am induced to this unpleasing work, by the opportunity.
nity which this mixed congregation affords me of speaking to such, whom I expect not to meet elsewhere; and I fear, this admonition to you, is too much neglected by such, from whom it might be better resented.

Repentance is the great design of the present providences we are under, and the best expedient to prevent the evils we are threatened with. God will embitter that profane and persecuting spirit which hath raged in the church of England; and tho' forgiveness be our duty, yet providence levels its arrows against the guilty, in a manner too extraordinary to be disregarded; but how few consider the dealings of God, even when clothed with the greatest light and wonder?

I know the guilty have ignorance enough to impute to their zeal for truth, what they have done from their innate enmity to Christ; but mistakes do not acquit in a matter so important; and persecutors never ruin the godly under a good character, but think they do God good service, in destroying whomever they can call factious, or schismatical. The concern of Christ is too hid, not to be oft mistaken by sinners; For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. And profane persecutors do as truly wound Christ in his doctrines, worship, and members, as if they laid violent hands on his very person.

John xvi. 2.
1 Cor. ii. 7, 8.
Oh profane ones! who else could it be but Christ, whom you opposed in his members, whilst you persecuted the most serious imitators of him, and men, of all their neighbours, most devoted to him?

Was it not Christ, in his gospel, you despised, when you ridiculed the most essential doctrines of his gospel?

Have you not acted against Christ in his ministers, whilst you stopped the mouths of such, who were as likely to advance his interests by their ministry as any others; yea, and to this added a heap of malicious lies and slanders, left Christ might be served by them?

Have you not hated, and laden with contempt, the most probable evidences of real holiness; as a strict life, serious discourse, and holy tenderness?

Is it not the special testimony of Christ in your day, which you have resifted, when you disabled from service, and exposed to extreme hardships, all that considerable number who stand and suffer for this, viz. That the ministry of the gospel, and the communion of saints, ought not to be clogg'd with sinful, needless, or uninstituted terms and practices, to the wounding of conscience, dividing the church, hazarding the reformed interest, and destruction of christian love and serious piety?

What hath all your pretence been, but a zeal for what yourselves call indifferent?
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II. rent? And for these you have hated, oppos'd, and almost at last quite ruined the undoubted interests of the blessed Jesus. How much have you done to give a fatal wound to the very form of your religion, not to be recovered by a little unseasonable noise?

Surely its high time that your personal irreligion and profaneness should force you to suspect, that you are not so likely to know or serve the cause of Christ, as others, so much more pious and concerned than yourselves.

Ought you not at least to fear, you have been acted by the Devil against Christ, especially when you reflect on the methods you have used? Would Christ have put you to serve him by lying, perjury, profane scoffing, and cruel persecution, to the utmost of your power? Were fabbaths spent by you in disturbing meetings, as if you were the men that designed to serve Christ thereby? If nothing else will cause you to suspect, that enmity against Christ did govern you, consider how you treated any of your own church, who were pious and serious: How much more were they valued by you, than we whom you pretended some difference with, as cause of dislike?

God calls you by me to deep humblings for these things: Be convinced and ashamed of your opposition to him; and be assured,
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If you repent not, you shall all perish. Can Serm. II. Luke xix. 34.

You pretend so much as to say, To me to live is Christ, who would have Christ and holiness, have as little interest in others as they have in yourselves? Was it not too much that yourselves did not live to Christ, but that you must grudge and ruin any that did live to him?

How will you answer the Lord Jesus, when he shall ask you, Why persecutest thou me? What account can you give of all your hard speeches uttered against him, his truths, and people? Must not you fear you have filled up your sins, and the wrath of God is come upon you to the uttermost, by forbidding the ministers of Christ to preach his gospel? How must you wail, when he shall at his appearance convince you, that you have pierced him in your evil treatment of those men and things, which he will then own to be his interests?

In pity to your souls, consider, Is this you have done suitable to your baptismal vow? Doth your profession of christianity oblige you to do nothing for Christ and his cause, except venting your scoff and rage against things wherein his interest seemeth most concerned? The Lord fasten these things on your hearts, and force you to a repentance as notorious as your scandal.

I speak not these things, as if repentance were confined to you; we have all need
II. Having said what I think myself engaged to suggest to profane and persecuting ones, I must solemnly warn you against all censorious thoughts and evil speeches, against any godly ministers or people of the church of England; their differences with us will not justify uncharitable surmises, nor reproachful language against them. All good men aim at one thing, even to serve Christ, tho' they do not agree always in the means. God serves himself by the different sentiments of his people, and hath his own methods to convince and cement them; greater union is reserved for that new Jerusalem that will descend out of heaven from God, that beareth the form of a cube; its of one measure, and there carnal interests will not divide.

2d Exhort. Let all real christians live more entirely to the service of Christ and his interests.

You may be humbled that you have done no more for him, and that your unusefulness to his concerns, is imputable to your remiss temper, more than want of talents. How many of your gifts were never employed to advance truth? His members have been in straits, and his gospel...
pel languishing, when your riches were hoarded up. Many neglected opportunities of service must reproach you, when the frame of your hearts bespeak them tender. Many have been your industrious contrivances, wherein Christ hath had the least, if any share.

Oh! be awakened this day to strong resolves, that hereafter to you to live shall be Christ; yea, only Christ, and all other interests subordinated to his. Let all you have be laid anew on his altar. Get your hearts lifted up in the ways of the Lord; and be wholly for him, whatever choice shall be made by others. Satan's instruments are industrious, unwearied, and prodigal in his service. Christ hath but few engaged in his behalf; and shall the declinings of his interests lay at your door?

I shall annex some directions and motives.

Direct. I. Exercise yourselves in the advancement of the interests of Christ in your own souls.

If Christ reign wholly in us, he will reign greatly by us. Grow up into Christ in all things, till you are filled with all the fulness of God; and your capacity and readiness for his advancement will be enlarged. Be more acquainted with him, and you will judge him worth your service, and highly value all that is his. Flaming grace will contrive much: What can I serve
Serm. serve Christ in, and freely consecrate all to him? Whereas our backwardness is an infallible sign that his life is feeble in us. In a word, he that neglects Christ in himself, will be little fit for, or concerned in, the advancement of Christ in the world; nor indeed be blessed with much success in his attempts for it.

Direct. 2. See that your aims be sincere in all which you seem to serve Christ by.

Low or bad purposes spoil good works. God trieth the heart, (in our best services) and loveth uprightness. Good sermons were spoiled by envy, and charitable deeds by ostentation. Its unhappy when our hearts have not higher aims for Christ, than our hands at best can accomplish; but its wicked, when what we seem to offer to Christ, is a sacrifice to our idols.

Direct. 3. Cheerfully dedicate all you have to the concerns of Christ.

Its a cursed wedge which is reserved from this dedication, whether it be estate, relation, gifts or life. What Ananias spared, spoiled the acceptance of the part he offered. Tho' it be not always necessary all should be parted with, yet it is necessary that nothing be unemployed, when fidelity to Christ calls for it; and it ceaseth to be yours, when it cannot be kept without treachery to his interests. As all must be dedicated, so it must be cheerfully laid out,
out, as what is fit and best. None but Serm. free-will offerings, and a cheerful giver, II. are lovely in God's account. Its left on record as the praise of some, *They took joy-

fily the spoiling of their goods.* Indeed, the hardest thought in our greatest toils and expence for Christ, should be; Blessed be God, that I have any thing to express my love and zeal for Christ by.

Direct. 4. Be always solicitous to know what the interests of Christ are, which you should at present serve; especially if there be doubts concerning them.

The gospel is an infallible rule in general; providence and the series of prophesies may contribute to your direction, under the guidance of that higher rule. Undoubted duties must always be done in their season; undoubted truths must never be denied, yea, must always be professed, if some damage to the interests of Christ do not attend it, beyond what our profession of that truth, at that time, will counter-vail; doubtful sins must never be committed; undoubted sins must be discouraged in our place. Present good, which is less, may not be bought by the certain loss of a greater good at some distance; nor at the expense of a greater evil in sure prospect. The more material interests of Christ must not be sacrificed to those less considerable, nor undoubted to doubtful.

I can but glance at these.

You
Advancement of Christ's Interests,

Serm. You ought to be assured in everything you engage in as for Christ, that it be his concern and your work; yea, your present duty, which a greater is not excluded by. Assurance in this will command your engaging for it, and encourage under all difficulties in it.

Rom. x. 2. Mistakes herein cause great disorders, kindle a fiery zeal, which is oft fatal to the concerns of Christ; and whatever we do to advance these mistaken interests, are offerings to a lust, and unprofitable to ourselves. It would amaze one to see the heat of some in supporting errors, opposing truth, destroying peace, and propagating a weak notion, to the hazard of the most considerable interests of Christ.

But yet our indifference is carnal, when Christ seemeth by his providence, by Satan's violent assault, or by the great influence of a truth at that time, to call us to engage strongly in it, though it appears at other times less momentous. To say no more, search well what will be most for Christ's glory.

Direct. 5. Mortify those lusts which most hinder, and improve in those graces which most forward your living entirely to Christ.

Mens lusts are their greatest obstacles to service; and its impossible to advance Christ considerably, if improved graces afford not willingness and strength: Therefore
the End of a Christian's Life.

II.

fore trample on your pride which will disdain low service, and fret at any contempt which attends your labours; but be more humble, and you'll agree to be any thing, so Christ may be all. Be more free from covetousness, which grudgeth all expence and loss for Christ, selleth truth to get or save a little dross; but get more heavenly-mindedness, which disdains earth, so it may but get more treasure in heaven. Cast away that slavish fear which betrays conscience to a mortal's threatening; but be more endowed with holy courage, which will dare to be zealous for Christ in the very face of danger. Silence unbelief that still suggests difficulties, but hides from you both supplies of strength and the promised rewards; whereas more faith will still enlarge your service, in the view of sufficient aids, and an eternal crown. Above all, trample on selfishness, which most devoureth our talents; whereas a publick spirit, and superlative love to Christ, would constrain your consecration of all to him, as one well deserving of it.

Direct. 6. I might add, that you ought to manage all your designed service, as may be most conducive to the advancement of these interests of Christ.

Great prudence is necessary to give an advantage to all our undertakings, that the success we aim at be not prevented.

But
But I have no more time than to conclude all with a few motives to this duty.

1st Mot. It's the interest of Christ I am persuading you to dedicate your lives to. It's that Christ who hath so amazingly denied himself for you, to whom you owe so much, from whom you have received, and still expect, such great things. Can you behold any thing as his concernment, and not be enflamed with zeal? Oh! what honour is it to serve him! Being his interests, they must needs deserve our regard, and command our industry: This glorious One would not stake his glory, and set his heart on trifles; and who but the unbelieving and ungrateful can grudge him any thing? Methinks a reflection on any thing as his concern, would inspire with all that can en vigor ate our attempts.

2d Mot. It's but our lives, at most, which are to be dedicated to him. They are short, and so its but a little while, and the hardship is over. They are but poor and mean things to be an offering so acceptable to him. Alas! how inconsiderable is all we can do or suffer, that they should reflect any glory on him who fills the heavens, and is now (by us) raising a monument which will be admired for ever? Who would not strive to contribute most to his blessed designs? How can our little matters be laid out to so great purposes?

3d Mot.
3d Mot. In serving the interests of Serm. Christ, we do, in the best manner, serve our own.

What we do for him, he doth not need; but if we refuse it, we are undone. We must shortly reckon for all talents; and how uncomfortable will the account be, when little can be reckoned as placed to Christ's account?

But there is gain by the most costly service, and profit by the worst of hardships; the advantage is more than *an hundred fold*; if you live to him, you shall ever live with him; a share in his glory will be yours, if you partake in his concerns: *If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.* How wisely is our all laid out, when it will yield such great returns? Look upward, and see what mansions Christ is preparing for you, whilst you are labouring and laying out yourselves for him; and he is like to receive the most illustrious crown, who yields the greatest service. Surely you are injurious to yourselves in sparing any seed now, when you have Christ's word for so vast an increase: *He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; but he that soweth bountifully, shall also reap bountifully.* Oh! into what a state will you soon pass from an useful life? *To die will be gain, if to you to live be Christ.* In eternity you will find all your endeavours carefully *died.*
Must not you say, From this moment, Whatever I can do, and all that I possess, shall be devoted to him and his interests. Engage then in his service; you have angels and all saints sharers with you in the undertaking, and Christ at the head of this royal company. They are interests will stand, tho' you refuse to assist; they do still advance, tho' invisibly to us. If you dedicate not your lives to the concerns of Christ, you must lay them out for the devil; one of them is served at all times, and by all persons. Faithful service will give a great testimony to the Lord Jesus, and yield wonderful advantage to such under your influence, whose good you are inclined to endeavour. You will prejudice no interest by this, but the interests of the devil, which commenced and grow still on the manifest ruins of mankind; and ought you not to oppose him, to whose usurpation are owing all the disorders and calamities in the world; which evils are redressed to the degree of the advancement of the interests of Christ, and no further.

Can you, after all this, refuse to bemoan the world, where so many opposite interests are set up against Christ; and pity sinners, who so blindly resist, and impatiently bear, the merciful and just attempts of the Lord Jesus?
Jesus? Must not every soul echo to the apostle in my text, Now to me to live is Christ?

The whole discourse is so applicable to your Lordship and brethren, that I need no more than intreat, yea, charge you to act, in your places, as men to whom to live is Christ. Let not any opportunity for service to him, bring your souls under the guilt of negligence, nor yield Christ matter to upbraid you with. A trust is in your hands, see that the ends of God be faithfully answered: Consider that place, Thou Ps. lx. 4, hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Resolve then, in your station, that if Christ gain not by our power, our consciences shall not reproach us with refusing to dedicate all our abilities to him, whose glory we chiefly aimed at, and to whose interest we are fully devoted.
The Protestants Deliverance from the Irish Rebellion, begun October 23, 1641.

BEING A Thanksgiving-SERMON PREACHED

The 23d of October, 1689.
TO THE
READER.

AVING lived many years in Ireland, where much of my temporal concerns do yet remain, I think myself more especially concerned in such providences as affect that kingdom. The present state thereof directs us to mourning and prayer, as our ordinary employ; however, I was content, for once, to take down the harp from the willows, and make a thankful mention of our past deliverance. Great are the praises due to our God, for saving the Protestant interest from the Irish rebellion begun in forty-one. Thou wilt find somewhat in this sermon that may command thy wonder, and thereby heighten thy acknowledgments. Herewith I have joined
joined some hints referring to the hopefulness of Ireland's redemption from its present distress, with directions to such a temper, as may hasten a period to our hardships.

But how difficult is it to convince men, that their danger or safety is decided by God's sentence; and that their carriage, with respect to him, hath a greater influence in determining the condition of a people, than all second causes?

The common neglect of approving ourselves to God by repentance, suggests to me those fears, which for several months I have mentioned, and again expressed in this discourse; viz. That the deliverance of Ireland will not be so sudden or easy as most conclude.

It's no slight matter with me, that such as have fled hither, so little answer the purpose of God, in driving us from our estates and dwelling. Who can think we are suffering God's rebukes, when we still
still add to our provocations? In-
temperance, pride, formality, divi-
sions, and levity in Irish Protestants,
are indecent, because we are a spoil-
ed people; they declare the greatest
obstinacy, being we are under the
loudest calls of God by afflictions;
they argue the grossest madness, as
they obstruct the return of our bles-
sings, for which we are so impa-
tient. Can we imagine that he who
hath begun a controversy with us,
will not force our amendment, or
prolong our hardships?

We are under too plain indica-
tions of unfitness to receive or im-
prove a new deliverance; among
other testimonies thereof, How sad-
ly is a small beginning, or presage
of it, abused? Londonderry, so
wonderfully preserved by the con-
curring help of all Protestants there,
is become a bone of contention. Un-
expected success hath made it a thing
too angrily disputed, who had the
greatest hand in it; tho' its plain
what
what men must have sustained the reproach, if that city, and the interest it was concerned with, had been overcome. But now, what God in a manner wrought alone, people endeavour to ascribe to this or that sort: What God accomplished for the common good of Protestants, men are appropriating to the sole benefit of their several parties. Had conformists and dissenters disputed thus in their dangers, or foreseen these debates, the consequences had been fatal. For my part, I adore the providence that inclined the church of England to join with those dissenters who had shut the gates: Their union was their strength; and they became united on necessary terms, and mutual allowances. The church of England-men laid by the doctrine of non-resistance; the dissenters waved the advantage of their number in choosing the officers; indeed they had more reason to induce them to this.
it was not a time to indulge ambition; military skill was very small among the ordinary people of the dissenters; for many years they were not admitted into any employ, yea, oft disarmed; and most of their leading persons gone; so that its much they had so many dissenting officers as they had. Blessed be God, that managed that multitude to so great purposes; officers could have little influence over them, when they were made by themselves; and who, without money, can be expected to govern a body of mere volunteers, further than their common sentiments lead them?

Is this a matter to serve little ends by; and that whilst there are difficulties enough before us, to try the vigour of Protestants, however united? Durst I speak heaven's mind by this affair of Derry, for the conduct of our present King, I should say; God will preserve the protestant religion, and their majesties,
To the Reader.

ties, by the united force of conformists and dissenters; leaving out, that the dissenters must be ten to one, as they were in Londonderry. Further, I should think it a reward sufficient for us, if all the church of England would now glory in this action as theirs, and that I never see such a change of things, as to prevail with any of them, to re-proach any man as no true member of their church, for having a hand therein.

I am solicited to vindicate the dissenters from some late reflections made on them by a right reverend prelate of Ireland; but I think it no proper work to irritate any, while I am calling all to repentance, that our desolations may not become perpetual. I can engage for myself, and many others, that nothing but sin shall prevent my compliance with the national settlement of the church; yea, if any thing that is sinful be removed, I shall be thank-
ful to God, that the nation is become so far more innocent. Non-conformity is neither so profitable nor creditable, as to induce a fondness of it, when providence shall once remove the things that render it as yet our duty.

Yet I would intreat all persons not to be angry with us, that we do not change our judgment of things on their bare assertions. Degrees of light are not equal; and a judgment of private discretion must be allowed every man, as to his own practice; tho' that justifieth no deviation from the divine rule.

And the more the constitutions of the church are accommodated to that rule, the more easily will a people be gathered under her wings.

The Lord grant that the awful providences we are under, may abate all selfishness, and incline our souls to holiness and peace; that so God may restore Ireland to its happy state, and prevent new forfeitures,
tures, by mortifying all those sins which have exposed us to our present anguish. This is that which we ought all to desire; and were we answered therein, other matters were soon adjusted. I will only add, that importunity extorts this sermon from me; I had no design when I preached it, nor a fortnight after, to publish it; but if God is pleased to bless it to the good of any, it will satisfy

Thy Servant, in our

Nov. 11, 1689. Common Lord,

Daniel Williams.
I Samuel xvii. 37.

David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and the paw of the bear; he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.

I was willing to fix on a sermon subject which might lead me to mention our past deliverance, as matter of praise; and to hint at our present dangers, so as to prevent our despondency: My thoughts soon entertain'd this text, as apt for both purposes. Here is a great deliverance recited; He delivered me out of the paw of the lion. And from this another deliverance is concluded; He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. In the former, his own life, and his father's flock, were concerned; on the latter depended the welfare of all Israel. The anointing which David received by Samuel, fitted him for the first, and that was a pledge of the latter; which was the first noted step to the throne designed for him. The text is some addition
A Thanksgiving-Sermon.

Serm. addition to ver. 36. That verse afferts his

III. conquest past and expected; but here he

acknowledgeth God as the principal author

of his success, whereof he gloried; q. d.

I flew the lion and bear, as the instrument;

but it was in the virtue, and by the aid of

the Almighty that I did it. God wrought

therein by my hand; I was but a youth,

those beasts were more than a match for a

man; yet God rescued me out of their

power, and enabled me to destroy them as

contemptible things: I took him by the

beard.

Hence he infers, that the displays of

God's power would not be wanting in this

new and more momentous occasion: He

will deliver me. David had an impulse

warranting him to this encounter; a reve-

lation persuaded him of success. He might

in general conclude it, from what Samuel

had said concerning his being king of Is-

rael, which must have failed if he were

now overcome: But no doubt a conquest

was particularly suggested at once with the

impulse which pressed him to this engage-

ment.

The design of the whole is to direct

Saul to due acknowledgments of God,

and to encline him to suffer David to

encounter Goliab, who defied the armies

of Israel with such contempt: q. d. En-

trust me in this affair, notwithstanding my

youth and unskilfulness, God that hath

owned
owned me in a matter as dangerous, will supply my defects, and cause me to prosper by his all-sufficient power at this time.

Two observations from the words will introduce what is apposite to our occasion.

Observ. 1. All deliverances ought to be ascribed to God as the author; and he should be owned according to what is signal in those deliverances.

Observ. 2. Past deliverances are some ground to hope that God will yet deliver.

In treating of the first of these, my work is to explain what may have any difficulty, to prove that truth which is asserted, and then apply it to the deliverance we commemorate.

All will be contained in the following heads.

Sect. I.

I. A deliverance is the freeing of persons from some inflicted or impending evil: Its an evil we are freed from, or exemption from it is not worth the name of deliverance: There is some obnoxiousness to, or dangers of that evil, or it is no deliverance.

Deliverances are various, according to the several sorts of endangering mishiefs.
There are eternal miseries, with respect to which we are delivered from the wrath to come. Salvation from any other calamities, are a light matter to this, and leave us miserable without it. What avails escaping the lion’s paw, if we fall into the devil’s clutches? Temporal deliverances will soon be forgotten in endless flames.

There are spiritual evils, from which we are freed by preventing grace, renewing grace, or pardoning mercy; the first secures from the actual commission of many sins, the second from the habitual dominion of all sin, the third from the guilt of our transgressions, which otherwise binds us to punishment, privative and positive.

There are corporal evils of sundry sorts, from each of which a deliverance receives its name. A deliverance is sometimes complete, viz. when the mischief doth not at all touch us, or when none of it remaineth, tho’ suffered for a time. Sometimes the deliverance is partial, as when it happeneth, that tho’ we are safe from part of the distress, yet some degree thereof continueth: As in the case of Israel, I will grant them some deliverance; nevertheless they shall be servants, that they may know my service, and the service of the countries. There are personal and publick deliverances, &c. Each deliverance supposeth us actually hurt, or some way in danger of it. Whether it be from this, or that kind of
of misery we are saved, all are comprehended in this general.

2. All deliverances should be ascribed to God, as the author of them. Whatever kind they be of, however few or many, of all its true, that

(i.) God is the author of deliverances, whoever be the instrument. God puts in his claim as of old; I am the Lord thy God. Hos. xiii: from the Land of Egypt, thou shalt know no God but me; for there is no Saviour besides me. When the instrument seems most probable, he is the deliverer. The worthies of David set themselves in the midst of that parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord saved them by a great deliverance. When second causes are weak, its grossly stupid not to see his hand: He gives means their aptitude, who instructs with wisdom, whereby men are politic: He teaches my hands to war. Who endueth the spirit with courage, or the arm with strength? It is God that girdeth me with strength, and makes my way prosperous.

The success of all means depends on him: The victory is the Lord's. The proud helpers stoop under him, if he withdraw not his anger. To convince men of this, he oft waves the ordinary course of things, baffling the strong, who seems to have conquest in his grasp, while he giveth triumph to the feeble. The multitude are made a prey
Thanksgiving-Sermon.

prey to a small number; yea, God hath refused numbers, lest the people should vaunt themselves against him, and say, My own hand hath saved me. Who can, on a strict observation, disown that deliverances call this God their father, and the highest means are subordinate to him? He subdues the enemy, whoever gives the stroke:

Thou subduest before them the inhabitants of the land, and gavest them their land. Its God that calls and summons instruments:

I commanded my sanctified ones, I have called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness, &c. The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. Its he that strikes terror into the hearts of enemies, and hides counsel from them, whereby the men of might do loose their hands, and their knowledge becomes foolish. So that which way ever he exerts his power, salvation is of the Lord.

(2.) Hence it followeth, that all deliverances should be ascribed to this blessed God; the principal efficient may well claim the honour of the effect; every man ought to say from the heart, The Lord is my fortress, and my deliverer. He permits dangers, to excite mankind to seek his help; and thereby heighten their acknowledgments. Every deliverance is a witness for God, and ought to be a remembrancer to our sluggish minds: His own arm got him the victory; the Lord hath made known his salvation,
salvation, and his righteousness hath been openly shewed in the sight of the heathen: And thence we are called to exalt him. Ascribing the glory hereof to him, is a fit homage to the discoveries of his power. When his arm is made bare, how profane is it not to ascribe strength to our God? Ps. lxviii.
Praise is a tribute of gratitude to his goodness, expressing itself in every such relief. Where God's kindness so discernably engageth our regards, its the basest ingratitude not thankfully to own our Saviour. Who must not expect to be left to the next danger, that ascribeth not to God the honour of past deliverances? Our minds are distempered, if they be remiss to so poor a return under so great engagements. In every deliverance, the infinitely glorious God compassionates the distressed, and engageth his power and wisdom in their concernsments. On their behalf (tho' oft base and wicked) he stirs up himself, and commands salvation by the appearance of his glory.

These acknowledgments are but the reflections of that glory from a well-disposed soul, capable to observe, and willing to own it. If there be any light in our minds, we must see that this hath the Lord done. If there be any love to God in our hearts, affectionate resentments will intermingle with our convictions, and from both an offering of due praise will ascend to
to him as our Redeemer from all evils:

III. The very Pagans thought sacrifices due to their idols after a victory.

(3.) The last part of the observation is, That God ought to be owned according to all that is signal in a deliverance: Some pieces of providence are more curiously wrought. The footsteps of God are more discernably impressed, yea, his very image seems enstamped on them. Many things concur to set off his power, wisdom, and goodness, in a brighter light; these are called his wonderful works; in them we may direct ourselves to God, as Moses did; Thy right hand is become glorious in power, thou hast appeared in the greatness of thine excellency. He oft fills a salvation with wonders; we can fix our eye on no part of it, but there occurs somewhat extraordinary; somewhat too difficult for a leffer strength than omnipotent; somewhat too excellent for a lower hand than what's divine; with instances hereof are the scriptures full. Thus it was when God so immediately avenged his peoples cause, by his plagues on the Egyptian task-masters.

He made the waters a wall of defence for their feeble army, while he treasured a deluge to overthrow the host of their strong pursuers.

Amalek's success is limited by their prayers. How miraculously did he ruin the confederate forces of the five kings before
before Gideon? Hail-stones devoured more
than the sword; and that darkness might
not abate the deliverance, the sun and moon
stand still until the people had avenged
themselves. Jericho's walls fall down with-
out any battery, besides the sound of rams
horns, and the shout of the people.

Gideon, and three hundred men, with
pitchers and trumpets, destroy an army
numerous as the sand by the sea-side.

A thousand fell by a jaw-bone of an
ass in the hand of Sampson; and Shamgar
flew six hundred with an ox goad.

God saved Israel by Jonathan, and his
armour-bearer; but it was by causing a
trembling in the host; the garrison and the
spoilers trembled, and the earth quaked; the
multitude melted away; they went beating
down one another, every man's sword was
against his fellow.

Of a like nature was the discomfeiture
of Benhadad, with thirty-two kings assist-
ing, by the two hundred thirty-two young
men; and afterward a small party flew a
hundred thousand, because they said the
God of Israel is not God of the vallies.

When Hezekiah is in a perplexity, an an-
gel slays 180000 men.

The Jews are rescued from a destruc-
tion, near to be executed, by the interrup-
tion of Ahashuerus's sleep.

Time would fail, should I enumerate
the deliverances which carry with them the
astonishing
S E R M. astonishing indications of the divine arm.

III. Some are recommended by the extremity of the dangers, others by the improbability of the instruments. Oftentimes the methods God is pleased to choose, are so remarkable, that a disregard is scarce consistent with the grossest stupidity.

Whatever is signal deserves our notice; they are beams of divine glory, which creatures ought to entertain with strict observation. To huddle over the wonders of God, or view them by epitomes, is too expressive of a contempt of God, and an abject spirit; whereas the works of the Lord are sought out of all them that have pleasure therein; his works are honourable and glorious.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

I S H A L L now apply what I have said, to that which called us together at this time. My work is to rear a pillar, and engrave this inscription:

The Lord delivered Ireland from a bloody and horrid Rebellion, begun the 23d of October, 1641.

Popish craft so imposed of late on the foolish temper of some, as that it was become a doubt with them, whether there was an Irish rebellion; by such it was complemented with the title of a civil war.

F o r t y-
Forty-five years had reconciled them to the barbarities they had not felt; the Irish were all become innocents, popery was grown tame and good-natured. I hope such at least, as share in the present calamity, are too concerned to remain infidels.

Such seeming Protestants you wanted not in England, who denied the popish plot till they saw it executed; yea, then seemed to favour it so much, as to disbelieve it still.

We are come hither to make mention of that mercy God extended to us; I wish all of you, that belong to Ireland, may own God with affections becoming that deliverance. Its matter of reproof against Israel, that they remembered not the day when God delivered them from the enemy. Let not the remissness of our souls, spoil our seeming remembrance of that time.

For your assistance, I shall,

I. Represent to you some things that were signal in this deliverance.

II. Direct you to such acknowledgments of God, as become a deliverance so great.

The first may serve as an argument to enforce the latter, because acknowledgments should bear some proportion to the greatness of our mercy. The deliverance of Ireland was not common, every thing therein was eminent; the things which
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Sermon. Sincerely made other deliverances great, all meet in this. Let us instance some of them.

1. It was a deliverance from the aw
fullest evils; it was from the Irish, the most savage of christians; from Popery, the worst system that pretends to the name of religion. The calamity was not small; we may truly be spoken of in those words, He sent his word and healed them, he delivered them from their destructions. This will appear,

(1.) If we reflect on what the Protestants of Ireland did suffer, as far as the Irish prevailed.

What a number lost their lives by violence! The land was become an aceldema. Two hundred thousand Protestants were destroyed by these bloody men. Many, at the first breaking out of this rebellion, were invited to feasts by the Irish, and butchered at the entertainment, without the least warning: Mere dying was a kindness; tediousness and barbarity must heighten their slaughters; they stripped multitudes, and forced them to perish by cold and famine in that hard winter. Crowds were burnt together in barns; many driven into rivers, and such as attempted to escape, were forced back to perish in the waters. Women with child they ripped open; poor babes they tossed on pikes, as pleasing sport. Candles were made of man's grease;
grease; no entreaties of women or children could induce to pity: A conceit of merit excited their bloody inclinations. Women exceeded the men in rage, if possible. Their enmity extended to all that bare but an English name; houses and improvements they laid waste; they would cut collops out of the English cattle, and let them live in torment.

Where was there a house in their power, that had not the inhabitants slaugtered? how few children left to mourn for their murdered parents? or women to be moan their butchered husbands or children? Scarce a family in Ireland that groaned not for some massacred relations. What shall I say? It was an epitome of the worst mischiefs the earth at any time beheld; the devil seemed to boast to what rage and cruelty he could instigate corrupted nature. All these villanies they exercised, when enjoying their religion, and civil immunities, in common with the English, and no way provoked by them.

From these men we were delivered; from these very men you in England were lately saved. That you may be thus managed by these persons, is the desire of such who press the restauration of the late king, who hath no other instruments, except the French, he can confide in.

(2.) Let us further take notice, what yet greater miseries the Irish Protestants must
Serm. must have suffered, if Ireland had not been delivered.

They who survived the former attempts, must either have been destroyed as their dead friends, or exposed to penury and contempt by flight, or undo their souls by idolatrous compliance. Popery had reigned in that country, and gospel-worship and doctrine had been utterly banished, if this salvation had been denied us. This acccents that deliverance; thereby God prevented the establishment of spiritual abominations, and revived his own interests, and the pledges of his gracious presence there. Our salvation was great, as it secured us from Popery, which includes the utmost repugnancy to the essential designs and nature of the christian religion.

Instead of knowledge, ignorance is by principle urged, as most tending to devotion.

How is God worshipped, when the greatest expressions of worship are paid to angels, saints, and images? To them they offer incense, prostrate themselves, invoke them in the second person. Its true, they say their worship terminates not in those lower objects; but the generality of their ignorant followers are tempted to think otherwise, especially when the most agree, that the same worship is given to the image and the exemplars; and few of the ignorant can
can exert any act of the mind, whereby the worship is to pass from the image to God himself; neither by the determination of their best casuists, is such an act needful; a virtual termination is sufficient. The idolatry of the Pagans is equally justifiable; they declared, We believe not the copper or gold, whereof the images are made, to be God; but in these materials we adore those, that sacred dedication introduceth, and causeth to dwell in the images.

Further, if the bread and wine remain in the eucharist after consecration, they own themselves guilty of the grossest idolatry; for the council of Trent declares, That what we bodily receive in that sacrament, is to be worshipped with the supreme worship Latria. Now what can be more evident, than that the substance of bread and wine remain after consecration? The Spirit of God again and again calls it bread: It could not be the broken body of Christ at the time of institution, for he was not yet crucified; the blood of the new testament was not shed, which must be the dying blood of the testator. It destroys the nature of a sacrament to suppose no sensible representation, and brings the thing represented from an object of faith, to be an object of sense. This conceit of theirs enervateth the testimony given to the person and doctrine of Christ.
Serm. Christ by all his miracles; they might be all forgeries, at least the spectators were not sure the miracles were performed, tho' they saw them with their eyes. If you allow not our senses to be judges of their proper objects, farewell all evidence and certainty of reason, yea, of faith itself. Upon this sordid supposal, that its not bread we eat, tho' we feel, taste, and see it to be bread, depends their acquittal from the grossest idolatry, themselves being judges.

There is an idolatry forbidden in the second commandment, viz. worshipping God by an uninstituted medium: This all their distinctions cannot evade; and most of their worship is grossly chargeable thereby.

From this idolatry in a people, once a church of Christ, Rome comes to be called the Great Whore. So far is her plea, That she was once a church, from securing her present church-state under her spiritual adulteries, that she could not be an idolatrous whore, had she not sometimes been a church. Compare Hof. ii. 2, 4. with Rev. xix. 1.

The honour of Christ is as much debased by Popery, tho' the exaltation of it be the great design of christianity. His royalties are usurped by the universal headship, dispensing with his laws, altering his institutions, imposing new articles of faith, and
and terms of life. He hath no title nor peculiarity, but what the virgin, or some other faint or pope, is crowned with.

His mediatorship is divided among thousands of rivals; each priest offers a propitiatory sacrifice in every mass. Some of the best authors affirm the saints do intercede in the virtue of their own merits; the most modest impeach Christ as unwilling to intercede, without their minding of him; or unable to prevail with God without their concurrence. Thus the old daemon-worship is revived.

But I have not time to hint at the general heads of their abomination.

Popery is as fatal to civil society, as to souls. What security have Protestants of their estates, when as heretics and excommunicate, they have forfeited all, and any man may make the seizure? Their lives are as ill secured, when its meritorious to kill them. All compacts are excluded by their doctrine of equivocation; and the grossest villanies may be allowed of by that of good intention; Suarez, Angelus, Lopes, &c. all agree.

Kings are bound to be destroyers of their Protestants subjects, on pain of excommunication and deposition: Should he bind


b Conc. Tr. 6. c. 2. Can. 3. Longobard. l. 4. dift. 45.

bind himself by never so many oaths, or promises to them, they must not be kept with them because hereticks. On this bottom the Irish acted, when they destroyed such Protestants as surrender'd to them on articles.

Instead of answering any holy purpose, Popery is a system of politicks to enslave the nations, and aggrandize the clergy: Its calculated for all tempers; it stoops so low, as to provide a pardon to delude such who resolve not to change their lives.

Have we not cause to esteem this salvation great in this respect? We were saved from Rome, whose hierarchy wants not one mark of the antichrift; from the Roman-church, that mother of abominations, whence so many christian churches derived the infection; in which meet the several enormities of Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon; which names the Spirit stigmatizeth her with, as having respect to her filthiness, cruelty, and idolatry. God saved us from the greatest hazard of eternal misery, which he threateneth for compliance with this church, (since the reformed churches were erected) above any other sect or party.


* Well did Pope Martin V. fix this on the Duke of Lithuania, Scito te mortaliter peccare si fidem servabis datam hareticis. Cochleus Hist. Hift. lib. 5.*
If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wrath of God, &c. And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and of the lamb.

Thus you have our deliverance considered, as to the mischiefs Ireland was redeemed from.

2. The danger and obnoxiousness of Ireland to these forest miseries were great, and scarce avoidable.

Extreme hazards do heighten a deliverance. On this account also was our salvation great. Whence could we expect it? what was there to render it probable? The boasts of the Irish were not esteemed vain, considering their advantages, whilst our hopes were on the confines of despair. All prospect of relief was reduced to a small point of time, and means least promising.

The design of this rebellious insurrection was universally laid, which succeeded in most places according to their project. People from several counties were secretly lodged in Dublin, without any publick observation. Matters were so far prepared, that all things promised success, and in a very few hours to be put in execution, by surprise.

Rev. xiv. 9, 10.

He shall be racked with anguish of mind, and torments of body.
surprising the castle and stores: But he
who makes one in the most secret designs,
interposed in this extremity, and saved the
city and castle by a seasonable discovery,
in this manner:

**One Macmohan** acquainted **Owen O**
**Conally** (another Irishman) with all their
purposes. **O Conally** urged him to discover
it, which did expose him to suspicion and
threatenings. They being jealous of him,
would not suffer him to go out of their
company: But, late at night, **O Conally**
pretended necessity to ease himself; they
sent one with him as a guard, but he
leaped over a fence, and so escaped, and
acquainted Sir **William Parsons** (one of the
justices) with the plot, That the **Irish** were
in the city, that next morning they would
surprise the castle, and possess the city;
which when accomplished, they resolved
to destroy all the Protestants; adding, that
at the same time the **Irish** would be in
arms in all parts of the kingdom to massa-
cre the Protestants, men, women and chil-
dren.

The justices and council, by this no-
tice, preserved the city, which was within
a few hours of destruction; and thereby
prevented the loss of the whole kingdom,
thus within a step of death. But the sa-
ving of that place did not remove all the
difficulties that lay in the way of our deli-
verance.
The Irish were exceeding numerous above the English, more than twenty to one; they possessed in a few days almost the whole kingdom, destroying the English as you have heard.

They were yet more formidable, as they were strangely abetted, not only by the Pope, who excited them, and allowed their cause, but even by such as gloried in a Protestant name: To say nothing of commissions from England, which they boasted of, though perhaps only pretended. Yet it is plain, that a great part of that army, which the Lord Strafford raised in Ireland, to enslave England, was engaged in this rebellion: Several officers had passes for Ireland soon after the beginning of the rebellion, and as soon as landed, appeared at the head of the Irish. All the importunity of the parliament here, could, after a long time, procure but forty proclamations to be printed, wherein the Irish were declared rebels, and none of those to be published without farther orders. In a proclamation soon after, they are called subjects; the Earl of Leicester, the Lord Lieutenant, was forbid to go for Ireland: Commissioners from the rebels courted here, they from the Protestants frowned at. When the English had got great advantages against the Irish, orders are sent to the Lord of Ormond to make a cessation, and several of the honest members of the council...
Serm. Council imprisoned for opposing it. Soon after a peace is concluded, upon articles utterly destructive to the English interest, both religious and civil: Upon this many of them are brought over for England and Scotland to fight for the king. It was not long, but matters were so contrived, that that part of the English called royalists, joined with the Irish under the Lord of Ormond, destroying such Protestants as would not concur with them. The Irish thus encouraged, became again masters of almost all Ireland, except Dublin and Londonderry; and an army of near thirty thousand besiege Dublin, no way doubting to become soon masters of it, considering the small force, and poor works which were its security.

You see that all Protestants were not formerly averse to the Irish no more than now; the same spirit will act alike under the same circumstances, yet many instances will not caution against such. Under these hardships and difficulties our deliverance groaned. Many years it lay between life and death in these struggles; we might well cry, We know not what to do; but our eyes are unto thee, O Lord; and that was not in vain, for the Lord saved us, notwithstanding the advantages of our enemies,

5 At the treaty of Uxbridge, the King's commissioners would not at all agree to that proposition of the parliament, That a war should be entered into against the Irish rebels.
mies, and our own weakness. He made those mountains a way, and claimeth the higher acknowledgments, by breaking thro' such obstacles for our relief.

3. The appearances of God in Ireland's deliverance, were glorious and convincing. He saved us with an out-stretched arm, forcing this assurance in all men, That verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

I might instance most remarkable preservations of many particular persons; but as to that, I will confine myself to Mrs. Teate; She was, with others, driven naked from her dwelling; she had a child fucking on her breast, but neither meat nor drink to support her; wandering in a wood, where she was hiding, on the way to Dublin, her milk was dried up, the babe ready to perish, she resolved to leave the child, and not see it die in this anguish: But as she was laying it down, she finds covered in the Snow under her feet, a fucking-bottle full of warm milk, whereby God saved the life of the infant.

The common salvation affordeth amazing indications of God's power. He divided the Irish by the Pope's Nuncio, and many other ways; he dispirited them beyond what is usual, struck such a terror into

Not only passing sentence, but executing it, in punishing the wicked, and delivering the just.
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Serm. into them, as rendered a few English victorious over multitudes; yea, a few sick men have routed a great body of their strongest soldiers. Their counsels were infatuated: The sword of God was evident on their right eye.

How did vengeance overtake them, and the God of recompence made them drink deep in the cup they had forced on others? He gave them blood to drink, for they were worthy. His three sweeping judgments were commissioned against them, and each accomplished its message on thousands. Multitudes were starved by the famine; the plague spared them not, and the sword devoured. What numbers lost their lives in Ireland? England and Scotland found graves for many of these bloody creatures. Several thousands of them were called hither by king Charles I. they entered into a vow against the covenant and puritans; but neither was much hurt by them, nor their friends much profited. God found a way to follow them with vengeance, and few returned back. The same eye watched those twenty-five hundred which were sent to Scotland. Thus God redeemed us with great judgments, and made bare his arm: His jealousy sustained him, whilst he rescued us from the destroyers; whenas till the last stroke, the strength of the Protestants was very disproportionable. Who can refuse to say, Thou art the God that
preached Oct. 23, 1689.

4. **The effects of Ireland's deliverance** was very benign and extensive.

A *salvation* may very well be estimated by the good it produceth; and its rare that the good is not proportionable to the wonders whereby the deliverance is accomplished. On this account was our redemption signal; the settlement of *Ireland* became more firm, the Protestant religion obtained more extensively than before was possible; the *Irish* weakened themselves, and the mischiefs designed against the Protestants, fell on their own heads; the *Irish* forfeitures augmented the number of *English* planters. Had not an old Popish design (though more discovered, at least believed of late) governed our settlement, on the restauration of the royal family, an *Irish* interest could never have been rampant there, nor have bid for it by any dangerous struggle.

But alas! from that time the snake was cherished, many *Irish* murderers restored to the defrauding of the adventurers and soldiers. In a little time their influence became so great, that their vote determined most of our publick offices; an address to them was the sure way to make an interest; though had our gentry encouraged the *English* more, and the *Irish* less, they had been safer. By these things
Serm. matters ripened to their present crisis.

III. However, for a great while, Ireland reaped the fruits of this mercy; peace, plenty, liberty, trade, made that land flourish to the envy of such mean spirits, who can attempt no means to thrive, but by depressing their nearest friends.

Ireland's deliverance, which was owing to England, did in some measure affect your own safety: Had that country been unreduced, much misery had broke forth, which by our redemption is stifled in the womb of probability. And its manifest, that while a Protestant interest was supported in Ireland, there could no nursery of instruments be raised to set up Popery and slavery among you. I deny not, we had some Protestants fit enough for such designs, if the late King's wisdom had served to employ them: But the infatuation which excluded them from service in Ireland, made others of the same temper useless in England, as being convinced that their own employments here must cease, as soon as professed Papists could be found to fill up their room. Hereby the means of our present ruin, became an occasion of England's safety.

These things may serve to express the greatness of Ireland's deliverance. Each particular is an argument to enforce the next exhortation; viz.

Exhort.
Exhort. Be persuaded to acknowledge God with praises answerable to a deliverance so great.

Can such a mercy be received, and but a common tribute be paid to the sole author of it? Acribe ye the highest praise to our God, these were his doings, and they were marvellous in our eyes. It well becomes us to say, *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods; who is like thee,* glorious in holiness, fearful in praise, doing wonders? We are monuments of his glory, and witnesses to his mighty workings among the children of men. We alone are not capable of becoming-praises for what he hath done; he deserves the admiring thoughts of all that hear these wonders: We beseech all to join us, that our acknowledgments may be the higher, *Oh Pshal. cvii. that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to Ireland; bless him with us, bless him for us. You that join in this celebration, speak to us as Jethro did, Blessed be the Lord who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians: Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods; for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them.*

He

1 The word render'd wonderful, is derived of אָוָד; noting, that these works are separate from man's conception, skill, and power, Exod. xviii. 10, 11.
H e pitied Ireland in its low estate; and though his anger did for a while burn like fire, he turned from his indignation, and renewed the face of that desolate country. Shall not we read his name in every part of our deliverance? It was altogether a redemption becoming himself. Herein God made himself visible to us, and to the whole world by us. Though we need a new deliverance, let him not lose the glory of this that's past. If he should, for the sins committed after so great a mercy, go no more out with our armies, but leave us desolate, as he hath begun to make us, yet all praises are due to him, for what his hand hath wrought in this deliverance.

But is it enough to praise him with our mouths, or spend a few hours to record his wonders? No, this would be no fit homage to an infinite Spirit; he cannot accept of that for praise which is so lifeless. Therefore, if we will praise him,

1. See that God have a greater interest in our souls, by what he hath wrought for us.

His greatness is manifest, let him be had in higher esteem: Who will not fear him more, after his terrible judgments thus executed on our enemies? Shall we limit the Holy One, or distrust his delivering us in the like extremity, when he rescued us out of such depths? We must say, The God of my rock, in him will I trust; he is my
my shield, the born of my salvation, my Saviour. The weakness of means should not discourage, the most probable means ought not to be idolized, now that we see he commands deliverances, and doth whatever seems good to him. Shall we measure our hopes by the enemies weakness, or our own strength, allowing little for him that so convincingly appeareth to be the Lord of Hosts, and the God of Battle?

Oh love him with more ardent affections, whose goodness was at such expence to entitle him to our kindness! Let him have more of our hearts, who in the greatest extremity did relieve us, and bless us with our lives, our estates, our peace, and, above all, with our religion.

2. Let us live this deliverance to the real honour of our God that saved us. Without this, our mercy becomes our snare; and that which was for our good, will turn to our harm. God did not deliver us to work abomination; he designed not those blessings for fuel to our lusts, which he gave us to render our service to him more enlarged and cheerful. He expects men should pay the vows to him, when delivered, which they made to him in their distress; and dedicate those things to his praise, which he granted them by his wonders. They praise God unacceptably, that live not more like saints. The richest offerings are not valuable, if men
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SERM. III.

See Psalm lxviii. 57, 58, 67, 62.

Ezra ix. 14.

men yield not themselves to the Lord that saved them, and live his praises. Those deliverances are of short duration, which are acknowledged by bare words, and dis-owned by gross miscarriages. People may read their future doom, when they provoke God after signal mercies, in those words of the Scribe; Should we again break thy commandments, wouldst not thou be angry with us, 'till thou hadst consumed us? so that there should be no remnant, nor escaping. Oh! that Ireland had been awed hereby to a forbearance of those sins which now have provoked God to expose us to the former rebukes, and to repent him of that deliverance which we are now remembering. Our return to God for the former mercy, must be very unsuitable, and defective, that God (in less than fifty years) repeats the same national calamities.

The sense I have of the present frame of the Irish Protestants, almost prevents my proceeding to the next observation. My mind is often exercised, with this thought, Will God twice, in one age, deliver a people from national ruin, who have so visibly abused their first mercy, and seem so far from repenting under their present distress? I shall however say somewhat to this next particular.
Sect. II.

Obf. 2. Past deliverances are some ground to hope that God will yet deliver.

We gain, by being saved once, an assurance that God is able to save us again. When God hath once delivered, we may conclude the good-will of God to repeat that deliverance, unless some great forfeiture prevent it, or the designs of providence be greatly altered.

Former mercies are allowed by the Holy Spirit, to be argued as arguments with God for renewing those mercies, yea, adding to them.

When God hath saved from his enemies, it's a plea against God's giving us up into their hand. Thus pleaded Sampson, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant, and now shall I fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?

Application.

1. I shall say somewhat of the probability of our deliverance.

2. Direct you to what may help towards this deliverance.

1. I shall endeavour to hint somewhat as to the present state of Ireland, and consider what may probably be the event of God's present dealings with that nation. You have heard how we were once delivered;
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Some of us, to our cost, know the danger that nation is in at this time. Its true of it, the bear was killed; its as true the cubs are risen up to devour, and Goliath at the head of them. Oh! may I add, The Lord will yet deliver. I have no revelation, as David had in the text, and therefore I undertake not positively to answer this question:

Will God, that once delivered Ireland from the Irish rebellion begun in forty-one, deliver it again from its present distress?

Tho' I dare not be positive, I shall offer,

1. The things which may be objected against God's delivering us.

2. The things which give us some ground to hope that God will yet deliver; and then add my conjecture from both.

1. There are many things which may weaken our expectations of a new deliverance.

I will not lay stress on obstacles from second causes, tho' they are not inconsiderable; as the Irish are numerous, disciplined, united, engaged by the highest interests and inclinations, strengthened by a neighbour tyrant, excited by the priests, to whom the vulgar are blindly obedient. They want not friends in England and Scotland; and some more capable of serving them, by assuming a Protestant name; our
our soldiers are not habituated to the foil. Serm.
These and many such things affect me not, they are all easily resolved in God's omni-
potency, had we good signs that God would but undertake to save us.

But our just fears are from moral rea-
sions, which render it suspicious, that di-
vine indignation will further commission our enemies, and blast our attempts against them.

Ireland hath grossly abused the former deliverances; the sins before forty-one, re-
vived, and continued to eighty-eight: What profaneness, abuse of plenty, and irreligion, abounded in that nation, so lately, and so miraculously, delivered, and that out of the forest anguish? There is little visible re-
pentance under our present distresses; mi-
nisters and people, conformists and non-
conformists, discover no temper answer-
ble to the fore effects of God's displeasure, but the contrary. Alas! how doth sin abound still, even among such as have fled from Ireland, tho' they can hardly subsist?

Our army there is full of sin; I wish all be faithful; I hear that very few are seemingly serious.

Men generally rely on our forces cou-
rage, and the contemptibleness of the enemy, allowing nothing for the supreme influence of the Almighty, who alone can spirit or dispirit men as he will, and whose purposes all shall execute. I wish
I wish the strange neglect of Ireland, is not with God as a provocation to abate some mens honour in the relief of it.

Is there no cloud over England, which the speedy deliverance of Ireland can scarce consist with? These things may at least moderate our confidence.

2. Yet there are many things which administer hopes, that God will again deliver that country.

The enemies are the same in principle and disposition, as they were, from whom God once saved us. They are adversaries to God and his truth, whereby his interest is embarqued in our hazards.

The former blood and mischiefs remain in their skirts, the guilt of forty-one is not purged away, many of the actors are with them, the rest are their off-spring and approve of it. They have added new mischiefs of late to their former rebellion; what rapine, and spoil, yea blood? God's people and concerns have been defied, and they have been obstinate in their Popish errors beyond any people.

The cause of the English Protestants is good, even the common defence of our religion, lives, and estates, from the unjust attempts of most barbarous enemies; its the publick good, notorious beyond debate; its that for which government is appointed by God. I think it one of our great mercies, that the consciences of men are
are delivered from that enslaving principle, That a whole nation must tamely yield to be destroyed by the mere will of a prince, notwithstanding our legal securities and restraints on all absolute power, in the fundamental constitution: A doctrine fit for the harangues of such who had little to preserve by the laws, and much to get by gratifying the lufts of a prince; tho' yet they barely provide for their posterities enjoyment of those estates, which by their preferments are acquired.

God hath given great pledges of deliverance in some remarkable beginnings of it: Londonderry is miraculously preserved, tho' not altogether by the influence of such as now assume the entire glory.

The Inniskilling men (as they are called) have prospered answerably to the Protestant successles in the former rebellion. Now it was either inspired, or of very vulgar observation, that Haman's wife, and wisemen, suggest; If Mordecai be of the Eti. vi. seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.

If God deliver not Ireland, the Protestant interest in these three kingdoms, and many other places, can hardly subsist as national; whereas a little apocaliptick skill will direct us, that the work God hath in hand, and the time we live in, sets us beyond the ruin of any Protestant state,
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Serm. tho' not past the forest struggles and convulsions.

III. These things offer us matter of hope, that it may be said of that nation, They shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.

Having represented these things that may induce, and also encourage, our expectations, I shall humbly offer my thoughts.

I believe God will again deliver Ireland, the Protestant interest shall revive there, our enemies shall be overwhelmed, and be more broken by this attempt; but yet I cannot hope to see that land saved so suddenly as most expect, nor so easily and cheaply as we all desire. Our struggles are like to be such as may bring the Protestants to repent, and fit them by reformation to use their mercy: God will force men to a greater dependance on God as the only Saviour; and, it may be, lengthen our exercise, until many false Protestants be discovered, and other such ends be accomplished on us. Its rare that God begins such national afflictive rebukes, and hastens a period to them, before any such considerable purposes be effected, which were agreeable to the perfections of his nature to intend.

This
This may serve as to the first head, viz. The probability of Ireland's renewed deliverance. I shall now proceed to give such counsel as God directs a people to in our case, and may contribute to our deliverance.

2. Let us resolve to be, and do, that which may render us a people likely to be delivered.

Tho' we cannot merit deliverance by any amendment in our frame, or any act we can perform; yet there are qualifications which dispose for mercy, and exercises which God enjoins in order to our relief, and to which he hath graciously promised the deliverance of a people. If these be neglected, we vainly hope to prosper; we strengthen the yoke, we provoke God to leave us grappling with our woes, and delay, yea, prevent, our expected blessings.

Compliance with God in these, is the surest prognostick of God's appearances for us, as in times past.

In order to this, I will propose these directions:

1. Heartily repent for Ireland's sins.

Had not we sinned, God's restraints had been still on the wrath of the Irish. Our provocations are the great springs of our distress; look not at men so as to overlook your faults: Hast not thou pro- cured this unto thyself? in that thou hast forfaken
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Serm.  forfaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way. Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thy heart. Take repentance in its essential parts.

(1.) Then be convinced wherein you have offended; impartially search, and humbly acknowledge your transgressions. You have time and loud calls to reflect. Who can plead innocency? and who that is guilty, dare be so stout-hearted against God, as not to charge himself, especially when God writes our sins in our punishments? Popery is set up, but is it not because you have not lived like Protestants? We have rebelled against God, and he hath advanced our enemies above us. We oft returned with the dog to the vomit, therefore the land hath spued us out. God hath deprived us of our estates; but did not we spend most of them on our lusts; and very little to any charitable uses? How seldom was God worshipped? how much was he provoked in those houses that are now in ashes? Let all the hardships you feel, awaken conscience, and bind you to listen to its accusations. Lose not this opportunity for the welfare of your souls: If you be faithful, you may eternally bless God for your losses, as well as more suddenly repair them.

(2.) When

Lev. xviii, 28.
(2.) When your sins are set before you, bitterly mourn for them. Bewail the sins of others, which thou hast made thy own by not grieving for them. Mourn most for all those iniquities thou hast committed. Canst thou, without self-abhorrence, remember thy fraud and oppression? the sabbaths thou hast profaned? the oaths which God hath heard from thy mouth? Ought not tears run down thine eyes, now that the hand of God is against thee for wasting thy time, resisting the Spirit of God, mocking at religion, trifling with the eternal God by formal and heartless devotions?

Oh! that we could afflict our own souls, whilst God is embittering our national sins, and receive instruction by his rod. Oh! the perjury, injustice, gluttony, pride, uncleanness, contempt of the gospel, murder, and other crimes, which that land did groan under! What frothiness, enmity against the power of religion, errors, ignorance, idleness, and superstition, appeared in too many, on whom it was incumbent to warn and recover others! Selfishness, formality, and divisions, who can tolerably acquit themselves from? What work have we made for sorrow? how ripe were we for judgments, before God inflicted them? Just is God in all that is come upon us: He was weary with repentings, ere he summoned our calamities to testify against.
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III. Against us. You that never mourned for sin in your plenty, mourn for sin in your wants. What contempt you meet with, let it teach you to blush for your offences, whereby you have brought your christian profession under reproach. Instead of fretting at your hardships, bemoan the provocations which brought you into them. God calls to weeping and mourning, woe to such as despise it.

Isa. xxii. 12, 14. Jer. vii. 3.

(3.) Amend your hearts and doings; vow reformation, and be sure to pay it. Dare you harbour a resolve to sin as you have done? Will nothing reclaim you? Can nothing alter you? How will you reckon with God at the great day, for your present affliction, if your lusts baffle it, and break out in the same instances?

Think what God expects from you, what men may expect from you under what you feel. Can you hope that God will deliver you, whilst you are unwilling to leave a sin for his sake? Will he subdue your enemies, when you harbour his, and will not put them away? Do you find any delight by sin, which countervails your present distress for it? What then will it be to endless burnings?

Should God be pleased to save Ireland, whilst the Protestants continue as wicked as before, our calamities would soon return, and our safety, in the mean while, be the greatest plague. To be given up to
to sin as irreclaimable, is the worst symptom a man or a nation can be under.

Harden not your hearts against this admonition. Let Israel be your example in amendment, and then you may look on it as a president for mercy: *And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord, and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.*

Carry not back to Ireland the same vicious inclinations which you brought thence with you; get a spirit more holy, and devoted to the service of God and your country; hold not fast those sins which made you unfit for your places, and plagues to the land, as far as you contributed to make it guilty, and thereby miserable: If we refuse, I know not how much we contribute to prolong the miseries of our brethren there, as well as our own. See how Nineveh reformed by a warning, and shall *Jon. iii.* not we do so, that feel so much?

2. **Contribute** your utmost help to the reducing of that country.

Such as are able, should put their hands to it. I know, as matters stood, it was a vain attempt, when you left that place; but now let not cowardice or idleness restrain you; God’s cause, and your own concern, require it. If any object incapacity of getting thither in a condition for service, I can only answer, with a compassionate wish, Oh! that likely men were employed!
employed! good men that are likely to be blessed; men interested in Ireland, that are certain to be faithful. Its pity that they who killed the bear, should not fight the Philistine; and they whom God delivered once, should not be employed the second time.

However, such as cannot remove thither, should do their utmost here for the help of that place. Let us intreat and persuade succour, if we can do no more; not fretting at past unsuccessfulness, to the irritating of such as must help us, or exposing the common interest, by the advantage that bad men may take from our too quick resentments, though they proceed from our feeling, not our ill-will.

3. Be earnest in prayer to that God, who is ready to hear, and able to help.

Learn what fervent prayer meaneth; such miseries should open the dumb mouth, and quicken the drowsy spirit. We should all learn to plead our cause with God, for distress suggests argument and fervour too.

I fear some of you have too much time to spare; you may use it to good purpose, by giving yourselves to prayer: cry often, and strongly to that God, who is not faint, nor weary; his fitness to save us now, is not less for saving us once.

Prayer hath done great things; it is of mighty force with God, to put his power on work. A spirit of prayer is a certain preface
preached Oct. 23, 1689. 169

Prefage of deliverance, and it will sweeten, SERM. heighten, and secure a mercy, that it was III. prayer obtained it.

Plead therefore with God; Say ye, 1 Chron. Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise. What if you should urge God, as Israel did; We Judg. x. have sinned against thee, do unto us whatso- 15. ever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.

As we should pray for God's help in this thing, so pray for hearts fitted to improve it. I can hardly wish a conquest for our return, till reformation make us fitter for it. I think we have also cause to beseech him, that if there be a deliverance on God's part, there may be a deliverance on man's part: If he give the victory, that men may not refuse the forfeitures, left growing miseries be entailed on Ireland from age to age.

I shall enforce these directions with this motive:

The condition of the Protestants in Ireland, is very dismal. You have all need to repent and pray, for they who are here, did escape but with the skin of their teeth, for the most part. How great are

k I apprehend the author's meaning is, That men may not refuse taking the advantage of the forfeitures which our enemies will make by this rebellion, as had been done in former instances.
JO

are their traits! the rich have not bread to eat; they who lately abounded, depend on charity, and are forced to beg.

They who are still in Ireland, are in sore anguish and distress. How desolate is the North? thousands are perished. I hear, from a dissenting minister, That hardly one man of seven of his congregation but perished in Derry. By the way, I'll tell you, the burden of the work, and misery in that town, fell on the dissenters, being ten to one of the conformists, tho' it seems their graves deserve not a paper-inscription.

Such as have their livelihoods in Ulster, are so spoiled, and poor, that they cannot sit down with hope of living. But, alas! how much more calamituous is the state of such as are yet in the power of the Irish? Their houses robbed, their flocks wasted, the most of the men in prisons, and like to starve this winter by cold and famine. This lingering death is like to be as terrible as the former massacres, and many are daily subject even to that: Not a few have already been barbarously murdered. What awful days, and frightful nights, pass over them? What intolerable insolencies do they bear from the French and Irish, who now are their inmates? I am credibly informed, that in some parts of Munster, there's scarce a woman from the age of ten to sixty, that is not ravished. This is the stratagem of the priests, to make the case of the soldiers desperate.
preached Oct. 23, 1689.

Hath Popery lost its sting, when it acts thus against Protestants, whom its all policy to court for a while?

Will not these things excite your repentance and prayer, that so God may be inclined to hasten the relief of those poor creatures? If you have any bowels of pity, be serious and importunate.

I shall address a few words to such of this auditory who belong not to Ireland. My request to you is, That you would treat the Irish Protestants according to their condition: Look at them with a becoming concern; they are bone of your bone, they are of one faith with you, they have been delivered once by the mighty hand of God, and he will yet deliver them.

Deny not to relieve them in their present straits; there cannot be greater nor fitter objects than may be found among them; grudge not to help on their deliverance; pray for them; let them be still upon your hearts; England was never forgotten by many of us. Murmur not under any taxes the reducing of that kingdom may bring upon you: Shall such a tribe be lost for want of your utmost help?

It's your advantage that our miseries are your warnings; by us you may cheaply learn to reform your miscarriages, and so keep off the judgments which we suffer.
Ireland now is under the force of that storm, which lately more threatened England; this war begun in your bowels, and was transferr’d to us by unaccountable means on all hands. Its equally strange, that the late king should be necessitated to that place, by a needless forsaking of this city; or that he should, by the influence of his seeming enemies (tho’ real friends) find that kingdom in a case to receive him. Need I add, that you will be concluded by our case: If we be not delivered, you will soon feel calamity; we cannot perish alone; if God do save us, your cloud will blow over as to popish threats. Ireland is the place that England’s doom depends on; the war cannot be long confined within that land, at least the issue will not. Though your deliverance be begun by the marvellous successes of our gracious king William, it is not perfect before Ireland is reduced: So that to help to rescue us, is your own true interest.
SERMON IV.
Of Repentance for national Sins.

In the Fourth Volume of Casuistical Morning Exercises.

Hos. X. 12.
Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy: break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come, and rain righteousness upon you.

The prophet joineth counsel with threatenings; amendment is that he calleth them to, as a means to save them. That he might induce them to this, he represents their aggravated sins, and the dangers to which they were exposed by their provocations. Yet lest this call should still be uneffectual, through an opinion that repentance could
Of Repentance

Serm. could avail little to a people so guilty; IV. he added, that if they returned to God, their sins, tho' great, should not prevent mercy; and the threatened judgments, tho' near, might be diverted.

By this text God proclaims, not only to particular persons, but to nations, how desirable it is to him to execute his goodness; and his extreme backwardness to avenge himself on the most provoking kingdoms, unless they add impenitency, under solemn warnings, unto their rebellion.

God seems to address himself to Ephraim, to this purpose, Thou art a very guilty people, yet turn, that I may forgive: Thou art on the very brink of ruin; thy obstinateness is so notorious, that it will not consist with the rules or credit of my government, to spare thee longer. Oh yet be persuaded to render thyself a subject capable of my kindness. I have long pleaded, and thou seemest even unpersuadable: Yet I will make one further essay; I will try thee once more: Sow to yourselves in righteousness.

First, The words containeth some of the essentials of repentance, and suppose the rest. Under a metaphor from tillage, God applieth himself in the description of this duty; q. d. 1. He that will repent must deal with his indisposed heart: Break up the fallow ground. Whatever pain or difficulty
difficulty attends so barren or obstinate a frame of soul, you must strive with yourselves, pluck up those weeds, strike at the root of your lusts, which render the fruits of righteousness impossible. This sense of that clause is more evident from those words of another prophet, *Break up the*  

_Jer. iv. 5._

*fallow ground; sow not among thorns._  

2. When the heart is thus prepared, we must proceed to proper acts of reformation: *Sow to yourselves in righteousness* a. Let the rule of righteousness be observed in your hearts and ways, be just to God and men, return to God in sincerity, be and do what may argue you to be *trees of righteousness._  

_IIa. lxii._ 3. Do thus to yourselves, i.e. leave it not to others; or, you shall reap the advantage of it yourselves, if you repent.  

3. You must also *seek the Lord;* i.e. worship God, and not idols, as hath been your way. Follow after him, who is departed from you; call upon him, crave his grace to help you; but be not satisfied with faint and short attempts: persist in this work till you find his favour in the blessed effects of it, even *till be come and rain,* &c. These heads of repentance this text affords.

Secondly, *This* repentance is urged from variety of arguments, but principally from this, *That national mercies would certainly follow this national repentance._

Reap

*ad justitiam.*
Reap in mercy. Its promised more strongly, than if it had been said indicatively, you shall reap in the future tense. Being put thus imperatively, the import of it is this: You have no more to do, but possess your mercies upon your repentance; mercy will of itself grow from that root. God hath provided all antecedent causes; he hath ordained the connexion, and it lies on him to make a repenting people happy. You may be assured of this; for that which was mere mercy in making the promise, is become an act of righteousness by the promise: You may now expect it from God as just; in which sense I take that clause, till he come, and rain righteousness upon you. That which was mercy in the first part of the verse, is righteousness in the last part. I know its true doctrine to say, till God bestow on you holy inclinations, and ability to perform; but that's not the most designed sense. He further argues, from the plenty of those blessings which God would afford on their repentance: Till he come, and rain righteousness. The returns of God to a repenting people, are in a fulness of blessing; and there shall be showers of blessings.

There is one motive more, viz. The seasonableness: Its time to seek the Lord. Its high time, and but barely so; you cannot say there is no hope, though you must repent.
for national Sins. Serm. IV.

repent soon or not at all. The consideration of this paraphrase must lead any one to the case that I am to handle. Can any serious spirit think it vain to ask, What is that national repentance, which may give a sinful people hope of mercy? Which is the same with the case as it is given me.

What repentance of national sins doth God require, as ever we may expect national mercies?

I have led you to it by this text, that it may not seem a melancholy fancy, a mystery not to be handled, or a needless inquiry.

It's an awful case: Its not put to satisfy your curiosity, but to guide your fears and hopes. Its not only to direct your minds to a right judgment of the matter, but to excite your hearts to that repentance which may afford us hope in the midst of our dangers and guiltiness. Its the happiness or misery of nations which are concerned in it: Its the only remedy that a sinful nation can use or turn to. God is peremptory; Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

My work is, 1. To resolve the case in general. 2. To apply the case resolved to our own nation. I shall use this method. As to the first:

M I. Shew

*Ἀπολέσθε, utterly be destroyed.*
S E C T. I.

1. S H E W you what is supposed in the case as stated.
2. E X P L A I N the terms, national sins and mercies.
4. P R O P O S E the difficulties that attend the resolution of it.
5. R E S O L V E the case, which the forementioned particulars will much conduce to. I shall, as proof to this resolution of the case,

1. E V I D E N C E that the repentance expressed in the fifth head, doth ordinarily afford ground of our expectation of national mercies, notwithstanding national sins.

2. T H A T when this repentance is not in a nation, we cannot ordinarily expect national mercies.

First, T h e s e things are supposed in the case as stated. Where there is sin, there ought to be repentance. There are national sins, as well as personal sins; and a nation, as such, becomes guilty by national sins. There are mercies which attend a people as a community: Our national sins have removed national mercies, or at least prevent and suspend the bestowing of these mercies. God requires a repentance for national sins, and that as a means of national
national mercies. There may be a repen-
tance which may be defective to this end,
and from which we cannot groundedly
expect such mercies. That there is a re-
pentance for national sins, which, if we
arrive at, may warrant our expectation of
national mercies. These, and such like,
are supposed as the case is stated, and
therefore I pass them by.

Secondly, I shall enquire what na-
tional sins are, and what national mercies
are. The rest of the terms in the case
will be handled under other heads.

Quest. What are national sins in the
question?

Answer. Such gross sins as render a na-
tion guilty, and expose it to national judg-
ments, and forfeit national mercies: When
the land sinneth against me by trespassing
grievously, then will I stretch out my hand;®
Whatsoever sins God hath threatened to
destroy a body of people for, are in the
question.

The answer directs us to consider these
several parts of it.

First, These sins are gross in their na-
ture; they are not sins of infirmity, or sins
which ordinary care, labour, and watch-
fulness, could not prevent. They are called
bloody crimes. You may find them enu-
merated, " Willfully and repeatedly against God's
covenant."

Ezek. xiv. 13.
merated, when God arraigns nations in the

IV. testimony of his prophets, when calling them to repentance, and when God justi-
fies the severity of his judgments against a people. I shall name some of them which desile a land: Idolatry, perjury, breaking of covenant, blood, uncleanness, apostacy, oppression, profaneness: I need not bring proof hereof; the scriptures are full. Yea, among such provocations are reckoned mens refusal of the gospel, silencing and obstructing the ministry, malignity against good men, divisions and en-

mity, lying, pride, abuse of merces, gross formality, hypocrisy, great decays among saints, and gross backslidings.

Secondly, These sins must be national, which denominate a kingdom sinful. We consider them not as the sins of particular persons, but as they affect a community, as united among themselves, and distin-
guished from others by some special bonds.

We will enquire for the clearing of this, Quest. How sins become national?

Answ. 1. By all, or the generality of a people, being personally transgressors, as to those crimes: The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot, to the crown of the head; there is no soundness.
for national Sins. 181

Thus Sodom could not afford Serm.
ten innocent persons. The infection is oft propagated to the whole body, though begun in a few; as, From the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land. This doth not mean that every individual is corrupted, but the generality of all forts; magistrates, priests and people were profane: Ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

2. When the governors, representatives, and influencing persons, are transgressors: I will love them no more, all their princes are revolters. Israel is become vile by the sins of Jeroboam; wrath against Judah remained, because of the provocations that Manassab had provoked God withal. Provoking abominations by the rulers of a people, and cursed laws, defile a land, and expose it. Saul brings a famine on Israel by violating the covenant with the Gibeonites. What governors do, may be said to be done by a nation; tho' I think, when judgments take their express rise from the sins of rulers, there is some other guilt among the people, ripening them for judgment, or a compliance with their rulers sins.

3. By the generality of a nation making itself partaker of other mens sins, though it do not actually commit them. Some that do not personally commit the sins, may become guilty of them, by not hindering.
dering those sins according to their power; by rejoicing in those iniquities, or pleading for them; by not mourning for them; by contributing to those enormities. These ways a land may be guilty, though a few chief men act the sin.

Thirdly, These sins are such as expose to judgments, and forfeit national mercies. These are here intended, and reference to both the former heads must be had; but besides the grossness of the sins as to the nature of them, and their extent as national; on both which accounts they become national provocations, the case requires our observing further,

1. That more refined sins may expose one nation to judgments, which may not expose another land. This depends on the variety of advantages some people are under above others. A nation that hath gospel helps, and professeth holiness, and worshippeth the true God, may be exposed to judgments by formality, backsliding, and more spiritual evils, than other lands not so circumstantiated. Sins below gross immoralities may as truly forfeit their mercies, as injustice, blood, or idolatry, amongst ignorant paganish countries.

2. The provoking sins of one and the same nation, may be made up by various kinds of offences, according to the different condition of the offenders.
Sometimes a land is polluted by the Serm.

IV.

same sort of sins propagated through the
body of the people. But it is not al-
ways so, the offences vary, and the na-
tional guilt results from the several of-
fences. The sins of magistrates are of
one kind, and the sins of the subjects of
another, according to their different ta-
lents and station.

The profane part of a nation trans-
gress by enormous crimes, and the pro-
fering part are polluted with more spiri-
tual wickedness, as barrenness, deadness,
censoriousness. The offences of the gentry
and commonalty may be several. Ministers
and people may fill up the measure of
iniquity in a different manner.

Hence you see, that a nation may be
guilty, though some remarkable villany
may not be universal: Its enough if the
different sorts of inhabitants grossly offend
in their several kinds.

3. Usually the sins of a nation do not
bring judgments, or forfeit mercies, by the
simple commission of them, but as attended
with some additional aggravations. A land
rarely is destroyed, unless sins are com-
mittcd after warnings. Utter destruction
comes not before lesser judgments have
been tried, and prove unsuccessful. Secu-
rity and impenitency is added to rebellion
before God proceeds against a people.
Serm. The Lord's goodness displays itself in his calls, and patience waiteth an answer, e'er he takes the advantage against a land. Often, besides the grossness of sins, there is boldness and shamefulness: They declare their sin as Sodom. I shall not mention antecedent aggravations, as light, convictions, covenant-bonds, &c. which add a weight to sin whilst committing. You see what national sins are in the question, and when they become such as hazard the ruin of a people.

Quest. What are national mercies in the case before us?

Anfw. Such blessings as truly and considerably affect the good of a community.

They must be blessings in their nature, and national in their extent; they must have an aptitude to the common-weal; the more they conduce to make a land happy, the greater the mercy is: Neither is the gracious design of God to bless a land thereby, to be disregarded, for sometimes he rains snares, and gives quails in judgment.

These mercies regard our souls, or our bodies, or both. I shall enumerate some of them. The pardon of past sins, and help against the like offences; the presence of God as effective of spiritual and temporal good; gospel ordinances; a holy, judicious,

*By pardon, I mean an exemption from temporal punishments for those sins.*
for national Sins.

dicious, faithful ministry; a pure worship; the Spirit's energy in the gospel, to the conversion of many sinners, and real edification of saints, whereby the estate of believers may be flourishing; a godly discipline, and communion of saints, founded on plain gospel terms; love and peace among churches, grounded on essential, not disputable, notions, and expressed in all the fruits of christian love; freedom from persecution and malignity; a godly magistracy, using its power to restrain sin, and promote godliness; peace in our borders; justice in our courts; learning in the schools; wisdom and sincere designs for publick good among counsellors; plenty, by a blessing on our trades and labours; health in our streets; credit and influence among neighbouring countries; freedom from such judgments as waste and debase a land. These, and the like, constitute a happy nation. They are mercies which national sins forfeit, and without which the aspect of a land is mournful. Greater or less degrees of all or any of these are within the question, as the object of our expectations, and the sorts and degrees are often proportioned to a nation's repentance, and determined by it.

Thirdly, The case stated and distinguished from what seems like it. It is not what repentance God requireth of particular
Serm. cular persons in order to eternal life, nor
IV. what repentance God requirèth of a sinful
nation as its duty; nor what's that repentance, without which a nation shall never enjoy national mercies; nor what repentance is that on which every nation, in all cases, shall partake of national mercies; nor what shall limit our prayers, nor yet altogether our hopes, as to the state of a land; much less what is that repentance which will best secure national mercies? But the question connects our repentance and warrantable expectations. The scope of it is, What is the lowest sort or degree of repentance for national sins, which is requisite to warrant, and ordinarily direct our expectations of national mercies?

The reason why I add ordinarily, will appear after; the indefiniteness of the term national mercies, whether of this kind or of that, to this or that degree, I insist not upon; supposing that it imports at least so much and many mercies, as render a nation tolerably happy, and exempted from what it esteems calamitous.

Fourthly, the difficulties of the case.

It's not only hard to determine it, as the minimum quod sic, in any qualification for mercy, nor yet as a thing depending on multitudes, and relating to the providence of God as to what is future, but there are these other things that make it difficult:
I. Other nations are not under such express rules, with respect to God’s outward dealings, as the Jewish nation was.

That people was under a theocracy, God was their king: On this account the Lord chargeth them, when they were for a king; they rejected me that I should not reign over them. Idolatry also was high-treason in that state; they were God’s peculiar nation, and were to live in a more immediate dependance on him, even in civil respects, than other people.

The rules of their external privileges (both church and national) were express in that covenant of peculiarity, whereinto they were admitted. This covenant easily determined mens expectations of God’s dealings with them. But I think we cannot always conclude from God’s methods towards them, how he will deal with other nations that are not under the same law.

2. There have been always great displays of sovereignty in God’s dispensation of judgments and mercy towards nations: He waits longer on some people than on others, tho’ no more guilty. Sometimes he granteth favour to a nation, though its sins be many, and punisheth it when its provocations appear less. The sins of multitudes are connived at sometimes, and at other times he afflicteth for the offences of a few, as in the case of Achan.
He hath diverted judgments at the prayer of one Moses; but sometimes though Noah, Daniel, and Job be there, they shall deliver no more than themselves; yea, he hath forbid his servants to pray for a people, as a thing to no purpose. God hath sorely reproofed small sins in particular persons, as Moses, Uzziah, &c. to let men see its patience in God, not innocency in men, that he still destroys not.

There is exact wisdom and righteousness in all this variety, which the light of a higher state will discover; though now, by reason of darkness, his ways seem perplexed to us. However, this sovereign unaccountableness must abate our positiveness in judging what will be the way of God towards a people, though it hinders not the determining our ordinary expectations.

3. There are prophetick periods wherein national mercies shall not be obstructed by impenitence, but repentance shall follow them. Israel was not remarkably penitent, when the time of redemption from Egypt was come; yet God keeps his day. Their release from Babylon found them in the like unfit posture, yet God is pacified, and brings them to repentance by their return. This people is unclean, and what they offer is unclean; yet he makes them prosper, and build the temple, even tho' they had not turned to him. And it seems
to be not much otherwise with the church, when it sings the praises of God for the consummating stroke against antichrist; she is not ready, nor cloathed with eminent holiness.

4. The desolation of a land is sometimes absolutely determined.

When its thus, a blessing is with-held from means that tend to make a people penitent; and what of repentance there is, becomes uneffectual to divert the misery. Manasseh repented, Josiah and the people, with some solemnity, humble themselves; but notwithstanding this, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his wrath, &c. because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal, &c. When the utmost limits of the time of God's patience is over, ruin is unavoidable. God bemoaneth a land in this condition, as our Saviour in his tears over Jerusalem: If thou hadst known at least in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thy eyes.

5. God sometimes moderateth and refrains his judgments from other considerations besides repentance.

If executing judgments upon his people, will occasion blasphemy and reproach to his name, he often forbeareth his people

8 The figure Apoësopesis is twice used in this verse: Thou hadst been happy, hadst thou known in thy day; thou art now undone, because they are hid from thy eyes.
Serm. 190

IV. Though impenitent: I would scatter them into corners, &c. were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, and they should say, Our hand is high, the Lord hath not done all this. Joshua, and others, knew it was a strong plea, What wilt thou do for thy great name? Again; when his people have been so obstinate under judgments, that if he preceded in his wrath, they must be utterly destroyed; rather than do so, he hath raised his hand. If the sins of his enemies be full, he conniveth at his church, whilst he avengeth himself on his adversaries, especially if his servants are to be executioners of his wrath. Sometimes God hath had respect to some ancestor, or some particular action of a people, that hath been pleasing to him; and on that account hath been favourable, tho' they have been otherwise obnoxious to judgments.

6. It's not very easy at all times, to judge of national judgments or mercies. God may afflict in order to mercy; he may take away lesser mercies to make way for greater blessings: He often lays a foundation of lasting good, by delays and astonishing struggles. On the other hand, he may forbear judgments, and bestow good things, whereby a nation is ripened for forer plagues: He may destroy the gentry to save the vulgar, or level his stroke against evil magistrates or ministers, and so shake the state, to make the
the body of a people, or his own people national Sins. (at least) prosperous. Many such ways are with him. Each of these affect a community, and yet the aspect of them are so intricate and clouded, that deep thoughts are needful to determine, when we see the mercy we expect, or the judgment which we fear.

You may perceive that the case before me, though it seemeth so popular, is not so easily decided: But the greatest difficulty is to adjust the nature of repentance, as accommodated to our expectation of national mercies; which will fall under the next head.

Fifthly, The case resolved; and somewhat concerning the rule by which it is resolved.

The rule by which we must determine this, is hinted in the case itself, under those words, what repentance doth God require? Some expression of the divine will must guide us; we must not judge by second causes, or by vain fancy, as we are too apt to do; neither too rigid, nor yet too compassionate, inclinations, must decide the matter, or lead our expectations. The directions of the sovereign ruler of kingdoms, must alone take place; what notices he hath vouchsafed, must be regarded with reverence: natural principles, due inferences from his essential perfections,
Of Repentance

Serm. tions, the nature, order, ends, and methods of his government well considered, and an observation of his dealings with ourselves in past times, and also with other countries, do all contribute some light in the matter before us.

But our chiefest regard must be to the scriptures, especially to such parts of them as urge repentance on a people with promises of good, in case of compliance, and threatenings of ruin upon their obstinacy. Also such parts should be observed as contain instances of national repentance, which have been succeeded or accompanied with national mercies. By this rule we must determine what that repentance for national sins is, whereupon we may expect national mercies. Here we must consider repentance modified as a means to this proper end, viz. national mercies: And its to be considered as to that lowest degree, which will support our expectations of those mercies.

Having premised this, I think it may thus be determined:

1. A repentance short of that which is enjoined in order to eternal salvation, will suffice to warrant our expectations of national mercies. Eternal issues are not determined by the same rules as temporal blessings. Unregenerate persons may repent, so as to divert present judgments,
and secure mercies: This is evident in Ahab and Nineveh.

If it were not so, we could not expect national mercies before the generality of a land became true converts, yea, active converts; for regenerate persons that shall possess heaven, may come short in that repentance which secures blessings to a nation.

Saving repentance is the grace we call sinners to by our ministry; the more of this prevaleth in a land, the more sure are the mercies of that people: Without it a nation will soon run into new forfeitures, and bring plagues on itself at last, as Nineveh did.

This saving repentance is a change of heart as well as practice; it strikes at the root, and excludeth the dominion of all sin, as well as national provocations: It hath a mixture of divine love reigning in the heart, as well as fear: Its excited by a sense of pardoning mercy through the blood of Christ, as well as God’s wrathful displeasure: Its an effect of the Spirit indwelling, and not only of its common operations: Its the fruit of the divine life, and not merely of natural principles excited by foreign impressions.

In these and the like, saving repentance exceeds that repentance of a land, which yet may afford expectations of national mercies.
The repentance which yields us ground to expect national mercies, I shall describe in these following particulars:

1. It hath several things wherein it partakes of the nature and sincerity of a true repentance. 2. It must be for national sins. 3. The repentance must usually be national. 4. It must be suited to the different condition and circumstances of such as make up a nation.

1. It must have so much of the nature and sincerity of a true repentance, as is included in these following heads:

(i.) **Clear convictions** of the guilt and offences of a nation.

We must believe those things to be sins, which God chargeth us with, and truly own, that we are chargeable with the faults for which God reproveth us. This God enjoineth: *Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.* They cannot be said to repent, who plead guiltless. This Plea God reproveth Israel. 

Jer. iii. 13. 

Jer. ii. 35. for: *Yet thou sayest because I am innocent, &c.* Whilst men plead for sin as no sin, or acquit themselves when they are criminals, sins bind on them the wrath of God, and stand in the way of a peoples good. But there's hope of a land, when it poureth out its confessions with them: *We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against thee.*

(2.) **Shame**
(2.) Shame, fear, and deep humblings Serm. of soul under the sense of the wrath of God, as provoked by our sins. Abah humbled himself: Turn to me with fasting and with mourning; rent your hearts, and not your garments, for he is gracious, &c. and repenteth him of the evil; who knows if he will return, and leave a blessing behind him? 6. God will embitter sin to us, or avenge it. Provocations shall prevent mercy, when they are easy and pleasing; but this remorse must reach to the heart, though it do not savingly change it. The heart must tremble at the threatened wrath. God will have his anger awful to men, and their abominations shall cause a blush, at least in a sense of what miseries they expose to.

Therefore while people make a mock of sin, as harmless; while they sport with the wrath kindled thereby, as a scarecrow, God will go on to strip a kingdom of its blessings, and load it with judgments: They were not at all ashamed, neither could Jer. vi. 15. they blush; therefore at the time that I visit them, they shall be cast down.

But this humiliation, fear and shame, must be from an affected soul, not bare bodily appearances in a day of humiliation, or hanging down the head like a bulrush Isa. lviii, for a day; these the Lord despiseth; for such things he will not turn away his anger.

N 2 Whereas
WHEREAS there is hope, when a people lie down in their shame, and confusion covers them, because they have sinned against the Lord. It bodes well, when men tremble at the words of the God of Israel because of transgression.

(3.) Such a compliance with God's warnings and rebukes, as to put men on seeking God's favour, and resolving to forsake the national pollutions.

There must be supplications as well as weeping: A voice was heard on the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel, for they have perverted their way. This is God's advice to a land, and its the constant way of a repenting people.

Thus Nineveh cried mightily to God. Herein the dominion of God is owned, and so far men acknowledge a dependance upon him: But this must not be only with the mouth; no, it must be with the heart as to this act and occasion. A slighty cry will not prevail: Its a brand on a people, that they cried not unto me with the heart.

With our prayers there should be a justification of God's threats and punishments. How hopeless then is the condition of a people, when that is true of them, we made not our prayer to God; and as sad, whilst they arraign his ways as unequal?

But good resolves must attend prayer; a full purpose under present convictions, though it may not always prove effectual, through
through want of a principle in sinners, and remains of corruption in saints. We are led to this by that place, Take away all iniquity, Ashur shall not save us; what have I to do any more with idols? Expressive hereof was Ezra's and Nehemiah's entering the people into a covenant with God against national sins.

Now what hopes can there be of a land, if it neglect the Lord, as if he had nothing to do with them; yea, continues resolute in its sins. Thus did they who said, After our idols will we go, we will worship the queen of heaven, &c. Alas! such a people may lie down in fear, and look at the mercies they want as impossible; yea, consider the blessings they yet enjoy as soon to be removed.

I added, that prayer and resolves should be in compliance with God's warnings: God will have a regard to his threatenings, and some tribute of obedience rendered to him by them whom he spares. Thus Ahab yielded to Elijah's message, and Nineveh regarded the threatenings of the Lord by Jonah. Therefore its an awful sign, when nations refuse to hearken, draw away the shoulder, and make their heart as an adamant, lest they should hear the law, and the words of God by the prophets. When this is the frame and carriage of a people towards God, what effects follow, the following
Serm. lowing words acquaint you: Therefore, came a great wrath from the Lord of
hosts.

Whether the warnings are sent by the word in the mouth of his servants, or by his wonders, or by lesser afflictions, the disregard of them makes the bands of a people strong; whereas attentiveness and compliance therewith, affords encouragement.

(4.) There must be a reformation.

All the former without this, are insufficient to be a prognostick of good; the other things tend to this, and must terminate therein, or repentance wants its aptitude to the designed end: I have sent my prophets, saying, Return ye now every man from the evil of his way, and amend your doings, &c. and ye shall dwell in the land: A gracious offer: But behold the obstacle to their benefit thereby: You have not inclined your ear, nor hearkned unto me. In the same manner God leaves it on this issue, Learn to do well, &c. If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

It's no repentance while gross evils are continued in, if our sins be sins of commission: Its no repentance while an express duty is not complied with, when the offence is a sin of omission: This shall be the punishment,
punishment of all Egypt, and of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. Let there be never so much mourning, though it rise to the covering the altar with tears, it yields but vain hopes, when men continue unreformed.

But amendment carrieth with it a happy preface; it restraineth the bitter effects of past provocations, and God in mercy encourageth it in a people, though on the brink of ruin. We see an instance in Judg. x. the people having confessed their sin, ver. io. accepted of their punishment, and called upon God, ver. 15. They put away their strange gods, and served the Lord; then the soul of God was grieved for their misery, and he delivered them, ver. 16. A parallel you have in Nineveh, the charge given by the king (which was complied with) was, Let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hand; then they conclude a possibility of escape, according to the tacit reserve in the prophet's message: Who can tell if God will turn away from his fierce anger, and we perish not.

2. But yet further. The repentance in these acts must be for national sins: If it be for other sins, and not for the sins of the land, it will not warrant our expectations of national mercies. God will have men direct their repentance to that which his wrath is kindled for, and which his testimony
Serm. testimony is against. It's not enough that you bewail your own personal private sins, but these publick faults. People are lotheft to own, bewail, and leave these national offences; custom fixeth them; they are commonly reputable, and by the generality of transgressors thought innocent; they are supported by interest and power; there's danger by repenting thereof. If you reform as to these, there's oft a loft of places; men are subject to shame by leaving faults in fashion, or the reproach of having long offended in those things; and how backward are our proud hearts to acknowledge we have been in an error?

But let it be never so hard, the arrow of God is levelled against these very sins, and even these shall be bewailed and forsaken, or he will proceed to embitter them. People may think to commute with God, and amend in other matters; but this is a vain attempt, to their own delusion and ruin. Thou shalt sow, but shalt not reap; for the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab; and ye walk in their counsels, that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore you shall bear the reproach of my people. This leads me to answer one objection.

Object. How may we know which are the national sins?

Answ.
Answ. If the same particular sins be universal. Consider the carriage of a people in general, and compare it with the word: National sins are too gross not to be seen, when the rule of a peoples walking is set before us. But if you would know which are more eminently the national sins, observe what sins have the greatest influence in corrupting the land; which cleaveth faftest to a people, and most (especially leading persons) are guilty of; which have been longest continued in, and in their nature and consequences are most grievous; which the judgments of God seem most directed against; what sins do the best ministers and people witness most against. By these rules you may discern what are those national sins which the nation agree in the commission of, or connivance at. But if the national sins be, by accumulation of several sorts of sins, according to the different state of people who constitute that community, you then must distinguish a nation into its constituent, or remarkably differing parties; as magistrates and subjects, ministers and people, rich and poor, infidels and believers, &c. Compare the frame and carriage of each of these, with that which God hath made their peculiar duty; and adding the former helps, those national sins will appear, which are made up by complication, though the same individual
dual crimes are not entertained by the several parties in a nation.

3. The repentance must usually be national. I do not mean that every individual must repent, but the generality; or at least some very considerable number, and those of such men that most represent and influence the body.

A small number of private penitents may save themselves, but seldom secure a nation. I confess here I must be wary, considering how graciously God is pleased to admit sometimes a few to personate a body, and give in blessings for many on their mediation: Phineas’s zeal turns away wrath from all his people. God seems to conclude the unavoidableness of Israel’s woe, from the want of one man to divert it; I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me, for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. This the desolate church complains of: There is none that stirreth up himself to take bold of thee.

But though sovereignty admits a very few penitents to profit many transgressors, yet we are not usually to expect this, whatever in extremity we may hope, for want of better grounds; usually a few are called none, as to this effect: No man repented him of his wickedness; I called, and none did answer; he wondered there was no intercessor.
There were the prophets themselves, and some others that repented; yet so few were as good as none to secure the good, which multitudes concurred to remove. His call is to the generality to return, and on that he promiseth favour: *Hear ye the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah; thus saith the Lord, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place*: And the failure, by the refufal, he affixeth to the body of them, ver. 28. Thou shalt say, *This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord, nor receiveth correction, &c.*

We can hardly look for good to a land, unless the repenting persons be numerous enough to vindicate the glory of God, and influence the land to reformation. The assembly of penitents must be solemn. How general was the repentance of Nineveh, from the greatest to the least, from the king and nobles, to the most abject.

Some farther light may arise from the next head.

4. The repentance should be suited to the different condition and circumstances of those that make up a nation: Each must repent of the sins common to all, yea, the gross trespasses of each sort must be bewailed by every sort.

But yet there is a repentance peculiar to each, which ought eminently to appear, or at least really to be, and this exerted ac-
Serm.  cording to their respective abilities. Magis-
strates ought to mourn for the sins of the
people, and also to repent of their own ill
examples, bad laws, &c. And they must
express their repentance by exerting that
power which they have above others: they
should enact good laws, restrain and pu-
nish sin, command days of humiliation,
appoint good ministers, &c. So Ezra did;
the same did Nehemiah. Magistrates do
not repent, if they do not so; and a land
may perish for their neglect.

Suppose a land divideable into unbe-
lievers and believers; these believers must
repent of their own sins, as well as the sins
of unbelievers; they must be humbled for
their own decays, contentions, worldliness,
barrenness, vanity, pride, though less gross
than others, as well as for the idolatry and
profaneness of the irreligious. The reason
is, that these sins of theirs contribute to the
bringing down judgments, and obstructing
of mercies, as well as the groser sins of
unbelievers, nay, in some sense, more; be-
cause they ought to be witnesses for God in
a degenerate land. Their examples encou-
rage the groser villanies of others; they
have more light and strength to keep them-
selves pure; yea, if the number of good
men be considerable in a land, the lot of
a nation is mostly determined by them,
and God's regards is much more to them
than others.
If you take the epistles to the seven churches to be so particular, as most do, you may see how God reproves and threatens them, though small portions of those states, of which they were members in civil respects. I think I may say that the repentance of believers for their sins, must exceed the repentance of unbelievers in some proportion to that life, grace, and aids which they have above those unbelievers; their humiliation must be deeper, and more ingenuous; their resolves stronger; their return more universal; their prayers more fervent; their reformation more extensive, spiritual, and vigorous than other men. In this it's true, as a man is so to his strength. If their repentance be no greater than others, they may expose a nation, and prove its ruin.

I might proceed to gentry and commonalty, to ministers and people, but time prevents me; and the same rules may guide you in these, as in the instances before described. I shall only add, that supposing a part of the land persecutors, and the other persecuted for truth's sake; these latter must be humbled for the sins of persecutors, and repent of their own sins, and that according to the advantage which their afflictions give for their humiliation and amendment.

While men throw repenting work off of themselves to others, as if they could acquit
Of Repentance

Serm. acquit themselves of God's challenge; are there not also sins among you? are you no way guilty? The land is like to suffer, and the common condition to be deplorable.

It's true, if the design of God be to single out any one sort of a nation to suffer by themselves, the impenitents of that sort may not damage the body of the nation, further than their struggles with, or their loss of, that part may affect the residue. As if God resolve to punish professors of religion only; their impenitence may affect the whole no farther than the distress of such professors amount to, except as it is an awful omen; because judgment seldom begins at God's house, but it reacheth in woful issues to others afterwards. Or, if God hath a controversy with the gentry of a land, their impenitency may not fatally reach the ordinary people, if penitent. For if God resolves to punish ravenous, domineering pastors, or persecutors, their neglect of repentance shall not hurt the whole who repents; nay, it will be their advantage to have them blasted, if they remain impenitent, as the kingdom's plagues. Its much more so as to particular families, whether the highest or less influencing the corruption of a commonwealth.

But where God designs not a distinct respect in his judgments, the stubbornness of any one sort doth threaten the nation; their not repenting in a way proper to them, may
may plunge the whole into a loss of mercies.

Thus I have, according to my small light, resolved the case.

The decision of the case proved.

1. The described repentance doth ordinarily afford a people national mercies, notwithstanding national sins. In the resolution of the case, there occurred some reasons, and many scriptures, to evidence this; so that I shall need to say little more for proof. There seems to be an express rule in this matter: At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, or concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: If that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

The repentance which God hath accepted, so as to prolong the welfare of nations, was of this sort, as you see in Nineveh, and other places. Should we examine the repentance of any land, it hath rarely arrived to a greater height. A defect of the repentance injoined in the covenant of grace, is obvious in that repentance which hath yet been effectual as to national mercies. This repentance answers the great methods and ends of God's general government, as to the temporal weal of nations, and provides a foundation to proceed upon in those methods, whereby his
Serm. his spiritual kingdom is advanced, and the eternal welfare of souls is promoted, we may expect God will continue national mercies to a people who come up to that repentance which hath preserved other nations. We have great encouragement to our hopes from many texts.

2. Where this repentance obtains not, a people cannot justly expect national mercies.

Isa. viii. 9. Let a nation seem never so safe, its security is vain, and all its supports shall be blasted by impenitency. What though Jer. xv. 7. a people are related to God? I will destroy my people, fith they return not from their evil ways. May not their privileges, and pledges of God's presence secure them?

Jer. vii. 4, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15. No: Trust not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these: Will ye steal, murder, commit adultery, and swear falsely, and say we are delivered to do all these abominations? Go to Shiloh, and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of my people Israel; and now because you have done all these works, and I spake unto you, but you heard not; I will do unto this house, wherein you trust, as I have done to Shiloh; and I will cast you out of my sight. Mock shadows of your repentance, and weak uneffectual attempts for it, will leave men under disappointments.

When a people is given up to impenitency, and God withholds a blessing from the methods that tend to their repentance, there's just cause of fear that judgments are determined against that land: Hear you indeed, but understand not; make the heart of the people fat, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed. How long, Lord? till the cities be laid waste.

God is so positive against a land refusing to return, that their felicity is impossible: Wrath came upon Judah for this their trespass, yet he sent prophets to them to bring them back to the Lord, but they would not give ear. Thus saith God, Why transgress you the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? Were it otherwise, God's name would not be sanctified, no order in this lower world would be kept. But further,

Impenitence is not only a moral obstacle to good, as it provokes God to withhold it, but its a natural obstacle: The wickedness of men is efficient of woe to a people, and is, in many senses, destructive of mercies, and inconsistent therewith. Many enormities of a nation are its plagues, as bad laws, wickedness in magistrates, a corrupt ministry, oppression, &c. Its iniquity is even materially its ruin.
Many inferences are obvious; as, How dreadful an evil is sin; how dangerous to a land are multitudes of offenders. A nation is foolish that discountenances piety, and destroyeth the godly party, whereby it strikes at its own refuge. How good and long-suffering is God, that calls the vilest nations to return, waits long for their answer, and destroy not till their repentance is even hopeless? What enemies to themselves, neighbours, and posterity, (bound up in their doom) are an impenitent people? What sottish and atheistical men are they, that guide their hopes and fears of a nation's welfare, by fancies or second causes; but without regard to God's favour or anger, or the influence that repentance or impenitence have upon the ways of God towards a people? What a dismal prospect is a wicked nation, sporting with their provocations and warnings? How uncertain a tenure do most nations hold their mercies by? But I have not time to insist upon these.

I shall briefly apply the resolution of the case to our own nation. We are a nation, we have national sins, repentance of these sins is a presage of our future state
as well as others. I know no exemption, or peculiar allowance, we can expect at the hands of the righteous governor of the world. Oh that our hearts were under the power of this awful truth, that our iniquity may not be our ruin.

In order to this,

1. I shall insist on some things in order to our repentance.

2. Enquire whether we may groundedly expect national mercies from our present frame.

3. Conclude with an use of lamentation of our national impenitency and dangers.

In order to our repentance. I shall,

1. Represent to you the national sins we ought to repent of. Hereby you will know what we should be humbled for, resolve against, and reform. What a terror ought it to be but to mention our provocations? Oh that a land of light should be chargeable with such enormities, and yet be secure, and hate to be reformed! Where shall I begin the charge? We and our fathers, for some ages, have been guilty of the same sins, yet unrepented of: Against whom shall I level the indictment? Alas! we have all sinned, and done wickedly as we could. Magistrates and subjects, ministers and people, the unbelievers and believers. To what sorts of sins shall I confine myself? Woe is us: What sins did God
SERM. ever destroy a land for, that are not national with us?

But that the sound may not appear uncertain, I account myself bound in conscience to be more particular: My subject forceth me, not any uncharitable design.

Oh that my own heart were more filled with zeal for God, and deepest sorrows for the nation's sin, whilst I am recording what may offend the guilty, though the charge be too plain to admit a denial. Let us enquire,

Is England altogether innocent as to its laws? Do not we see that some of the terms of conformity are far other than our blessed Lord hath instituted? Are they not remote from a tendency to advance real piety, and exclusive of some things that would much conduce thereto? Is not a diocesan bishop set up, whose sole jurisdiction bars all the other ministers from the exercise of a great part of their office, while the bishop is utterly unable to perform it through the largeness of his diocese? Is there not more than an umbrage of lying and perjury imposed on all ministers, when they must assent, subscribe, and swear to what is more than suspicious, yea, utterly false? Are not a heap of ceremonies and corrupt usages re-assumed, (though once cast out) to the facilitating of the return of popery, dividing of Protestants, and the scandal of the weak, who are
are too apt to place religion, yea, all their Serm. religion, in those vanities? How many severe laws were made against dissenters, and severely executed to the ruin of thousands? Was it no provocation to silence two thousand faithful ministers when their labours were so necessary, and their places were to be filled up with many young men, who have proved fatal to serious religion? The sacrament is made a politick engine, to further the damnation of unworthy receivers; that all such may be kept out, whom they suspect any way hazardous to excessive pomp and ecclesiastic pegeantry.

Can the land be innocent, where atheism is so professed, the most blasphemous oaths are fashionable, perjury, uncleanness, drunkenness, malignity against all credible holiness, so common and consistent with reputation? Was it not among us, that the covenant was burnt by the hands of a common hangman, and horrid murders committed as legal executions?

Is not that christian nation guilty, where prophanation of sabbaths is so notorious, yea, pleaded for as warrantable? Most families have nothing of God's worship, the plainest essentials of religion by few understood; the operations of the Spirit turned into ridicule, and religion placed in things that bear not a faint resemblance of the very form of it, while sobriety itself is mere matter
Of Repentance

Serm. matter of scoff, and the fountains of learning send forth many more fitted to infect than reform the age?

Is it to be concealed, that men enter on the ministry, as apprentices on a trade, and use it as a mere means for a livelihood? How many are pastors without the peoples consent? And too many preach, while unacquainted with the gospel as a law of faith, and rule of the recovery of apostate sinners. The labours of such have no tendency to convert or edify their hearers; yea, alas, conversion is judged a foolish thing to urge: All the most debauched and profane are regenerate, if they were baptized, and come to church. Many souls eternally perish by the influence of this one principle; and the ministry is diverted from its greatest end.

Have we not seen the ministry too much laid out to serve the late governments in designs of enslaving the nations, and ruining the life of the Protestant religion? Though amazing was the providence which almost too late opened some men’s eyes by a close attempt against their own places, and so swayed their minds, that they contributed to save the land from that ruin, which a few more sermons of non-resistance (if believed by the nation) had render’d unavoidable. The good Lord continue that impulse, left our miseries become greater by the beginnings of our deliverance.
for national Sins.

I design not this account of all our publick ministers; blessed be God there are many to whom the interests of Christ were more valuable, than to allow their labours to serve any base design. But this of late was found the way of church preferments, wherewith too many complied; and made the pulpit a stage for a poor oration, rather than a place to testify for God, or bring souls nigher to him.

Are believers and serious christians (whom I confine not to any sect or party) free from contributing to fill up the measure of our iniquity? Oh that they were! then should my soul rejoice in hope; but its otherwise. Alas, how much have they made the vilest abominations their own, by not mourning for them, and by their carnal liberty contributing to them; Our gold is become dross. How unedifying are their discourses? how unexemplary is their walking? Each one seeks himself, and none the things of Christ. Circumspectness is laid by as unfashionable; the virgins all slumber and sleep. How few dare plead the cause of God, or do express his image! What heartless duties, froward passions, notorious pride, and neglect of education of children? Fast-days are kept without humiliation; sacraments and sermons are become lifeless; God is sensibly withdrawn, and none bemoan it; religion is dying, and none uphold it.
Serm. IV. What a chillness on the love of saints to each other? what fordid divisions and distances? A new standard of godliness is erected, viz. a zeal for parties, and selfish interests, under pretence of Christ's interests; whilst what is essentually and undoubtedly his, recommends men little. How little do good men relish that life, light, and love, which is purely divine?

Can I excuse dissenters, as such? No: To say nothing of some of them immersed in destructive errors; alas! the more orthodox have a share in polluting and exposing the nation; a vain itch hath seized much of our ministry; we study to please rather than profit; we envy one another; run into extremes, because others come not up to divine institutions; we overlook the mercy of our ease and liberty, because we abound not as others do. Tremble! oh my soul! to think, how many, even of them, persecute by railing, lying reports, non-communion, and cenfuring the state of souls for non-compliance with doubtful notions. Too many set up uninstituted terms of communion, destroy the pastoral office, promote little designs with base tricks, and grofsiest lying, under the covert of equivocation and surmises.

Were it not that some breathe another spirit, and more suitable to the divine nature, and the gospel of Christ, I should sit down with horror, and give up the land for
for national Sins.

for lost. The shadow hath sensibly eaten up the substance; we have fancied, talked, and disputed a gospel frame, and practical holiness, almost out of the land. A dead form is that which most are content with, and carnally plead for, whilst they profess more purity and power than others.

Are these evils in the land, or no? are they sins? are they not general? Arise, O God! and convince us, embitter them to us. Oh, was there ever more need to crave the pourings out of thy Spirit, now its recesses are so manifest! How discernable will be its pourings out, if thou bless us therewith?

2. I do, in the name of God, call you to this true repentance for these national sins.

We have nothing else left to relieve us; our begun deliverance will be abortive, yea, more destructive, without repentance. What nation ever needed repentance more; whom hath God oftner called, and more expressly warned? He hath long waited to be gracious, and must he destroy us at last, when weary of repenting? The ruins of all our neighbours cry to us, Repent, or you will be more miserable than we are: God seems to be on his way to you with the dregs of the cup. Our sins are of the grossest nature, the longest continuance, and forest aggravations.

How
Of Repentance

How often has God punished this land for them, and yet we hold them fast? What variety of judgments hath he essayed our reformation by, but in vain? Thou London's plague and flames, shall not they reform thee? Will not former streams of blood extinguish our lusts and divisions? Shall we force God to repeat them? We were lately on the brink of ruin, and yet the same malignant, formal, and irreligious temper revives.

God hath, by a train of miracles, repited our woe, and begun our deliverance, but what are any sort of men amended? Methinks we should have past our own doom with Ezra; Should we again break thy commandment, &c. wouldn't thou not be angry with us, till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?

These abominations are yet more odious by our profession and advantages. To be acted by such a notion, wearing a christian name! These villanies were tolerable among Pagans, in comparison of us; but in a place of light we have thus transgressed, in a land of uprightness we have been thus vile. Oh the convictions, struggles, and helps we must have trampled on! the many vows we have broken in all these transgressions! Yet in the midst of our rebellion, God renews his call, Repent, Oh sinful
for national Sins.

Sinful nation. Let the cry of mourners be heard in our streets! Oh let shame cover our face; if you have any pity for yourselves or posterity, truly repent at last.

View the national mercies you may enjoy by repenting, and that you are sure to lose by hardening your hearts against it. Read them over again where I named them; are they not valuable enough to excite your reformation? Oh that all would concur in their places to reform! When will magistrates restrain sin, disannul all bad laws, and state the terms of our ministry and communion, so that all may be useful, and not spoil their efficacy by guilt contracted at their admission; nor perpetuate our divisions, the consequences whereof have been so dismal, and are like to be more so. When will ministers engage in the reformation of the land, by faithful warnings, sharp reproofs, good examples, plain and importunate pleadings? Will the grossly scandalous gentry and people abhor their enormities, and put away their great provocations, whose cry is gone up to the heavens? Shall England's mercy be secured by a revival of strictness of life, more love and power, among professors? Will you be your country and church's plagues? That great good, which primitive saints rejoiced in the hope of; or overwhelming judgments, which posterity will be astonished at, do depend upon the return we shall make
SERM. make to God's present call. Mercies of

IV. the most glorious nature are in the birth,

and shall your, even your, impenitence ftifle

them?

Jer. iv. 1. O H return; and if you will return, let

it be to the Lord your God. All changes that

amount not to this, will avail us nothing. Your

prayers, your fast-days, are as water

spilt on the ground, without reformation.

How can I ceafe till the generality be per-

suaded to do this, which is fo neceflary

to our commonweal? Let us all cry, Turn

us, O Lord, and we fhall, or will be turned.

Hof. v. 4. Frame your doings, as men determined to

turn unto the Lord. Set heartily to it with

all your might, for its hard work; delay it

not a moment. Oh God bow our wills,

that the land may jointly anfwer, Lo, we

come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our

God.

Mal. iii. 7. CAN you pretend, Wherein fhall we re-

turn? Alas, wherein have we not departed

from him? All in a manner is out of

frame; every thing, every perfon, confti-

tuably needs amendment. Let us all unite

in this, and God will blefs us with light

and love for union in other things. This

work needs all our hands; let us make up

that wherein others will be defective, all

ftriving to begin and outdo each other. Oh

that all emulation and ftrife were re-
duced to this, which of us fhall first and

most reform.
3. If the generality will not be persuaded to repent of national sins, let not particular persons neglect it.

I am loth to descend so low, yet this is better than none: Who knows how many may be convinced by the repentance of a few? At least you may preserve yourselves, and view the publick calamity with more composure than other men, as having done your utmost to prevent them. We know not but God may delay judgments for the sake of a few remarkable penitents, though we may not commonly expect it. Shall there be so great cause, and none set themselves to it? Hath God none among us that regard his loudest calls? Can there be so little love to his name and honour in England, that even a few will not afflict their souls; and is he so provoked, that a few will not testify against this common apostacy? Poor nation! that hast none that love thy welfare; that all will lose showers of mercy for thee, rather than sow in righteousness.

Oh that some would resolve this day--- Ezek. xxii. Let not God say, I sought for a man, but I found none. Repent of your personal sins, otherwise how can you repent of national sins. Examine thyself how far thou art infected with the national provocations; what hast thou contributed thereto; charge thy soul therewith; say, the measure is so much the fuller for my
Serm. my fake; bewail thy share, mourn over the faults of others; thou mayst grieve for what thou canst not reform, but be sure to reform thyself to thy utmost; reform thy family; yea, set thyself to bring all (thou art in thy place capable) to amendment.

Do not judge of faults by the common opinion; let not the example of others be thy standard, but set the divine rule before thee, and review things thereby: Resolve to stem the tide, and to judge and act in the face of it. What though the multitude be against thee; what though bigots rail; what though many professors, yea, men of thy own party condemn thee; all is nothing, whilst God will accept and approve thee. A man must be singular that will reform himself in a degenerate age; he must be resolved, that will attempt to reform others.

2. Let us enquire, whether we may expect national mercies from our present frame and state. I believe God will not forsake us, but in time he will do us good. But the enquiry is meant thus; Whether mercy will be immediately enjoyed; is the wrath of God turned away; and will his progress in a way of judgments be stopped?

Can we reasonably conclude, tho' the sword hath been furished, it shall not destroy; our warfare is accomplished, the clouds are past, the bitterness of death is over.
for national Sins.

over. Dare I say, Rejoice, O land, in the Serm. favour of a reconciled God; for good, only good, shall presently be unto thee? I shall, by way of objections, give you what is matter of hopes; and, in the answer to those objections, give you the ground of my fears, and in the end declare my thoughts.

Objed. I. Are there not some testimonies of national repentance, from whence we may hope mercy is towards us? As,

1. Penal laws against the worship of God are as good as disannulled, and persecution is at a stop.

Answ. I. I wish the general remains of malignity, argue not a sorrow for that liberty.

2. I find most of them that were guilty of persecution, instead of repenting of it, do justify it as a just prosecution, though it was an usurpation of the rights of people, as men, and as christians.

3. Are the sacrament test, and act of uniformity removed?

2. We had a publick fast-day kept with outward solemnity.

Answ. I will judge of no man's heart; yet I cannot but observe,

1. The most polluting sins of the land were not solemnly owned, much less bewailed. Where was a publick acknowledgment of the sinful silencing two thousand ministers, because they durst not profane
Serm. fane their office, and plainly lie and per-
IV. jure themselves. I might name many such
other sins: Alas, general confessions avail little.

2. What publick reformation in life and manners appears since that day? what fewer oaths? Profaneness is no way abated; men are returned with the dog to the vomit. Now fastings, without amendment, are but a mockery with God, and profit not a people.

3. Men are so far from repentance, that they cannot endure to be reproved for their sins. They say you irritate, if you mention their offences: They like to hear others accused, but abhor the least hint against their own faults. Tell the imposter on the church, that uninstituted terms of communion are sinful, and rage is awaken'd. Persuade the bitter spirit to be peaceable, and his tongue is soon envenomed, and you shall be railed on as the great disturber.

Object. 2. But a great part of the land is innocent of some of the most notorious crimes; the sober persons are many, who share not in the profaneness of the land; the persecuted and ejected cannot be guilty of the oppressions they were under; and many of the church of England never agreed thereto.

Answ. 1. How little do such truly mourn for those sins of other men? How much more common is it to hear the better scoff and laugh at profaneness, than bewail
for national Sins.

bewail it? Persecutors are more railed at, than mourned for. By this we become guilty.

2. Are not there iniquities with the soberer part of the nation, impenitently continued in to this day? Do we see backslidings healed? How much more mortified, heavenly, circumspect, charitable or fruitful, are the hopesfullest persons in the land, by all our calls? Yea, our complaints, tho' so general, little tend to alter us: Our righteousness is as filthy rags; we fade as a leaf.

Objeét. 3. But if we consider the sovereign dealings of God with us, may not we expect mercy, though we see not repentance? As,

1. God hath lately wrought a great deliverance, when we were on the brink of ruin; and that by a series of miracles, when we were as unworthy as we are now.

Answ. 1. Such deliverances are never compleated, and seldom long continue, where repentance doth not immediately follow. Though God may command deliverance first, yet he annexeth holiness to it; and where that fails, the beginnings of safety prove a snare, and do expose to greater distress: When he saved from Babylon, he cleanseth them from iniquity.

2. Do not we find that deliverance is at a sensible stop, for want of our amendment? Instruments to save us seem less apt, our enemies are in better heart, and a much more
more threatening posture. The hand of
God is at a stop; those hopeful touches on
the minds of men, are much defaced; they
that mean well, are less spirited and en-
trusted; they who design ill, are more vi-
gorous and countenanced. What a change
have a few months made in our hopes, tho'
they were raised by the highest displays of
divine power and goodnens? Its almost true,
You shall conceive chaff, and bring forth
stubble; your breath as fire shall devour
you.

2. May not we hope that God will finish
our salvation for his own honour, and not
suffer a work, wherein he hath so immedi-
ately appeared, to be imperfect, notwith-
standing we reform not?

Answ. 1. God hath his honour con-
cerned in giving national mercies to an im-
penitent people, as well as in not perfecting
a begun deliverance. He is sanctified in
afflicting a sinful land; his government is
exposed in sparing an unpersuadable peo-
ple; nay, we oftner find him bear the re-
proach of not delivering his afflicted peo-
ple, than of not punishing a rebellious peo-
ple.

2. God can secure his honour in both
these respects, with great consistency. He
may ruin popery in other places, whilst he
exposeth Protestants to it here. He may
perfect this begun deliverance in England as
to Papists, that they may not blaspheme, and
and yet distress Protestants by each other, and so still punish the land for its impenitency.

Object. 4. God seems to single out some particular families for judgments, who have been most accessory to the sins of our land. He hath altered the succession, and so its probable he may not punish the nation for the iniquity of the throne.

Answ. 1. God may punish a land for the sins of a former king, though the government be transferred into another family. God punished Israel with three years famine, in David’s reign, for Saul's bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.

2. If others do not take warning by such judgments as are levelled against particular persons, and repent, judgments will extend beyond those persons or families. Successors, by the same neglects and provocations, will expose a land to miseries, though their title be not derived by descent from former offenders. Yea, if a new government and people purge not the land of the crimes, which had their rise in a former court, the vengeance will follow to the extent of the infection, and the guilty at least be in danger of misery. David righted the injured Gibeonites before the famine ceased.

3. How little is profaneness or irreligion restrained? how faint and few are the attempts
Serm. attempts for reforming the nation, since IV. God hath blessed us with a prognostick of good in the change of our government? Are men spirited for this, as Josiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, &c. To be infected by others seems easier than to reform them.

Object. 5. Are we not under such accomplishment of prophesies, as may argue a Protestant kingdom begun to be delivered, shall have its deliverance perfected, notwithstanding its sinful distempers? Is not the Philadelphian state beginning, the witnesses rising, the Ottoman empire falling, and Antichrist's ruin just reviving and perfecting even to the utmost of the judgments determined against him?

Answ. I am well persuaded of all this, and have declared it many years, when the contrary was more probable as to the posture of affairs here, and in the rest of Europe; yet let me tell you,

1. That in the accomplishment of these prophesies, the Spirit will be abundantly poured out, in order to the eminent holiness of such places as share in these blessings. All the promises that refer to these latter days, are full of peace, purity of doctrine, and worship, and true godliness. With the song for antichrist's fall, the church is made ready, and clean linen, which is the righteousness of the saints, is given to her.

Rev. xix. 2, 7, 8.

2. Almost
for national Sins.

2. Almost at the entrance of fulfilling Serm. these prophecies, there will be the most
shaking and astonishing dispensation to-
wards the churches, as ever besel them:
Then is the great earthquake, such as was
not since men were upon the earth, so mighty
an earthquake, and so great. This is that
hour of temptation which shall come upon
all the world. These epistles I take to be
prophetick of the most eminent periods of
the church state, from Christ's time, to
the end of the world; and this trial is in
the beginning of the Philadelphian state.
Its true, indeed, this will benefit the church
at last, and be fatal to its enemies and false
members, but it will be terrible to all.

3. Such an awful dispensation seems
necessary to purge the church, and lay a
good foundation of its real and lasting glory.
This will be a means to convince false and
irreligious Protestants, that said they were
Jews, and were not. It will pluck up
every plant out of the church, which God
hath not planted. Hereby all constitutions
repugnant to Christ's interests will be over-
thrown. Without such a paroxism, how
should degenerated christianity recover it-
self? how shall the power of reforming the
church be rescued out of the hands of such
who hate its purity and spiritual welfare?

It's next to impossible, by any calmer
means, to settle peace in the church, or
awaken Protestants out of that formal tem-
Of Repentance

Serm. per, which is the epidemick crime of the IV. Sardinian interval. You have it expressed in those words, Thou hast a name to live, and art dead. Many are really dead as unregenerate, others dead in opposition to spiritual liveliness.

Thus I have represented to you, what seems most considerable, as to the posture of our land, with respect to national mercies.

I shall offer my own thoughts upon the whole.

I think the repentance of England for national sins, is short of that which may give us grounds to expect national mercies. The methods of God indeed seem designed to make us a happy people, but it must be in the proper way and season. The great things God hath begun to work, the liberty he hath settled, the disposition in many young ones to return to God, and comply with his designs; his manifest exposing such who were likely to obstruct a reformation, support my hopes that blessings are in reserve for this sinful land; but yet its probable that some extraordinary storm will fall upon the nation, as a means to bring us to amendment, and a testimony from heaven against our crying evils, and shameful impenitency. By terrible things God will prepare us for blessings, and introduce our happiness by that which
which will try our utmost faith. I can hardly account our foundations sure, while men justify their sins, and persist in them. Our very reformation is impossible, whilst men of most influence have no heart to it, yea, hate and fear it. Whenever I see magistrates engage in reforming us, as their great duty, and with their whole might: When men of power esteem repentance to be the truest interest of the nation: When the ministry is awakened, to cry aloud, and doth impartially represent to the land all its sins and dangers, not mistaking, or palliating, our offences: When the body of the land, at least a considerable part of it, do crave and approve of reformation, and concur with the means God shall prepare for it: Then, and not till then, shall I account our repentance hopeful, and consequently expect the blessings to be established which God seems earnest to bestow.

But who shall live when God doth this? What overturnings will effect it, when so many have failed to do us any good? Its something very amazing, which can alter minds so adverse, or remove men unchangeably obstinate; yet the providences of God towards England are like to be terrible in proportion to all this. I do not herein limit the Holy One, but humbly propose my thoughts, as to the usual aptitude of means to their end; not wholly neglecting the
Of Repentance

Serm. the indications of present providences, as IV. to this matter; much less would I over-
look scripture prophesies.

Use of Lamentation.

Let us lament the impenitency of the nation, and its forfeiture of mercies, and hazard of judgments hereby.

What can be cause of mourning equal to our obstinateness? We are guilty of bloody crimes, and most regard it not: We seem reconciled to our abominations, as if they were innocent; and are as secure as if God had not threatened to punish a people for them.

The land is full of sin, after all the means which were sent to cleanse us. The fire hath devoured, yet our dross remains: The plague hath, in its rage, swept away thousands, yet the provocations of England abate not. How oft hath the Lord cried, Wilt thou not be clean; when shall it once be? But we have held fast our several iniquities.

It's but lately that popery and slavery were coming on us like a deluge, to the amazement of all that could with any zeal consider it; but the nation now seems sorry that it was at all convinced, and repents that there was the least motion in it towards amendment.
for national Sins.

Oh the ferment that hastily succeeded Serm. IV. our fears, least sobriety or holiness should obtain! God hath followed his rebukes with undeserved, yea, unexpected, mercies; but this sun-shine hath made weeds to grow, instead of rendering judgments effectual to make us holy.

What methods have been untried, but none succeed? Which is the nation that ever withstood so many and various calls to repentance? Nineveh is England's reproof; she repented at the first warning: Sodom would have condemned us, had it been trusted with half our advantages. Can the earth shew an instance of perverseness equal to ours? as if the gospel had extinguished natural conscience, or a christian profession did make us more regardless than Pagans. Every thing seems to harden us; we grow worse by those things that recover others.

Alas! we have few that bemoan our want of mourning: Are all our Jeremiabs asleep, that none drop a tear for England's security? Do all think it needless, or hopeless, to turn unto the Lord, that so few seem to set themselves in earnest about it. How very few symptoms have we, that we are not under a judicial hardness? Many are convinced they ought to repent, yea, many resolve it; but how abortive doth all prove? Our iniquities baffle our resolves, and satan triumphs over the vanity of our purposes,
Serm. purposes. What a hateful prospect doth our nation afford to God and angels? We are a wonder to ourselves, when a drowsy mind allows us to entertain any serious considerations.

Lord, what will the end of these things be? Wilt thou always bear, and seem to observe our provocations as slightly as we do? Alas! this would make us more miserable than God's forest rebukes: Judgments more awful than any we have yet felt, are become even necessary to our happiness; but though they are needful, what heart can endure them? What terror must attend those dispensations, which will separate the precious from the vile, pluck up constitutions so rooted by interest, custom, malignity and ignorance; disable the irreligious from settling church or state, and embitter our reigning sins to careless, scornful, and resolute offenders? How dreadful is that storm that will drive all good men together, when they are canton'd into so many parties, embittered by mutual prejudices, fond of, and valuing themselves by fond opinions, and distances from others, especially whilst self-conceit and ignorance so prevail? How hot is that fire which will purge out the dross among churches, when its eaten even into our hearts? What's that which can awaken drowsy saints, make the selfish, publick-spirited, bring the careless to holy watchfulness, and revive that simplicity,
simplicity, favourineness, and heavenly-mindedness, which is become such a mystery, and so unfashionable? Surely we may expect a complication of woes, and each filled with unusual degrees of God's avenging skill and power.

What may we not awfully expect? Disappointment by the likeliest men, dissolution of the most conceited churches, a shaking of the nation's pillars, a successive change of instruments, frequent blasts on begun deliverances, revivals by the most improbable instruments, many entire over-turnings and changes; opposition among the best friends, very near approaches of the most dreaded mischiefs, men's minds struck with tremblings, all carnal refuge failing us, reason put to a nonplus, probable and improbable confounded beyond conjecture, counsel hid from the wise, force and power baffled, authority become weak, all order disturbed, men at a loss what to wish, or deprecate; uncertain what to hope or fear, whom to distrust, or confide in.

These, and many such things, seem obvious in the constitution of that day of the Lord that is like to be upon us. And how many more awful things are in his treasures, to fill up that dispensation, of which he hath so long warned the world, as strange and unusual? We cannot judge of this great earthquake (which will affect us
Serm. us as well as other nations) by what hath been; for it is to exceed all that is past.

Who knows what new fights, strange strokes upon the spirits of men, and unheard-of judgments, may be reserved for this season. Can we love our nation, and be unmoved? Can we hate ourselves so, as not to lament that these awful things should find us impenitent; yea, carry in them displeasing rebukes for that impenitency? Should not we all wish, that each of our eyes were fountains of tears, to bewail, at once, the obstinateness and the impending dangers of the land of our nativity: Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; labour not to comfort me, because of the spoilings of the daughter of my people: For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down of walls, and of crying to the mountains.

Ira. xxii. 4, 5.
The Excellency of a Publick Spirit:

In a Sermon
Preached at the
Funeral
Of that late Reverend Divine
Dr. Samuel Annlesley.
To that Flock of Christ,
over which the Reverend Dr. Amnesley was lately Pastor.

Much honoured, and esteemed,

HIS presents you with a discourse (for substance) preached and printed at your desire. I faintly hope its acceptance with many, when justice is become a stranger, and a mere honest man a glorious title. Publick usefulness must scarce escape with the brand of folly, with those whose trade is turned into tricking, or account publick employs no more than a decent opportunity to cheat.
cheat the people: But truth may profit them, unless a zeal for their disease will not allow their reading what is directed for their recovery. To you, and some others, this subject must appear too plainly inflamed with God's image and authority, and a tendency to common-weal, to admit the censure of a narrow spirit (however disguised) to be its standard; especially, when this is what commended your late pastor to such unusual affection, as you expressed to him living, dying, yea, when dead. Yet this might be expected, seeing his very spirit is transfused into his people; by whose bounty (in good part) he performed such great things for a common good. Few ministers had such cause of glorying in so many publick-spirited bearers, as yours, Mr. Denham, Mr. Hartley, Mr. Cockerill, with many now at rest, might be named; the living I scarce
I scarce forbear. The sermon is much enlarged, and the method somewhat changed, that it may more contribute to common serviceableness. What's more desirable, than to be useful in making others so? Hence the eminent services of Mr. Brand so revived the Doctor: And hereby we must extend and perpetuate publick benefits, yea, oft above our own ability, and beyond our life. Promote you that design in this barren age, by putting this tract into hands who need it, and by your own vigorous example and prayers, that it may be seen the spring of your charity and christian activeness, is more lasting than the exemplary life or labours of your deceased Guide. May you find, in spirituals and externals, there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself. And may all
Epistle Dedicatory.

of us be excited to more holy fervour, by the death of two such as Dr. Annesley, and fervent Mr. Oldfield in one day, and worthy Mr. James soon after.

I am,

Your Servant,

In the Gospel,

Daniel Williams.
Acts XIII. 36.

For David, after he had served his own generation, by the will of God, fell on sleep.

Our request bringing me hither upon this sad occasion, (your venerable Pastor's death) I have made choice of this text as proper to enforce an important duty, which, though so little regarded by most in our age, yet the deceased was faithful in the practice of; yea, so eminent, that I hope he will be a moving example to others in this, wherein the signal excellency of his own life consisted.

The words read are part of St. Paul's sermon to the Jews at Antioch, in which, after a fit introduction,

1. He proves Jesus to be the Christ, from ver. 23——38. an article which (supposing the knowledge of God) hath the greatest influence in all our religious hopes and duties; and therefore a firm assent thereto ought to be more endeavoured than
Serm. I fear is usual with many, who boast of a Christian name. This point he argues from these topics; Jesus was of David's seed, which the Christ was to be, ver. 23, 24. Jesus was he whom John (in such esteem with them) did bear testimony to, that he was the Christ, ver. 24, 25. In the unjust condemnation and barbarous killing of this Jesus, the Jews had unwittingly fulfilled, in every circumstance, all the prophecies which foretold the unjust and cruel usages the Christ should meet with, ver. 27, 28, 29. This Jesus God had certainly raised from the dead, according as it was in several places prophesied of the Christ, and promised to him; which resurrection was God's testimony concerning him, that he was his eternal Son incarnate. But left any might object that that text, Ps. xvi. 10. was fulfilled in David, the apostle obviates this, by shewing that David lay in his grave so long as to putrify, which the Christ was not to do, neither did our Jesus: And by this occasion the words of my text are introduced, as David's praise, which the apostle would not omit, tho' his argument lies in that part of the verse which I have not read, viz. He saw corruption. And the following verses, 38, 39. are both arguments for Jesus being the Christ, in that forgiveness of sin (to which the Mosaic ceremonies and sacrifices were altogether unavailable, but as types and shadows respecting what
what Jesus did and suffered) was preached 

through this Jesus.

2. There is a serious offer of forgiveness to all of them, made in the name and authority of our Saviour Christ.

3. He inforceth this with an awakening caution, viz. That they prevent not their own salvation, yea, aggravate not their misery by rejecting this Jesus, the Christ, the Lord; *q. d.* the Lord Jesus, fulfilling all that's foretold of his death and resurrection, his being the crucified and risen Saviour; yea, the offer of that blessed forgiveness he purchased, will not suffice to your salvation, unless you also trust and receive him. Nay, if you receive him not, and accept not salvation in the way he proposeth, your punishment will be forer than if forgiveness had been never offered, yea, than if there were no Saviour, *ver.* 40, 41. For the profitable matter, not the mere connexion, having thus far diverted, I assume the text, which gives us account,

1. Of David's publick usefulness while living; he served his own generation by the will of God. "הָעַצֵּם and כָּלָּים, being alike governed by the verb ἐπεστήσας, causeth another reading to be as grammatical, *viz.* After he had served the will of God in his own generation; (that of Erasimus being too remote to deserve much regard, *viz.* That he fell asleep by the will of God) yet

Q 3
The Excellency of

V.

The sense of both readings alike secures the great duty of publick usefulness to be David's praise. If you prefer the latter, his service is determined to the publick weal in his own generation, tho' it may more expressly include also his care for his own soul, by his obedience to God's will, as prescribing the rule by which we must be saved; (which was the gospel law then as truly as it is now) of which a faithful improvement of our talents is no small part. But the order of the words most favours our own translation, which it is a fault needlessly to recede from. The former part, viz. Serving his generation, will be so enlarged on, as the scope of my discourse, that at present I need say no more than to note, that the word serve, ἐπερήσας, is metaphorical, and denotes both the publick influence of David's labours, and his great subjection: It alludes to, a man's rowing in a vessel under the conduct of a superior pilot. The royal prophet was but an under-rower; i.e. as much under divine authority, and as dependant, as if the meanest man. He served in the vessel, viz. the church and state, the safe passage whereof he consulted, and subserved, as his principal business.

By the will of God. God did not only serve his purposes by him, which the most regardless and obstinate cannot prevent, but this blessed man did designedly and faith-
fully serve those purposes God intended in his age and place; he obeyed God's will as he had notice of it, and whatever labour, expence, or danger attended it. This will of God he still consulted, as to the matter and manner of his performances. If you read the history of David's life, and the book of Psalms, you'll find the laudable character in my text evidenced in almost an uninterrupted series of publick and profitable actions, from his very youth to his death. By him God saved Israel from greatest dangers; he secured their peace, enlarged their borders; he fought their battles, united the tribes, brought the ark to Zion, established the publick worship, encouraged and propagated real piety, exemplified the divine law in the course of his practice. Few are the instances wherein he came short of the common good as the scope; yea, his heart was so enlarged, as to resolve greater things than God thought fit to permit his execution of, as building the temple (for which, nevertheless, he prepared the materials). How solicitous was he that his indisposed age itself might not fail to be useful to God's honour in his own, yea, future generations? O God, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works: Now, also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not until I have shewed thy strength to this generation,
The Excellency of

Serm. ration, and thy power to every one that is
to come. A life so eminently useful, might
well warrant his saying, I bear up the pil-
Iars of the earth; deserve the peoples ac-
knowledgment, Thou art worth ten thou-
sands of us; and answer the testimony the
omniscient God gave beforehand concern-
ing him, I have found David a man after
my own heart, who will fulfil all my will.

2. Of David's death: He fell asleep, after, not before, he had faithfully served a common good, nor later than he was capable to do so. Every man is immortal, be his danger never so great, till he hath accomplished the service God designed by him; and there is scarce a good man (that knows himself such) but would live till his course in service be finished, or would chuse to live longer than he can be service-
able: But when we are unfit to be instru-
ments of good to others, and are wrought to a meetness for glory, its fit time others have our place whom providence hath sui-
ted to God's further designs, by somewhat peculiariy fitted to the rising generation.

The word by which David's death is expeffed, is ἔστησεν, he laid him down to
sleep; which notes death to be no terror to him, and that resurrection would cer-
tainly ensue.

The former part of the text is what I
shall principally insist on; therein David
is commended, and they who imitate his life,
life, partake of the like honour. Two Serm. observations the words easily afford.

Ist Obs. It's an excellent character of a deceased person, that by faithfulness and diligence in his place, he hath been eminently useful in his generation.

To render this intelligible and useful, I shall,

I. Explain this character.

II. Give an account of some things requisite to render a man eminently useful in his generation, who is capable to be so by his gifts, estate, office, &c.

III. Evidence the excellence of this described character.

Sect. I.

For the explication of this character, I shall propose the following heads, which I think will render that duty plain, which I would this day call you to the performance of.

1. God so disposeth of men in their respective generations, that they are capable of being benefited by each other.

The parts of a political body can no more say to each other, I have no need of thee, than those of the natural; which disposition of things is the foundation of all societies. Men need each other, and are receptive of mutual advantages; conversation, friendship, families, trades, common
Serm. mon safety, (and what not) are provided for hereby, and without it would be defeated and cease. The all-wise God hath placed men in that posture towards each other, that no one is self-sufficient: Some need health, others knowledge, others defence, others food and raiment, others counsel, others reproof and spiritual instruction, others comfort, and the like: In each of these respects, those words of our Saviour may be applied, *The poor you have always with you*; some that need your help, many in a great degree, most in one sort or other; so that none can pretend want of objects, or occasions, as a plea why they are not useful; they are daily at hand, and adapted to the nature and proportion of your talents. Infinite wisdom hath contrived the several wants of mankind to give opportunity for employing that common stock he hath distributed; and as wonderful is it, that those very wants are the great means that the several possessors of that common stock receive benefit by the shares thereof which they respectively do enjoy: For its visible, that whatever any one man enjoys, would leave him distressed, unless by exchanging that with another, he were relieved by what that other man possesseth, and himself wants. Nay, that no man may reflect on God as unkind to the world, because the poor are so many, its worthy our admiration,
miration, that poverty itself is very con-
ducive to the publick good; not only as it
prevents much sin, but as its the greatest
spur to diligence, callings, inventions, and
services, which the common benefit de-
pends upon; yea, were none poor, every
man would be next to miserable, by want-
ing all those conveniencies which they now
obtain by another person's want, or desire
of wealth. Who would be servants, pri-
ivate soldiers, seamen, handicrafts-men, &c.
if none were poor? If some would study
law, physick, &c. its from few of them
that their neighbours could expect the ad-
vantage of their arts. Of them who would
fail to other countries, and bring back any
thing of their peculiar growth, how few,
if any besides themselves, should be the
better for them? I wish I might not say
we should have fewer preachers, and not
many so eager of places in the govern-
ment. But I digress too far in justifying pro-
vidence in such necessities among men, as
render them capable of being benefited,
and consequently in giving scope to others
usefulness.

2. E V E R Y man may be m o r e or l e s s
useful to others; and every good man is so.
E A C H may influence for benefit, tho'
in different kinds, and unequal spheres:
He that hath not pounds, hath his mites;
and, tho' he cannot profit multitudes, may
benefit some few. If you cannot instruct
the
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Serm. the ignorant, you can relieve the poor, and encourage the ministry. Are you so indigent, that you have nothing to give, yet you may pray for many, and be examples of meekness and patience. Some are unfit to serve the publick, in an office, who yet are capable to vote for a man that's fit to serve. Divine bounty hath provided a supply among men for those necessities to which mankind is subject: But a great part of the misery of the world is owing to some men's inordinate craving more than they need, and to others not duly laying out what they are entrusted with for others: Whereas, what God hath distributed among men, is a common stock to benefit the body; and of the several parts and sorts thereof, I may say as of those spiritual gifts, They are all given to profit others with ourselves: εἰς συμφέρειν. God allows not a man in the Lord's prayer so much as to ask daily bread for himself alone.

Totally to neglect the benefit of others, argues such unfaithfulness to God, and injustice, yea, cruelty, to men, that I repent not of saying, every good man is useful to others. To be good, and not to do good, is a contradiction; as it is to do good, and not to do that which is beneficial: A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: A Be thou warmed, is equally an argument of a bad heart, and of a dead faith.

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Cor. xii.

Psal. cxii.

16.

Jam. ii.
That religion which lieth in mere words, tho' noisy; and in mere hopes, tho' confident, will be found vain in itself, and useless to its owners; it will not be saving to ourselves, if it be not profitable to others.

3. God hath render'd some men capable of greater and more publick service than others.

It is true of the publick store of talents, as of our common mother the earth, The profit of it is for all; nevertheless some parts are a richer soil than others. So some men are far more capable of common usefulness than their neighbours are; and this by God's disposal, whatever be the just means of acquirement; yea, his permittive ordering hath place, tho' the means be unjust.

Capacities for service are various, according to mens offices, gifts, estates, interest, opportunities, and whatever else would render a man publickly useful, were the possession thereof but faithful and diligent. The degrees of each of them determine to what measure a man is capable to be a common blessing; whether he be actually so or not. Vain it were for any man to pretend himself less capable to do good than in truth he is, for God keeps a just account of the place every man stands in, and the talents each man possesseth; and he hath affixed a charge of service to the extent of every man's ability. A magistrate or
or minister may do more good than a private person, a rich man than a poor, one of great parts than one of lesser; a magistrate in higher place, than another in a lower; a minister eminently qualified, than one less so. Its sad that no man fails to expect regard according to his utmost preeminence, and yet few reckon themselves hereby under any greater capacity for service: They have no respect to that, tho' it be what God did most intend in the inequality of his gifts.

4. Men are obliged to usefulness in proportion to their respective capacities for it, and call unto it.

Were it not so, God would not appear to intend any glory to himself, or good to men, by any thing wherein the greatest excels the vulgar. The instinct in all men (yea, brutes) which sets the good of the community above one's private, would be a vain impression, tho' the basest secretly commend it in another. But this is written with so bright a beam, that none can doubt it without a great reproach to God the governor of this world. What must you conceive him to be, that appoints magistracy, and yet leaves the magistrate at liberty to suffer the innocent subject to be exposed and injured, the people unreformed and unpreserved? That he should institute the office of the ministry, and yet allow the minister to neglect teaching the ignorant,
rant, awakening the secure, reproving the scandalous, opposing the heretick, comforting the humble, and edifying the weak; especially when it's so evident, that performing those several acts, as the end of these offices, are so necessary to the benefit of mankind, (which sufficiently proves the offices themselves to be so). And its no less evident that God hath appointed these offices to those very ends, and annexed his injunctions that they be so applied and executed: Can then the officers be unobliged to exert that authority which the office conveys, for the good of that people over whom they thereby have power, yea, and claim an honour from?

MEN, fond of such trusts, will find they were not conferred as feathers for their caps, or gratifications to their lusts. Heaven's stamp was not designed to be set on poor clay, to indulge our pride, covetousness, love of dominion, or undue liberty, but for a common good.

As in offices, so in other vouchsafements, God hath a regard to service; and therefore with a charge of suitable usefulness it is, that he dispenses riches and gifts, each degree whereof is committed to the possessors as stewards, to lay them out to the uses he assigned; nor is it long before you will all be summoned to give an account of your stewardship. Then you shall be convinced you were not absolute proprietors,
Sermons.

V. proprietors, to reserve, or use at pleasure, one pound of your estates, nor any degree of your interest or gifts, but that a demand of service increased proportionally to what you did possess.

You may remember I mentioned a call to service, as well as a capacity for it; wherein I had respect to what’s more peculiar to the offices of magistrates and ministers; and hereby I would prevent a mistake, as if mere gifts, which fit us for an office, if we were called to it, did oblige us to do those things which are peculiar to that office whereunto we are not called, which is an usurpation, whatever usefulness men pretend. That there be magistrates God hath enjoined; how they should be qualified, and their power executed, he doth also appoint; but which particular persons shall be magistrates, and the extent of their power, he hath left to rules adjusted by the community whereunto they belong; in which respect the magistrate is called a human creature, ἀνθρώπος.

In like manner, Christ hath enacted that there be ministers of the gospel; their qualifications, authority, and work, he hath also described, which he permits no man to alter or limit. But he hath made other ministers judges, whether this or that proposed man be so qualified, and being found so, to ordain him; and among them so approved,
approved, he hath made members of the church the ordinary electors who shall be their more particular minister.

Nothing but confusion proceeds from mens running before they are sent; and ordinarily, as a proud conceit of their own gifts, puts them out of their own place, where alone God accepts their service, and they might have been truly useful to the utmost of their gifts; so a mischief to the publick, and prejudice to their own spiritual state, proves at long-run the effect of their usurpation.

Is it needful to add, That a fit opportunity for real service, is a call both to accept of an office tendered, and to every one invested in an office, to do those acts which belong thereto? As also, that a fit opportunity is a call to every man to employ, for publick benefit, his riches, gifts, and interest, according to the place he is in; yea, and very common danger and benefit binds us to more expence and activity than would be allowable in an ordinary juncture, as, They sold all, when sa-- Aës iv. having any thing would expose the christian cause in its tender beginnings; and this the civil weal of a nation may render as necessary.

5. The tendency of each man's actings to usefulness, in his generation, lies in doing the work of his day, for the benefit of others, suitably to the place God hath set him in.
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Serm. The last heads stated the degree of mens capacities for service, and obligation to improve them according to their call thereto; this head is designed to regulate all mens endeavours, so as that a common good may be subserved thereby. We have an example, which, if imitated by every man, would result in the general benefit, Neb. iii. Each man built and repaired the walls of Jerusalem, to his proportion, in his place and order, whereby the whole work was done for the common defence, and every man's particular labour contributed to that publick good, and was found therein. Conformably whereto, a national good must be promoted, if the magistrate would attend to the civil government, ministers of the gospel to doctrine and the administration of worship, and discipline without corporal punishments. The rich, to distribute to publick and private necessities; the prudent, to give advice; men of power, to execute well-advised things; and high and low, employed according to their station, that the common good suffer not by any of their neglects or usurpations. Then indeed the sad chasms in the publick would be made up, new heavens and a new earth in a great degree commence. Ambition on the one hand, and envy on the other, would be much allay'd: For who would exorbitantly seek that which he foreknows he
he must use for others rather than enjoy himself? What place for envy, when I see myself and others better served by every thing wherein another is advanced above me? Alas, how easy is it to commend this, and own its conduciveness to universal benefit! But the world groaneth under the contrary; every man throws off the care, labour, and charge the publick is to be served by, and intends little besides honour and profit upon the publick spoil: Every Phil. ii. 21. man seeks his own things. And this to such a degree, that the blindest cannot doubt a providence, in that the common good is served even so far as it is, when it is so little designed by most of men in any station; and that this must be by God's over-ruling the general selfishness to that good, which in its own nature (were it not for a superior hand) tends to the ruin of the publick, as such; especially when we find the generality of men of greatest influence most culpable in that respect, and the residue so unconcerned. O that God would awaken a more publick spirit in this age, when love to God, to his church, yea, to our country, is so extinguished by carnal selfishness; then every thing whereby each man is fitted for eminent service, would be as signally laid out, as the publick welfare did require. And few mens capacities for general benefit are contracted to one particular, but multiplied according to the variety
The Excellency of Serm. variety of their talents, relations, and opportunities. It follows therefore, that a man's place for service is commensurate to that variety, and not confined to one, however eminent it be. To conclude: A tendency to publick service is then greatest, when there is a regular application of every man's several office, relation, and talent, to the common good: Yet all this must be done with a special regard to that which is the peculiar work of our day; even that which is principally designed by providence to be contributed to by our various abilities. This must not be omitted on the account of any thing more ordinary or easy: for the peculiar work of every age and place, hath the highest consequences to that age and place depending on it; by that every man's fidelity is most tried, and a mistake in that renders men most publickly hurtful, as the promoting thereof makes a man the most beneficial in his generation. Of this hereafter.

6. He is faithful in his age, who, uprightly designing to serve God, and his generation, diligently employs his talents to promote a common good, in the greatest instances of which he is capable.

This is a provision against the discouragements to which persons, of a low figure, with honest minds, are subject: However, let such know, they may be faithful, tho' not eminently useful. If what little
little they can do, be uprightly designed, and with a willing heart performed, it findeth more acceptance with God than greater things done from carnal designs, tho' perhaps over-ruled by God to further use than they intended. If want of ability be the only restraint, God will judge us by our large minds, and not our narrow power, 2 Cor. viii. 12. A gift of two mites, when our all, is esteemed to be more than greater gifts, when disproportionate to a larger stock reserved. But then you must be sure, not to look at your own things, but also at the things of others, and cordially employ your little, being you have no more; for he is unfaithful, who, by sloth, or other carnal respects, omits to be useful to his utmost, because he cannot equal the more eminent; greater abilities would but more discover the falseness of such a man. Under the law one lamb was admitted instead of two, but it was when the leper was poor, and could not get so much, but this one lamb must be brought; so something, yea, the best we can, must be performed for God's glory, and a common benefit, or we vainly pretend to faithfulness, and as vainly, if idleness or waste are the things we indulge to make us capable of doing but so very little. Usefulness, by incapacity of our own causing, is as culpable as unusefulness when we are capable; nor deserves he the name of a good
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Serm. good man, whose laziness prevents, or lufts devour, what would qualify him for eminent service, altho' he do give and act according to what remiss labours have gotten, or his excesses have left still in his hand. Painfulness, and decent thrift, to enable us to do great things, are most laudable, notwithstanding the silly world's reflections; and he hath the greatest soul, who despiseth these from a mind intent on greatest service.

7. The eminently useful man, in his generation, is he whose great capacity for service, is vigorously, constantly, and wisely employed to do that good which is signally profitable in the importance, difficulty, and extensiveness thereof, in his day.

With the light afforded in the former heads, this gives you the whole of the character I proposed to explain.

Here I suppose a man greatly capable of service, by power, or parts, or estate, with any such other advantages for usefulness; there remains two things constitutive of this character, as principally respecting the eminency of this man's usefulness.

1. The nature of the work to which he applieth his abilities.

2. The manner how he employs his abilities, in prosecuting what is signally profitable.

1. The
The nature of the work to which an eminently useful person employs his abilities, which this head gives you under various epithets.

It's that which is a good work, and not sinful; its a profitable work, not hurtful, or merely innocent, which is the highest that even the civil part of men do aim at, no, its what benefits men. Its signally profitable; not in mean, low, and remiss degrees. 1. The signal profitableness there-of is in the importance of the good subserved, not what is trivial or inconsiderable; such as the salvation of souls, preserving mens lives, securing publick liberties and peace, supporting the esteem of useful persons, vindicating the oppressed, defending the truth, and opposing destructive errors; putting a stop to the attempts of church-dividers, propagating a gospel ministry, breeding and qualifying men for eminent service in church or state, as young scholars; and voting for, and procuring the fittest persons for offices in church and state, employing and relieving the poor, &c. And as its signal in the importance of the work,

So, 2. in the difficulty of it; when its not easy, but hard; not cheap, but expensive; not safe, but dangerous; when, as oft it falls out, a man, in the doing of it, is exposed to great expenses, deep studies, hard labour, displeasure of friends, vilest reproaches,
Serm. reproaches, loss of estate, persecution to imprisonment, bodily torments, yea, death itself. When such things attend our service, and a good work cannot be prosecuted with an exemption from such calamities, it proclaims endeavours great, and the man eminently useful; and the rather, because the good end prosecuted at so dear a rate, will be undertaken by very few; and yet these difficulties manifest its of greatest concernment that it be pursued, for otherwise Satan, and the corrupt part of men, would not so oppose. The apostle's work was signally useful in this respect; see 1 Cor. ix. 11. Such, with all the other martyrs, were eminently useful, in that they endured so much for witnessing to the truths, and instructing and reforming the world in their day; of whom its justly said, The world was not worthy.

3. But with the difficulty, the extensiveness of this good is greatly to be regarded, as what denotes it important.

This extensiveness regards variety of benefits, and reacheth to the greater number of objects. Its not in a few things, nor to a few persons, that eminent usefulness extends; most useful is he who can do most good to most persons (especially influencing ones). He who benefiteth the greatest number of people in whatever may be truly profitable to them, as a means of their happiness in their soul, peace, health, plenty,
plenty, freedom, credit, comfort, and the Serm.
lake, principally in what makes them happy for ever, next in what contributes to
make them safe, easy, and useful in time. And if besides being profitable to multi-
tudes while we live, we can also serve suc-
cceeding ages, it heightens the character: We will shew forth thy praise to all genera-
tions.

2. THE manner how the eminently useful employ their capacities in prosecu-
ting what is signally profitable.

Its not lazily, or remissly, but with vigour, with all his might. Diligence must
be great, and the heart intently engaged in it; as our τὸ ἐργα, not πάνων, our busi-
ness, not diversion; to spend, and to be spent therein. The rule is great, Rom. xii. 15.
7, 8, 11. neither must it be seldom, or by fits and starts; not late attempted, or soon deserted, but constantly: Happy is he who begins early, last long, and never ceaseth to serve his generation till God calls him off the stage: Blessed is he, whom his ma-
ster, when he cometh, finds so doing. Nor is it to be forgotten that it must be mana-
ged wisely, otherwise the useful tendency of great endeavours, well designed, may
be lessened, if not defeated. Prudent application of fit and just means, is needful
to accomplish so highly a valuable end; of which hereafter.

8. THE
8. The mere want of proportionable success abates not a man's eminent usefulness, as to his own excellency or benefit, though success be greatly desirable, and gratefully to be acknowledged: *I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought; yet is my work with the Lord: and tho' Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.* This may be applied by every useful minister.

Events are not in our hands, and therefore its not by them we shall be judged or rewarded; the faithful labourer is as well-pleasing to God, in the pains he took with them that perish, as them who are saved. If you have done great things to recover men, you'll be no loser, tho' sinners be hardened, or errors prevail. What tho' men abuse the money you bestow, and prove hurtful by the encouragement you have given; what tho' contrary events have followed your just endeavours; confusion for order, disquiet for peace, &c. this will lie at the door of such who were the culpable causes of such preposterous effects, and you'll no more be blamed than the heavens that dropped dew on that earth which brought forth briars and thorns.

**Sect. II.**

2. I shall now give an account of some things requisite to render a man eminently
nently useful in his generation, who is capa-
cable by his office, gifts, or estate, to be
so; wherein I shall have especial regard to
ministers, tho' not only them.

I shall distribute them under three heads.

(I.) Such things as are needful to in-
cline them to become intently willing to
employ themselves in serving a common
good. Ability, without a readiness of mind
to, and solicitousness for the honour of
God and good of men, will never make
us serviceable. To ingage your hearts
herein, it is necessary,

1. That you have a believing view of
invisible things; of God, as he who hath
a full authority over you, to command you
to this work; as he who hath an absolute
propriety in you and yours, and therefore
may dispose of you, and all you have, to
what service he pleases; to refuse which is
sacrilege in you, who have dedicated your
selves to him. Believe a judgment-day,
when you must account for all; keep fight
of Christ, who bought souls with his blood,
and whom it cost so much to redeem you
for his service; be at a certainty about
the worth of souls, your own and others;
and of the dreadful misery of such who
die unconverted, or unfruitful; realize sin-
ners woful state, when they cry, Come and
help us; and thy own, if thou refuseth. 9.
Beg faith of Christ, who is the author and
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Serm. V.

Heb. xi. 1.
2 Cor. v. 11.

the finisher of it. This is that by which unseen things are evident; without which evidence, we lose what must affect and move us in our service to souls: Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. Every man's unbelief is equal to his un-serviceableness; and as our faith is, will our usefulness be.

2. Love to God and man is needful to excite us to usefulness. This constrains us to express our gratitude to God, who hath done so much for us when miserable; and to be beneficial to men, whose misery we believe and pity. Strong love will answer all those excuses which have their rise in enmity to God and men; the remains whereof govern the best man as far as he is unprofitable. By this divine passion poor endeavours will be disdained, and the most expensive be no cause of regret; yea, a pleasure riseth with the height of the performance; and God's inclining us to do so much, becomes the very matter of our praises to him; as 1 Chron. xxix. 14, 15. Keep then this holy fire blazing; it will always point you work, and find you strength to do it: Nay, it will put you to pain whilst unemployed, and make you solicitous that it be to purpose. This, this was it, put Paul in travel, till Christ was formed in those.

3. A publick spirit is also needful to the same end. This is the immediate effect of love;
love; its the heart dilated by it. This is the next spring that sets all the wheels in motion, which otherwise stand still within the precincts of narrow self. How David became such a publick blessing, he tells you: If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy, let my right-hand forget her cunning. The vastest flock is productive of little in that man’s hand who is all for himself; whether self in his own person, or self in his family; yea, or self in his own party and faction.

But a publick spirit will be contriving and aiming at a common benefit above his own; in this will such a one delight, and this he must pursue, because it moves as a common soul related to, and concerned in all men, well knowing God hath an interest in each, and one’s self to be but a small part of the whole, and therefore to be less regarded than that wherein God’s glory is infinitely more displayed, and from which a so far greater tribute of honour and service will redound. Therefore be earnest with God to enlarge thy heart, and bring it more under the power of that relation wherein thou standest to the catholick church, yea, to all men, otherwise thou wilt be apt, with Cain, to say of thy very brother, Am I his keeper? Own thy self, with St. Paul, a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Jews, to the wise, and to the unwise. A narrow spirit is a com-
I can hardly hope thou canst get to heaven, but all may freely say, its no matter how soon it be that thou wert there. Look at Christ, who made himself poor that he might make many rich; and blush that thou wearest his name, whilst thy money rufts, and so many poor do starve. But happy is that publick spirit that can scarce relish his own felicity, when he sees so many miserable, but is bound with them that are in bonds. By this spirit a man is bent for God, and a publick good; and without it all beyond self, (that cursed self) is as nothing to him: He is a mere Galio, caring for neither God nor souls, church nor state. You see, that to encline you to eminent usefulness, you must get, improve, and exercise faith and love with a publick spirit; these will employ your abilities for service.

(2.) If you would be eminently useful, you must get such things as will fix and relieve you against those difficulties which attend eminent usefulness. Good inclinations and resolves will be tried in a course of publick service; and as the trials will be different, our preservatives and supports should be as various. Indeed, faith, love, and a publick spirit, which excite a man to great attempts for a publick good, do also yield relief against discouragement in the prosecution
prosecution of them. Yea, faith derives supporting strength from Christ, as he is our head of influence as well as conduct. But, besides these,

1. Be truly humble. The proud heart will scorn to stoop to many things which publick service requires, nor endure the debasements which it will expose to, and so the work will be half done at first, and forsaken at last, as too grating on a proud spirit, which formeth projects more agreeable to an aspiring mind. But, if you are cloathed with humility, you'll be fitted to stoop cheerfully to whatever your work calls you to condescend, and with easiness of mind to endure the contempt which you'll meet with from such you design to be useful to. Can you, without great humility, use such plain words as the ignorant understand, inculcate the same thing often, admit a familiar freedom to the poor and mean, go into nasty cottages, hear much weakness and nonsense, without discouraging the silly from saying any more? Can you, and not be humble, become all things to all men, that you may win some; and be a servant to all, that you may gain the more? Yea, you may meet with affronts and scorns, with flanders and reproach, from the very poor whom you endeavour to benefit in soul and body too; pride will soon disdain all such work, but so must not you, unless you cease to be a publick blessing.
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Ser. fing. Be humble, i.e. look at your selves,

V. vile dust and ashes, as bad by nature as

the most wicked you would reform, and

worthy to be as poor as the most indigent you relieve, and not too good to be

employed by your redeemer in the meanest services, but greatly honoured to be

used in such as this. When pride stirs,

and this seems hard work, as too debasing,

ask, may not that mind better fit me which

was in Christ Jesus my Lord, who made

Phil. ii. 5. himself of no reputation?

2. Be weaned from the world, mortified
to all in it, and well content with what

God hath reserved in heaven for you.

What you make your portion, that will

prescribe your work. If your happiness is

confined to flesh and time, you'll soon

quit what seldom contributes to it, and is
daily exposing it to hazard, yea, oft to

ruin. Even publick-spirited men, for their
country, venture all in common danger,
yet, after success, they get the least. 'Tis

oft more than so with men who are en-
gaged for the testimony of Christ, and

good of souls; worldly affections can never
drive this trade; covetousness, effeminate-
ness, fondness of relations, excessive love of
life, ease and pleasure, will obstruct you
when the expences, losses, pains and dan-
gers of eminent undertakings, present themselves.

There-
Therefore be crucified to the world, Serm. if ever you would be useful in it; and let it be a dead carcase in your account, if you would not be hindred by it in your best designs. Cherish heavenly affections, and with pleasure often view your chosen portion, otherwise irregular appetites will press too hard, to let you be much or long engaged in a work that's so far from gratifying it. This way Moses became so profitable to his people, Heb. xi. 25, 26, and Paul to Jews and Gentiles, 2 Cor. v. 12, 15, 18.

3. Get true christian fortitude; and this will unite, fix and steel the heart against all onsets which try your patience, courage, and resolutions, Rev. ii. 3. A pufillanimous man will refuse what's difficult, and forfake what's dangerous; or, so demean himself under it, as to frustrate a good effect. The truest courage will be put to a stand. For, 1. Satan singletli out the eminently useful, to level all his darts against; his own votaries he'll employ to persecute them; whatever in civil men is to be made use of, shall conspire to make your work difficult, and you unhappy and uneasy; nothing shall be wanting to terrify or bribery you, to tire or distress you, Rev. ii. 10.

2. Envy also still accompanyeth signal usefulness, which oft renders your friends more grievous to you than your professed enemies.
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Serm. enemies. In every age it's found, the spirit within us lusteth to envy. I wish all good men, yea, we ministers, could also find with the apostle; but God giveth more grace. Yet as unreasonable and devilish as envy is, you must expect it, and be prepared to endure the effects thereof, but still with a mind no more adverse from your work, or indifferent to it; only to avoid all ostentation, to conceal what of your work you can; but to omit none, unless you can get it done by another hand.

(3.) If you are called to serve your generation, by opposing the errors, or church-dividing practices, of any considerable sects, pretending to zeal for truth, (tho' never so fallly) and to a purer form of administration, (tho' in all that highly superflitious) you'll find those violent and base methods to asperse and sink you, which very Pagans would abhor to use. Yet this must not abate your testimony, nor incline you in the least to betray the truth, or to seem to approve of their unchristian attempts against the common good; neither suffer your spirit to be infected and debased, to a resemblance of theirs, in malice, rancour, wrath, rage, or revengefulness, which is so contrary to the spirit of Christ, as to make you justly suspect you were no appointed advocate for his truth and interest. And alike careful must you be,
be, that the highest provocations prevail not with you, to vindicate yourself by ways that (all things duly considered) appear a greater damage to the publick good, than the single interest of your person can countervail.

I have given you some hints of the exercise which you ought to provide against, lest a surprise cause you to quit, or disserve the blessed work you are called to.

(4.) Yet, 'tis true, it may prove more creditable, safe and easy, if it be only beneficial to men's bodies or estates; for against that fort, Satan and the world make less resistance, unless it affect the publick in somewhat wherein factions are concerned. Yea, it may be less hazardous and grievous, if it profit men's souls, if it be only in points which Christ hath gained a reputation to, and that you have many to assist you in the defence of, especially if your motion be but equal with those many, because such things are familiarised; or have obtained a greater interest in the consciences of men, and the remaining stream of opposition is divided.

(5.) But the most eminent usefulness is much determined to those points which are difficult, as still deciding, and wherein the interest of Christ, in your day and place, is the subject of a present contest between Christ with his instruments on the
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Serm. the one side, and Satan with his on the other. In such cases there will be great opposition, as far as Satan can influence any, either by their ignorance, malignity, worldly considerations, pride or custom, &c. And generally the contenders on Christ's part are at first but few, especially the more eminent ones; and therefore it necessarily follows that such must be exposed. It were easy to instance all this in the case of introducing the gospel where it was not before; in the reformation of worship or discipline, where they have been corrupted; in opposing and detecting false doctrines which many have imbibed, and long entertained; in reclaiming a degenerate people, from evil practices much indulged; in resisting encroaching errors and disorders, abetted by a considerable number of great zealots, especially if they have some plausible pretensions, suited to the disposition of sober ignorant people; and that some more than common spirit and fervour do attend the seducers, which is very usual. But this is less needful, having cautioned you as to the snares, and fore-warned you of the danger.

(6.) Therefore may not I with reason ask you? Can a feeble mind, or unfortified heart, persist in great endeavours, and in the face of such difficulties steadily pursue his glorious end? No; he must succumb.
fuccumb, and will quit the plainest and most important truth or duty. The interest of Christ will say of these as in Paul's case; no man stood with me, all these men forsook me. Therefore watch against all declinings in holy christian courage (merely natural will not serve, tho' its a good preparative) pray with hope for renewed vigour, that you may find, as Psalm lxix. 32. your heart shall live that seek God; and that he is the strength of your heart, when all else fails you, Psalm lxxxiii. 26. When the onset is vigorous, and begins to impress, be then strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. To that end, remember whose cause you plead, and who employs you: Read oft your commission, where you will find a promise fit to revive your very fainting spirit: Lo, I am with you to the end of the world. One less faithful and compassionate than our saviour is (if possessed of power) would not suffer any servant he employed to sink, in a business wherein he himself hath the greatest concernment. If your hearts be upright, and you have God's work in hand, the more eminently you are employed, the greater supports you'll find; and in the most difficult enterprize he is careful to give the greatest assurance, Jer. i. 7. viii. 18. Ezek. v. 8, 9. One promise he can so spirit and fill with power, that it shall set thy soul above all fears;
Serm. fears; and cause strength to advance to thy own feeling in very extremity, above what it appeared in the easiest of thy ways: Trust then in him with thy whole heart. And because what repels our fears tends to encourage us, 'tis not improper oft seriously to think what far greater mischiefs we escape, by not drawing back, or doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, than what can attend a faithful discharge of our work, which hath so great a reward when finished, *Heb. x. 58. Rev. iii. 5.*

_Hereewith_ I have finished an account of what's necessary to support us under the difficulties attending publick usefulness, _viz._ humility, mortifiedness to the world, and christian fortitude.

3. Several things are needful as tending to secure, or at least facilitate the success of your work persifted in.

_Herein_ we should be solicitous that, as much as in us lies, the end we propose may not be defeated, but that those receive that profit, which we sincerely conduce to, by our endeavours; whereby we may eventually prove blessings to them. To this end,

(1.) You must duly _address_ your selves to God, to engage his help. Be much in prayer to, and dependance on God, thro' Christ our mediator. Look to him for direction, that you may not mistake your work,
work, nor the best way to perform it: Seek to him for abundant anointings, that you may not be unqualified in proportion to your undertaking. His constant assistance and blessing must be fervently implored, *Neb. i. 11.* without which your most probable attempts will be vain, yea turn to your reproach and shame. And that you may be in the likelier posture for a gracious return, keep all clear between God and your own consciences; regard no iniquity in your heart, *Psal. lxvi.* 18. Rely on Christ's merits and intercession, and be always ready to ascribe to God the entire glory of all your serviceableness and success; for he is a jealous God, and generally blatheth that wherein he is not acknowledged: We must make God all in all, if we would signify any thing.

(2.) Be careful of your own behaviour before those to whom you endeavour to be profitable; that it conduces to, and do not hinder your usefulness. Prevent all prejudices, gain their affection and esteem; possess them with a sense of your kindness to them, good designs towards them, and your own belief of, and earnestness of soul for the matters you call them to entertain, and submit to; exercise great patience, meekness and tenderness; and see that your whole behaviour be circumspect, and your life exemplary, *1 Pet. v.* 3.
that they may find no just exception against your doctrine or endeavours. If they take occasion unjustly, or that by wicked persons you are falsely slandered, you may better hope God will prevent the unprofitableness of your labours, or at least accept them. Neither is it unfit to be cautious how you dispute with them concerning secular interests; avoid also fondness of external respect, and yet be as jealous that you forfeit not an internal reverence, nor prostitute your authority, as you are Christ’s ambassadors, Rom. xi. 13, 14.

(3.) Labour to attain and use true wisdom in the ordering of your endeavours, that they may be apt to real publick usefulness.

1. I call it true wisdom, not only to oppose it to folly and indiscretion, but also to all knavish craftiness. God’s cause needs no base tricks; upright men abhor the use of them. Christ seldom prospereth such to serve his interest; but if he over-rule them to any common good, as sometimes he doth other pieces of wickedness, yet he will never justify or accept such methods, but condemn those ways, and them who use them. But, indeed, as base tricks consist not with sincere designs of a publick good, so they are never used with that intention. No, no, let mens pretences be never so sacred, its to serve a carnal selfish turn, to propagate or uphold some private faction,
faction, in opposition to the true extensive interests of Christ in the world. The eminently useful could not die in peace, if they must not say, with the apostle, Our 2 Cor. i. rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. They were wiser than to think that will be accounted a service to Christ in life, for which, without repentance, he will cast them into hell at their death. This text may assure us, that Paul's guile, 2 Cor. xii. with which he caught these very people, was not any thing contrary to godly sincerity, which in this epistle, in the forecited place, he had with more than usual care instanced towards them; it was therefore no other than honest wisdom, or godly prudence, even that which I have said is so needful to advantage the success of your well-designed labour; it was an instance of his self-denial, not his self-seeking. He used his sparing their purses as a help to save their souls, upon finding their temper such, that the gospel was like to be less profitable to them, if he subsisted by it. This was far enough from any misrepresenting, and undermining, cheating, dividing, imposing, ensnaring, and intangling arts or methods; ways so abominable in the most ordinary affairs between man and man, that you should tremble at a thought of
Serm. of using them in matters enstamped with the name of God; yea, tho' it were but in defending a publick good, and yourself from the dangerous attempts of such as practise them.

2. Yet true wisdom and prudence are very needful to direct your just endeavours in the greatest aptness to succeed with all those whom you design to benefit. A true judgment of persons and seasons, with a direct regard to the end, and an exquisite understanding of the nature of the various lawful means, will qualify you to choose the fittest means to that end with those persons. God's word, prayer, consideration, and experience, must be your helps to arrive to wisdom, and be sure to exercise and apply to all your endeavours the utmost wisdom God vouchsafes you, a neglect whereof will aggravate your disappointment, as well as conduce thereto.

But my chief design, under this head, is to convince you of the necessity of wisdom in the whole course of publick usefulness, that so you may become more earnest with God for this, and careful to excite your souls to the constant exercise of it. Without wisdom you cannot rightly judge of the work of your generation; a mistake wherein is dangerous to your great end; its so, tho' it should be no other mistake than to overlook one of the more principal parts of it, and take up with what
what is next to it, as plainer, easier, or safer; yea, if it lies in several things, and you neglect but the least. How needful is wisdom to discern which is our present duty, and what the greatest good, when several appear in competition? Yea, often there's need of exquisite skill in an affair of publick consequence, to determine what will do more good than hurt. He hath not well observed, that thinks it always easy to judge what's the most proper duty in each company, and wherein they need most to be benefited, especially the fittest seasons, opportunities, and methods, to apply suitable means to effect that good which they severally stand in greatest need of, and are most capable of receiving. It's hard to accommodate yourselves to the various tempers and circumstances of your very acquaintance, and know whom, when, and how to reprove, encourage, examine, exhort, or relieve, so as to be most beneficial to each within the limits of your power, and according to your different obligations, tho' to the extent of it.

Great discretion is necessary to judge of obstacles, and to demean yourselves under them, as may most conduce to your publick usefulness; to know when, and how, to strive to remove or oppose them, when its best to connive and be silent: How to avoid the imputation of rashness and foolish zeal in the former, and of lukewarm-
Serm. Lukewarmness and cowardize in the latter; V. for publick usefulness will be affected by both.

In like manner there is use of wisdom towards such as drive on the same good design with you, as well as towards them who oppose; if you are younger, that the elder may not, by envy or suspicion, be tempted to divert you from your work, or give you disquiet in it. To avoid which, serve with them in humility, as sons with a father. If you be elder, that the younger's rashness, unfixedness, and less experience, give not Satan an advantage; to prevent which, do not discourage or despise, but assist and countenance them. But be they inferiors, equals or superiors, who do contribute to a common good; he that will be eminently useful, and give up himself to it, had need of greatest wisdom to govern himself towards each; for a little acquaintance with the world, will discover in most men so much of either humour, pride, envy, selfishness, covetousness, suspicion, cowardliness, unconcernedness for the publick, unfixedness, sloth, ignorance, credulousness, or aptness to be imposed on by designing men, as will force the observing to fix this conclusion, and govern themselves by it.

They that will be most useful in their generation, must spend, do, adventure, and suffer most, and yet must resolve to allow, intreat,
intreat, connive, yield, thank, forbear, forgive, deny themselves, and endure most whatever persons they have to deal with; and thus make the best use of all for a common good.

Who is sufficient for these things? But with thee, O Lord (who employest whom thou wilt) nothing is impossible. A stammering Moses, a suspicious Gideon, a childish Jeremiah, did succeed in that whereunto thou didst appoint them. Surely by all this you are induced to seek earnestly for wisdom: Ask it daily of God thro' Christ, who giveth liberally (for direction to do as James i. well as suffer) and upbraideth not. De-

pendingly hope, He will guide me by his counsel, and afterwards bring me to glory.

I have finished the second general head, viz. An account of what's needful to bring a man to eminent usefulness, who is capable of it; under which you have heard, that his soul must be excited to undertake it by faith, love, and a publick spirit. 2. Be relieved against the difficulties attending it, which is by humility, mortifiedness to the world, and christian fortitude. 3. He must facilitate his success by prayer to God, a due behaviour before men, and true wisdom in the management of all his endeavours.
III. I shall evidence the excellency of this character. To be an eminently useful man, is no empty title without real worth. God approves of it, angels and good men highly esteem it; yea, there's that in every man, which now secretly, and in time will publickly, allow this man to be the best, the wisest, and the greatest.

Eminent usefulness greatly differeth from its counterfeits. This is no pragmatical business in other men's matters, but a faithful discharge of our obligations to God and our fellow creatures.

Neither is it a pharisaical proseliting to a sect, which doth narrow and weaken Christ's interest (proving oft as fatal to the church, yea, to men's selves, as their walking at large in the world would be.) No, its an intentness to promote mere Christianity, and unaffected godliness, which reforms the world, edifies the church, and saves the souls of sinners in proportion to its success. Its what advanceth men above the rank of ordinary christians, who are babes to these grown men, shrubs to these cedars, very cyphers (if not blemishes and burdens) compared with these men of name, these common blessings, these witnesses to a divine life, and ornaments of religion, who bear up the pillars of the church,
church, yea, of the earth; to each of whom we weaklings may say, as they to David, Thou art worth ten thousand of us. This will appear, if you consider,

(1.) It's an extraordinary honour to be singled out by God eminently to serve our generation. What can be more glorious than to be singled out, as David, from among his brethren, to effect God's benign purposes to multitudes, when most men are useless, yea, hurtful; their names are registered among the worthies of Israel, and famous in Bethlehem, Ruth iv. 11. This is that Moses, Acts vii. 37. Being publick blessings, they, with Jabez, are more honourable than their brethren. No office reflects honour but with respect to that usefulness to which it obligeth, and for which it capacitates.

(2.) It argues a most godlike and excellent spirit: He is good, and doth good. He is נָּבִיא יְאָשֶׁר, which was visibly instanced in our Lord Jesus: He went about doing good to souls and bodies. In whom is this so exemplified as in the signally useful, whose activity, fixedness, labours, designs, and beneficence, correspond to Christ's, allowing for our contracted capacities? In such a man many graces and virtues are associated; nay, which can be wanting, yea, or weak in the constitution of this person? He also must be greatly cleansed from those dregs, which debase, divert,
The Excellency of Serm. and deaden the less useful. He seems to breathe in another air, to be of another make, and governed by contrary inclinations and rules than most of mankind are (I had like to have said christians;) hence he is too often branded as less prudent, because he walks by rules so much above what poor and narrow souls embrace, and postponeth those things beyond which a vulgar spirit cannot derive a motive. Let us remark a few scripture instances, left all appears a mere speculation. — Behold queen Esther taking her life in her hand to save her people; did not she then love her people above her life? Esther iv. 16. Moses neglected God's offer to advance his family, and intercedeth for the nation's safety, as if he had hated his own house, Numb. xiv. 12, 17. What dominion over covetousness, selfishness, and cowardice, did Nehemiah manifest, whilst by acting their contraries he repaired Jerusalem, established God's worship among the captives restored by his means. Without ostentation he might say, Should such a one as I be? Mordecai's mind was well ballasted, that under such advancement retained such goodness and meekness, as still to seek the weal of his people, and speak peace to all his seed. How could Caleb and Joshua refuse to frame their account to the humour of the multitudes, but that they had a more excellent spirit than the other spies? Neh. vi. 11. Esth. x. 3.
Numb. xiv. 24. Oh the magnanimity, zeal for God, love to souls, contempt of the world, and unwearied vigour and largeness of heart, which governed Paul to his extensive usefulness! which might be instanced in the other apostles and martyrs; yea, those illustriously shine in every eminently useful christian. Its the excellency of their spirit which forms such vast designs, and enables to the unwearied pursuits thereof. Divine influence inspires them, and keeps their minds above what's mean and selfish, beyond what's narrow and fordid; yea, so widens and enflames them, that their spheres prescribe the only limit to their attempts: How far would they relieve, reform, and improve the church, the nation, yea, the world, were it but in their power? Judge the spirit by the use others make of the same abilities, how useless, how hurtful?

(3.) The eminently useful have more manifest grounds for a comfortable death than others can expect. Death makes a great discovery of the true value of things; whatever renders this safe and easy, we ought highly to esteem, as men assured its our passage into eternity, and puts a period to our preparations for it: In the grave Ecclef. ix. there's no work nor device to change our state, or improve our meetness for an unseen world: Therefore whatever is the best evidence of our title to eternal life, and the
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Serm. the greatest meetness for it, that must afford ground of highest comfort, when self-love, and the nearness of eternity, gives death an awakening power.

1. I shall prefix a caution.
2. Prove what I assert.

1. For caution. The mistakes of weakly-designing men, necessitate me to acquaint you, its Christ only who procured a safe and comfortable death, by meriting our pardon, and a right to eternal glory, with a happy resurrection. Its by faith only, that a regenerate penitent looks to, relies on, and receives Christ as our atoning Saviour for pardon and life, according to his promises in the gospel; which promises, with the included benefits, are purchased only by Christ's obedience, and applied as an effect thereof, whenever they are applied. The qualifications which the gospel appoints in him whom the promises invest in its benefits, are no causes of those benefits, nor any part of the righteousness which procured them: But Christ using his gospel as an instrument in the governing and saving of sinners, and pleading with them his purchased benefits for motives to their obedience to the gospel, as a rule of judgment. Its not sufficient to our comfortable death, that we believe that Christ obeyed and died to procure pardon, and a right to salvation for penitent believers; but it must appear to us that we are partakers
partakers of that pardon and right to life, which must be by the evidence of our regeneration, repentance, and faith, not one without the other; nor either (when we come to die) without their genuine necessary effects, and each persevered in. They are vain hopes if we totally want whatever the gospel-promises make indispensably needful to our obtaining eternal glory; and the contrary whereunto the gospel threateneth with an exclusion from heaven, John iii. 3, 36. Luke xiii. 3. Heb. xii. 14. x. 38. He is fool-hardy that dares die, not knowing but that his faith was the faith of an unregenerate impenitent heart; yea, or satisfies himself with having thought he once at first had such a true faith, but is not sure that he persevereth therein; that regards not any conformity to Christ. Universal obedience, sincere holiness, and fidelity to God, and improvement of his talents, are things which the gospel so insists on, as being fitter to give evidence, than things more obscure or remote can be; Mat. x. 33. xxv. 30. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Ephes. v. 6.

2. I shall prove that the eminently useful, have more manifest grounds for a comfortable death than others can expect; for which end, it will be sufficient that I evidence; That eminent faithful usefulness is a most plain and infallible evidence of our title to eternal life, and that it also argueth a very great meetness for heaven; whence
Serm. whence it will follow, that the eminently faithful useful man, hath more manifest grounds for a comfortable death than others can expect, and consequently his character is excellent. It tends to a comfortable death; as,

(1.) It is a most plain and infallible evidence of our title to eternal life. Faithful eminent useful usefulness, is not only an evidence considered abstractedly, but it gives evidence to the sincerity of all, or most other graces; yea, and receives it from them: for by the in-being and activity of such graces it subsisted, and in it each of them expressed their vital power and sincerity, and that not darkly, but clearly; not doubtfully, but to full conviction; so that the eminently useful man, hath the concurrent testimony of every grace, in a light to which each contributes. And it answers any just challenge that can be made to his having those several graces, and that in reality; so that if faith, repentance, love to God, a new birth, or perseverance, have life promised to them, and the sincerity thereof being evident to a man, must yield strong consolation; then the eminently useful man hath very abundant reasons of comfort, as to his interest in eternal life. I shall evidence this by three things:

I. Can he doubt the truth of his several graces? Not of his faith, because he hath been thus signally excited by his assent to
to what Christ, as prophet, hath revealed; and encouraged, by trusting in his Saviour’s merits, strength, and testament; and governed by the commands of Christ his received Lord, and that in so faithful an execution of his own covenant consent and vows? Yea, his union to Christ is attested as well as his faith by which he is united, for his truly devoted fruitful life, could proceed from, and subsist by nothing lower, than those vital influences and supplies which came from Christ his head and root, Gal. ii. 20. Phil. i. 19, 20, 21.

**His repentance also** is unsuspected, when he beholds his lusts so subdued as not to hinder his living to God entirely as his end; his heart so altered in its purposes, resolves and relishes, that he could not live to carnal self, but a common good, wherein he delighted and spent himself. He knows his former evil course is duly bewailed when so directly changed, and that sin was truly hateful, being he hath not only endeavoured the utter mortification of it in himself, but greatly laboured to rescue all others from the dominion and effects thereof.

He is sure of his new birth, when he reflects that nothing less could make my aims, my temper and course, to be so far conformed to Christ’s, as my devotedness to God’s glory, and to the benefit of saints and sinners doth attest, 1 Joh. iv.
Serm. 17. Yea more, a lower principle than what was formed in regeneration, would never have lasted thus long, and carried me thus far, Job. iv. 14.

2. This eminently useful man's stated course and contrivances, repel a jealousy, that his love to God or man, or appearing zeal, was a painted fire; his faith, hope, or other graces, a dead image, because all these have vitally concurred, to direct, fix, and strengthen his labours, to lay out his talents, drive a constant trade, and spend his life for Christ, Job. xiv. 21. Job. iii. 16, 17. Rom. xii. 11, 12, 13. And there is as little ground to question his perseverance, when he knows he was not taken off from publick serviceableness, by his sloth, fear, weariness, selfishness, or change of purpose or designs; yea, that now he feels his soul solicitous for, and prepared unto a publick good, were he but capable to contribute to it.

3. Besides this testimony from the evidence of such graces as life is promised to, the useful man is in a way likelier for comfort than others, because the Spirit of God doth not usually forbear to cast a light upon the graces of such when they come to die, but (and that not rarely) he makes them to behold his face, and experience some foretastes of the approaching glory; so that with Moses they die at the mouth of God; with Stephen,
a publick Spirit.

Aët. vii. 57. as David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Yea, Serm. besides this, the useful man is encouraged by the great things that passed between God and his soul, in bending him for, and carrying him through those attempts and employments wherein he hath served the will of God in his generation. Many answers of prayer, eminent deliverances from evil, supports when fainting, revivings and enlargements when tempted to remissness, frequent views of Christ and heaven for renewal of strength, (and the like) which he hath oft experienced, have so familiarised God and Christ to him, and so fixed his trust in his goodness, truth and word, that he can quietly commit his spirit to him. And so, from all put together, having now fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith, he beholds that crown of righteousness hanging over his head, which he knows his God will give him: And he hath an abundant enterance into God's kingdom. 2 Pet. i. 11.

(2.) This eminent usefulness argues a meetness for heaven. He can easily quit all worldly enjoyments, who valued life itself but as a means for service, and consecrated all he had as subservient to it. This man is not called off before his work is done; for his course is finished, and the end of his being on earth so fully answered, Acts xiii. 25. Heaven must be a real rest to him after so much labour;
Serm. and very suitable in the nature of it to one of so agreeable a disposition. What welcome company are perfected happy souls, when the contrary made the saving and healing of miserable sinners to engage his thoughts, and command his strength whilst he lived on earth? His soul that was so enlarged by grace for publick use, will be very receptive of those fuller streams of heavenly joys.

How will he be satisfied with more of God's likeness there, when it will be but the perfection of what he judged so lovely as to strive so much to propagate it here? Psal. xvii. 14, 15. This publick spirit will be ravished in contemplating and adoring a blessed God, when he beholds how universal a good he is; yea, and ever hath been, by the records of his beneficence there published and explained. Whatever employment heaven allots (for it's no place of idleness) he is greatly prepared for it; who did heartily perform so much under the great disadvantages of this present state, which did arise both from his works and himself, yea, and such as he had to deal with. So that this man is gathered when ripe; he is even here a vessel of glory, being so meet for his master's use.

Now how comfortable will death be to a man thus well assured of eternal happiness, and prepared for that wherein it will
will consist? It cannot endanger nor hurt him; he must rather desire than abhor or fear it, when only a sense of present serviceableness (where it is more needful) hath reconciled useful saints to a longer life, Phil. i. 23, 24. To such useful ones as Paul it belonged to triumph over death, rather than be afraid, and welcome its approaches to enjoy that, a regard whereto had made him so laborious; 1 Cor. xv. 57, 58.

Thus I have represented the grounds on which a very useful man may die comfortably. But can there be the like for an unuseful person? I am sure, where a life unprofitably spent (through sloth, negligence, self-seeking and unfaithfulness to God) doth stare a man in the face, 'tis a just challenge to his hopes, it justifies his fears, and he vainly expects advantage by death, or safety in dying.

Yea, a man who hath been useful in lesser degrees, through remissness and narrowness of heart, cannot but feel greater jealousy of his condition than the eminently useful; yea, he must make bitter reflections upon his past life, wherein he finds so many neglects and baulks. So little work done in so long a time, and with so great a stock; and being self-conscious of the much greater things he might have performed for a common good; sure he cannot, without grief, behold his season
Serm. season over, whilst the blood of souls, the
groans of a dying church, or a sinking
nation testify against his departing soul, that omitted relieving them to his power.
What work for shame, and sorrow, ay, and fear too, will this make, compared
with a vigorously useful life?

(4.) The future rewards of an eminently useful man will be greater than others: His crown will weigh in proportion to his service: They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars in the firmament, for ever and ever. He that gained the ten talents, was made a ruler over ten cities; he that gained two, was made ruler but over five.

These wider vessels shall be filled as well as the lesser; but being larger, they contain the more. O then, happy he who was most abundant in labours; no degree whereof shall be in vain. Their works shall follow them as a retinue, adding to their grandeur; and rivers shall be more acknowledged by our blessed God, when he will come to reward the very drops.

These mens place in the body will be more noble, their thrones higher, perhaps their services more eminent in a heavenly estate, as much in proportion as they had been on earth. And tho' all faithful ones
shall be as angels; yet among these there are degrees, wherein there will be a correspondence as to those. Every generous design,
design, tear, labour, hardship, expence, loss and hazard, will be found in a proportioned glory: *He that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully.*

Whereas its easily inferred, how excellent a character of a believer it is, that he was an eminently useful person in his age. Its a title will found in the very heavens, and be honourably acknowledged by Christ upon his throne; he will say, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant,* *enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Which yet is no reflection on his own merits; for in the vertue thereof the most useful saints inherit those further additions, according to his promise, as well as the less useful possess the lesser degrees. True, *its all his own,* and *he may do what he will with his own,* but if he is pleased to foretell us how he'll dispense this *his own* to men, therupon his veracity commands our assured expectations; and if he also use those *higher measures of glory,* as motives to *greater labours,* we, in being *very laborious,* cannot be disappointed of those higher measures any more than of the least; yea, we frustrate his end in publishing such promises, if we are not excited to more abundant labours by the benefits promised, and upon such labours expect those benefits.

I have offered what I hope will convince you of the truth of the third general
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Serm. ral head, viz. That to be eminently use-
ful in one's generation, is an excellent cha-
racter; for to be so employed, is an ho-
nour put upon that man by the infinite
God. The spirit of such a man is excel-
 lent and God-like: He hath the greatest
grounds for a comfortable death, both
from the evidence of his title to eternal
life, and his meetness for it. And lastly, his
future glory will be greater than that of
others.

Sect. IV.

I shall proceed to the application of
this doctrine by some inferences.

1st Inference. To be a publick plague, is
a great reproach. What can be said worse
of a man when dead? That one did no
good in an eminent station; that he hid
his talent, which should have been em-
ployed in view, are infamous scars: but
that any man should influence to publick
mischief, this leaves his memorial accursed;
better never have been born; his gifts, his
estate, powers and offices, are become a
snare to himself, and a mischief to the
publick. The more active, the greater de-
triment; the longer he lived, the more
lasting curse hath this man been; and
the further hath he contributed to the
woe of others, as well as to his own dam-
nation. He will be signally marked in an-
other
other world, for the harm he did in this; receiving his torments with remarkable notice, when they do groan to themselves, who sinned only against themselves. Will the powers or riches he had on earth, guard him against the forest vengeance for the hurt he did? No, no. Of this abhorred sort are the wafters of countries, tyrannical princes, propagators of herefies, perverters of justice, great oppressors of the poor, wafters of God's vineyards, betrayers of their countries, silencers of useful preachers, enemies to the ministry, and calumniators of ministers, and the like. Happy multitudes, if such had never been; and next, happy that they are soon taken away; see Jer. xxii. 17, 18. Such will wish they had been ideots and beggars, or any thing else, which could have more incapacitated them from doing mischief.

2d Inf. This may convince us of the mischief of a narrow sectarian spirit, and consonant principles, wherever they prevail.

By such a narrow spirit, I mean a spirit that confineth charity to a sect distinguished from other christians, by customs or opinions that are not essentia to true godliness, and is embittered and enraged against all who differ from such usages and opinions. This is the spirit of poverty; (which is a sect, tho' a great one) yea,
Serm. yea, it is the worst of popery; and wherever it rules, the most diabolical part of anti-christianism is undestroy'd. All the persecutions and impositions of that beast proceed from this very spirit, and from principles both ministering to it, and formed by it (for their influence is mutual.) There's scarce any thing more opposite to publick usefulness, or less consistent with the precepts, design and true spirit of christianity; the former is that which my subject so calls me to demonstrate, and testify against, that without doing so, I cannot faithfully handle this doctrine. But who can doubt the destructiveness of this spirit to publick benefit and service, if you observe the way and behaviour of all sorts of persons who are acted by it?

For under its impulse it is, that

I. Men confine their usefulness to their own faction, as if they were indebted to seek the good of none beyond it; nay, as if conscience obliged them against all attempts for benefits more common and extensive. They judge all men out of their herd, unworthy of their love, concern, or labour; what's the publick to them, further than as things affect their own? Let the ship sink, so their cabbin can be saved. They'll obstruct all settlement in church or state, if it be any other than a provision for their sect, or managed by any besides themselves; yea scruple not to
to advance their party upon the ruins of the publick, as men see from age to age.

2. **What is it to such bigots, if true Christianity prevail with men, or converts be multiplied, unless they become their proselytes?** Alas! they judge no man religious, or good, out of their own garb; they surmise him carnal, who cannot pronounce their Shibboleth, and do as good as say, they are all in a damnable state who at all oppose them. Hence such people are far more industrious to bring men to a compliance with their fond peculiarities, than to a subjection to the great and most undoubtedly precepts of the gospel, *Mat. xxiii. 15.* which is a publick mischief, as in other respects so also in this. Men hereby waste that time, strength, and labour, upon an unprofitable (if not hurtful) trifle, which, by a publick spirit, would be employed in subserviency to what is really advantagious, *viz.* To make men holier and safer for eternity. Yet,

3. *As if this effect of such a spirit were not harmful enough to the publick, it further prompts men to malign the most useful, to obstruct the most prosperous successes of the gospel, to blast the most profitable ministers, and overturn flourishing churches, by dividing and defaming methods, with lies, violence and basest artifice, as if they thought justice, kindness, and truth, were due only to men of their own*
The Excellency of Serm. own opinion; and cruelty, tricking, and falsehood, were warranted, if not required towards all who differ, Gal. v. 10. and vi. 10, 12, 15, 16. Yea, it stops not here; what poverty, silencings, imprisonments, tortures and bloodshed, both by persecution and wars, do men, so spirited, greedily inflict, and bring upon mankind? neighbour nations, yea, our own proclaim. Such actings indicate this narrow spirit to prevail; such a spirit prevailing, will produce all those fruits, if there be but power. It may obtain under very different forms, but is not the more innocent for any of them, tho' it reigns in some of most. The best cause will not hallow such a frame; the worst cause generally hath most of it, and very oft it is a sign thereof. But wherever it is Christ will not own it, his interest, in a common good, is sure to lose by it; it springs from carnal selfishness, it's acted and excited by the devil, whatever is pretended for its justification, and it tends to publick hurt of the highest kind. Surely it's no part of, nor joined with that wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without injuring, and without hypocrisy: No, it's from what is earthly, sensual, and devilish.

Let us all watch then against the infection of such a temper; for it's too natural
a publick Spirit.

natural to our unrenewed part to allow se-
curity, yea, tho' our opinions be most ortho-
doxt. Satan will delude you to it un-
der the name of zeal, for he knows that zeal must degenerate into hellish fire when it blazeth in the former instances; yea, when it moves thereto. The quenching of such a spirit, in others, is our duty, or, at least, resisting it, that it prevail not to a publick mischief; nor is he worthy of the name of a man, publickly useful, that dare not venture all to oppose it; and the ra-
ther, because its as much worse than bru-
tish, as the devil is worse than a brute, and in many respects gives that wound to re-
ligion, and a publick good, which open profaneness is not capable of giving. No-	hing but a true publick christian spirit can expel it, and without that there will be no aptness to contribute to that progress of the gospel in the world, which we daily pray for; nor a possibility to main-
tain, or improve such a mercy, by walking in unity, love, and peace, to common edification. To all which, this narrow spirit of a party is so irreconcileable and de-
structive, that giving way thereto, will no more allay it than pouring oil into a fire. Happy times; when divine light and love will so abound, that self-seekers can serve no turn by such a spirit, and the honest-
minded shall neither be endangered, nor

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Serm. infected by it; then, and not till then, will a publick good be generally pursued.

3 Inf. We see one great reason why self-denial is so proposed by Christ to all his disciples.

This is the first article to which all his followers are to submit, If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. The two last are impossible to such, as agree not to the first. But besides the necessity thereof to these, self-denial is absolutely requisite to those services, which Christ designeth by his disciples, to each other, and to the world; as salt they are to season a corrupt world, as lights to enlighten a blind world, Mat. v. 13, 14. Wisdom is to be justified by them, Luke vii. 35. The virtues of God to be published. They are to propagate the interests of our blessed redeemer, &c. But which of these can we subserve, if self be not denied? All impediments to attempt such a work, and most of our unfitness to accomplish it, do arise from carnal selfishness; where this is subdued, men are ready and prepared to be common blessings, as opportunity is afforded. Then sloth will not delay, fear shall not discourage, ambitious or covetous aims must not divert from any labours that others may be benefited by; whereas carnal self must have our ease indulged, our humour gratified, and safety, credit, and
and worldly advantages provided for, what- Serm. ever becomes of Christ's interests, or a pub-
lick weal. He that denieth himself most, will be most beneficial; he that cannot do this at all, will rarely attempt, infallibly spoil, and easily quit any publick service. A self-seeking man will not propose, or prosecute, a common good, farther than his own present interests do invite. A self-indulging man will manage his endeavours so, as that the obstacles to his success, by his own behaviour, will exceed the utmost he contributes to it. A self-confident man will over-look the good he might do, attempt what he is unfit for, and, as a just rebuke from God, discover his own weakness, instead of being prospered in what he doth foolishly enterprize in his own strength.

Did you strictly examine your hearts and ways, it would appear, most mens unusefulness proceeds from their selfishness; this locks your coffers, that you cannot give; this benums your powers, that you will not act; this spieth the lion in the way, that you dare not go; this feels the burden, counts the charge, and resents the inconveniencies of service, as too great to be endured for it. Whereas, in all eminent usefulness, we do neglect the counsel, counter-act the projects, and offer violence to the inclinations of self, Gal. i. 16. and therein we must act not only as such who are

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Serm. are not their own, but as those who have no will of their own to obey, no selfish turn to serve, nor humour to gratify. When therefore selfishness is so certain an obstructer of the uses Christ designed his members to, how fit was it to make our denial of it a prime part of true christianity, and try his genuine followers by their consent thereto, especially when all publick mischiefs do as truly spring from self-indulged, as publick benefits do from this denied? Miserable man! since his lufts are become himself, and rational self-love become a stranger. Happy christian! who best consults his own true interests, by trampling on his lufts, restraining his irregular desires, and rejecting an undue concern for body, and earthly affairs, that he may live to Christ, and a common good. This man knows he shall find his truest self most gratified, secured, and provided for, in renouncing and opposing this his greatest enemy, tho' called self.

I shall, in the next place, exhort you and myself, according to the nature of this truth which I have explained.

1. Let us be ashamed, and duly humbled, for our unusefulness in our generation.

Who of us falls not under the charge of this fault? And, surely, blushings and grief, are very proper where the charge is true. But knowing how loth we are to acknow-
acknowledge our fault, and as backward to be affected with the sense of it, when its two plain to be denied, I shall endea-

(1.) To *convince* you of your unusefulness in your generation, that so we may not plead we are ignorant, if we are guilty.

(2.) To *excite* you to shame and sorrow for your unusefulness, when under conviction of the guilt.

(1.) *For conviction* of the guilty. To this end review your talents, and the improvements of them, for publick good; admit, yea, excite your consciences, to compare your distributions with your stock, your labour with your strength, and your publick services with your time, gifts, and opportunities. Deal herein as in the sight of Christ, whose *eyes are as a flame of fire*, Rev. i. 14. and be not unconcerned whether you find out your sin or not, for your ignorance prevents not your guilt, if the charge be true, tho' it will hinder your repentance, whereby your punishment becomes unavoidable. O then let each of us ask ourselves such questions as these: Have I ever proposed to live to God's honour, in the good of others, as the great end of life? or have not I utterly disregarded it? Have I done good to as many persons as I had a call to, and opportunity for? Or have not I wilfully exempted very many, to whom I stood obliged? Hath the good that
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that I have done in the world, been in proportion to my utmost ability? or hath it been very little, and inconsiderable, compared with what I could have done? Did I begin to be useful as soon as I was capable; and do I continue so to this time; or was I not far in years before I began; or have I not deserted it, after I made some hopeful beginnings? Am I seriously concerned to see so many sinners post to hell? Doth my heart bleed at the miserable condition of the poor and distressed? Am I very solicitous for the church’s welfare, and the nation’s happiness, so as to set myself to redress evil, and help the good of each in my place, and this to the extent of my power? Or, am not I one that flight the wickedness the world lies in, want bowels to the distressed? If I abound, seldom think or care what becomes of the church or nation, so that I and my friends be but safe and thrive; and accordingly I employ and spare my estate, labour, gifts, and power.

What answer doth an awakened conscience give to these questions? Doth it not accuse you? Must it not present to you a sad account of great omissions and many neglects? Have you no such secret misgivings as these? I fear I have been a dry tree, and barren soil; few have cause to bless God for my life. Oh, the little good I have ever as yet attempted to do to others!
a publick Spirit.

others! What fruit I have born hath been to myself, with unfruitful Ephraim, Hof. x. 1. If any have been benefited by any thing I have given or done, it hath been by God's over-ruling it, and seldom with any design or good-will of mine; or, at beft, I have less intended the good of others thereby, than my own private advantage; for my heart tells me, I coldly attempted the most promising enterprize from which I expected not applause or profit: And soon gave it over when I had a prospect of reproach, or loss thereby. Oh that you would be faithful to your own souls, and acknowledge your guilt; especially, if it be notorious! Great instances cannot be overlooked, unless you wilfully shut your eyes. What trade you have driven in the world must be known to you, tho' some diversions may be forgotten. Hath publick service for God been your business in any measure? or, have you made the very worship of God, and your most seeming obedience, to subservre carnal ends? Have you spent your estate on your lusts, or on the publick interests, and poor members of Christ, next to the supply of your own and family's true necessities? What projects have had the chief room in your heads? What matters have sat closest to your hearts? Were they serving your generation, and saving your own soul? or, were they the perishing a-
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Serm. fairs of life? Rest not till you make a true answer; nor till that, as past all doubt, be assented to; that so if unusefulness is imputed to you by the all-seeing God, you may cry, I am guilty: Being convinced of all, and judged of all.

(2.) If you are guilty, be ashamed and grieved.

His heart is obdurate, if not atheistical, that owneth his unprofitableness without shame, seeing its a thing so indecent and unbecoming; or without afflicting sorrow, it being a thing so sinful in itself, so unjust toward God, so injurious to others, and hurtful to your own souls. Give way to some thoughts that ought to strike your secure unconcerned minds.

1. God keeps a register of his gifts committed to you, and of your neglects and abuses in the employing of them. He knows what thou hast done, and what thou mightest have done; what you have laid out by his rules, and what under the conduct of your own lusts; nothing of either did escape his view, or slip his memory. The account of both are as full and exact as if enter'd in a book, Rev. xx. 12. and shortly the whole will be read by thyself, in a light which cannot be refused; yea, transcribed on thy very conscience, so as not to be blotted out. Anticipate this by serious reflections, and sure it must fill you with shame and sorrow, to see
fee so much received, and so little restored, by applying it to the appointed uses, yea, so much employed to very contrary purposes; so great an estate, with little or nothing to promote the gospel, or relieve the poor, but a very great sum wasted on thy lusts, or hoarded to look upon. Will it not affect you to find your names among magistrates or ministers, capable for, and called to the respective duties of such offices, for a common good, and over-against your names thus written, This magistrate was no terror to evil-doers, no praise to such as did well? Nay, instead of reforming others, he corrupted them by his countenance and example; instead of relieving the injured, he oppressed the poor, perverted justice, and persecuted my servants. This minister did not reprove sin impartially and boldly, especially if the offenders were such as he expected benefit by; he declared not my whole counsel, but minced and chose what was safest to himself, and most pleasing to others; he accommodated not his labours to the real benefit of all, but to the humours of some; disdaining plain speech, affecting levity, frothy or amusing discourses: He was more solicitous to know how he was praised, than how others did profit. He let truth sink, and errors gain ground, when he found his name or incomes should suffer by opposing the last, or abetting the first; such a time he dealt treach-
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Serm. treacherously with such and such souls, V. he obstructed a publick good for his private advantage; he excused himself from preaching, pleading, or speaking, tho' he saw my interest and the real benefit of others required it. How formal and cold in his performances, prayerless and slothful in his preparations; partial and careless in discipline, and unexemplary in walking. Notions he took up for truths, without search or other enquiry, than, Is this the opinion of a man eminent with the party I hope to live by? and will it suit with the fancies of these men? I might proceed herein, and annex the particular cases of others; but this may suffice to mind you what a blush should it raise, what an anguish should it cause, to see your names thus underwritten in the records of heaven; and know, the devil keeps also an account, as full as he can, that he may become your accuser.

2. You can make no apology for your unusefulness, but what's fit to aggravate your shame and sorrow. A vain mind, and a seared conscience, will suggest excuses, and take up with them, however false and frivolous they be: But enquiries there will be, which will pierce into the nature and truth of things, and minister such an awakening light, as shall render the most careless and confident person speechless, Matt. xxii. 12. It were our mercy
mercy that we allowed nothing as a suf- cient plea now, but what will be ap- proved of at the judgment-bar. Examine therefore the true reasons why you have not served your generations as well as others.

**Object.** You will pretend your utter incapacity for service.

**Answ. 1.** That is a good apology, if true, for God expects not to reap where he hath not sown; he is no such hard master. None shall have ground to affix that character to him. But is this excuse true? Can your consciences, as drowsy as they are, offer this plea, and abide by it? viz. The only reason why we were not publick blessings, was because we had no gift, no opportunity, estate or power to be so. If conscience upon a serious pause dare not stick to this excuse, but condemns thee, how much more will God condemn thee, who is greater and knoweth all things? But if still you verily believe that the objection states your case;

**Answ. 2.** Let me ask you, have you really pitied the distressed whom you could not relieve? Have you avoided being hurtful to others, tho' you could not profit them? Have you earnestly prayed for the church of God, and the good of the miserable world, bewailing the sorrows of the first, and the misery of the last? Do you rejoice in, and bless God for those who
who are useful, without envying the most eminent? When you desire an estate or gift, and bewail the want of them, is the latter mostly because you cannot be useful, and the former that you may be so? Do you take all due pains, and use all good thrift, that you may have somewhat to enable you to be profitable? And if you are poor, and have the help of others, do you make conscience not to ask it till you need; nor ask or take more than you need, that the relief of the more necessitous may not be hindred? If your hearts cannot honestly say, These things answer my case, its thus with me; then you have not a temper of mind, to be useful if you had abilities; and its most probable you are more able to do good, than you have been faithful to do it.

But if indeed your consciences do justly witness, that you can so answer to the above questions, as that incapacity is the very reason your generation is not more served by you than by your prayers and good example; then you are not the persons to whom my reproof is directed, so that you do that little you can.

Anf. 3. But such of you as are able to serve your generation, and neglect it, should be more ashamed and grieved when you consider the true causes of your unprofitableness.
Your hinderances to service, are from your selves; your lufts have the great hand in assigning the governing reason. Look at the baulks you have made, and the opportunities you have pass'd usefully over; and ask thy conscience, whence was it that I neglected this? Can you be unaffected when you receive this answer? My covetousness, my pride, my sloth, my fear, my unbelief, or my unconcernedness for God's honour, and the publick good, did hinder me; these made me unwilling and averse, these diverted my abilities to another channel, and would not suffer me to be useful and faithful in my trust. Were not you governed by one or other of these whenever you shut your ears to the cry of an afflicted church, of starved ministers, of a sinking nation, of diseased souls, and the distressed poor?

If it be so, as indeed it will be found, you have cause to be ashamed and mourn. Doth it become men to be under the conduct of such base guides? In this respect God hath called you to shew your selves men, Isa. xlvii. 8. But much more unwbecoming is this, to you that wear the name of christians; you are called and redeemed to be zealous of good works, Titus ii. 14. Is this to be so? Is this to imitate or obey Christ, whom you own for your Lord, and whose livery you have put on? Follow the channel to the fountain head; be led by
by your actings to the posture and frame of your hearts; and judge what vile spirits act you, what a dominion have these lusts in your soul, that thus command your talents, and determine the scope of your lives in opposition to the loudest calls. Oh blush and weep, that with all thy light and helps, under all thy Christian profession and hopes, thy heart is so earthly and carnal, so sensual and devilish; so full of hatred to God and man, as the authority of these lusts import; and thy unusefulness doth testify in the clearest light, the holy spirit hath made no saving change, if you are altogether useless; the change at most is very imperfect, whilst your usefulness is so much hindered by these unsubdued lusts. The very unprofitable must be made other men, Mat. xii. 33. and the less profitable are not very good men. You have those dry leaves and dead branches which may well put you to the blush, and fill you with fear, John xv. 2. the unfruitful branch will be cast out.

3. Your unusefulness expresseth that treachery, ingratitude and injustice towards God, which must cause shame and sorrow in every thinking person.

The least acquaintance with the infinite God, as our owner, ruler, and benefactor, would strike an amazement and terror in our minds, that this sort of de-
meanour towards him, should be justly ascribed to any of us; yet as far as publick unusefulness is our crime, all this base treatment of God is chargeable upon us.

(1.) Its treachery towards God, as its contrary to our profession, a breach of our vows, and betraying our trust. Let's consider this in three parts.

1. When you profess your selves the servants of God, the followers of Christ, inspired by his spirit, satisfied with his covenant blessings as your portion, expectants of his heavenly rewards, and acknowledgers of him as your ultimate end; do not you hereby profess that you are employed about his work, and serving his purposes in the world, that this is your trade and the business of your life? You who profess your selves christians, profess no less than what I have above described; but pray see how empty a profession it is? how far otherwise you do, than you pretend, and what other sort of people you are than you would seem to be; when all this while you neglect God's work, and follow your own; you overlook his designs, and serve your own turn. May not God say, they profess to serve me, but in works they deny me: With their mouth they shew much kindness, but their heart goeth after their covetousness, and after their pride, and after their selfish designs.

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Serm. Do you think God will be mocked, or that you can impose on him? It cannot be.

Blush then at your own falsehood; whilst your heads are so seldom projecting, how shall we best honour our God, and serve his interests: and if you are satisfied with an empty noise, or theatrical show; fear, left Christ apply himself to you as to Judas, Betrayest thou me with a kiss? Do you profess all this, that you may be exempted from promoting my concerns in the world? Yea, that you may disserve me the more, in betraying my cause by your connivance and neglects? Oh! let us mourn that our very profession testifies against us.

2. USEFULNESS is a breach of your vows, made to the living God.

Your baptismal vow includes a solemn dedication of your selves and all you have to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with an engagement of living to God, and not to his rivals, be they the world, flesh, or devil. Consider your uselessness, and see, is that a performance of this engagement, or consistent with it? Sure by your behaviour you think it was an error that you made this vow, Eccles. v. 6. but know they are no christians who consent not to it; and having engaged, you cannot think that mere making this vow was principally designed in Christ's institution; no, it was ordained to be made, that you might be
be more sensibly obliged to *execute* it, especially in so principal a part of it. However light you make of your great and willful unserviceableness in your day, you are therein no less than perfidious and perjured in breaking your oaths, and those oft renewed before the Lord at his table, oft it may be in sickness; besides the oaths you have taken as magistrates or ministers.

To your perfidiousness you have added *sacrilege* against your self-dedication, of which hereafter. Ought not our souls to bleed to think, I gave up myself and my all to God, to serve and honour him, to plead Christ's cause, and advance his interests, to live for him, and not for myself; yea, I have signed his covenant to do this, and vowed it upon the memorials of his death, and in several extremities when conscience represented my dangerous neglects, and yet notwithstanding all, I employ my estate, my time, my gifts, my power, as if at full liberty to use them as I please; as if Christ had no interest to be served by me, or I were under no obligation to spend or adventure any thing for his service.

3. *You have betrayed* that trust which God committed to you.

*Whoever* is a minister of Christ, is a *steward* to whom the truths and institutions of Christ are entrusted to maintain,
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Serm. dispense, and defend. 1 Cor. iv, 1, 2. He is a pastor, to whose care the flock of Christ is committed, 1 Pet. v. 2. In becoming ministers we undertake this trust. The life of souls is very much committed to us as watch-men, Ezek. xxxiii. 8. It cannot be denied then that a careless selfish unfaithful minister betrays his trust; he dischargeth not what he hath undertaken, but deals falsely and treacherously with our faithful Lord.

Magistrates are entrusted with God's sword, and subjects committed to their care to the degree of power which they have over them; doth not that magistrate then deal treacherously with God in betraying this trust, when he preserveth not the innocent, but defends the guilty &c? Yea, all the talents any man hath, is put into his hands to lay out as God directs for a common good; and every one whom we ought to benefit by that talent, is committed to our trust, as far as his welfare depends upon that supply.

Yea, Christ hath intrusted every christian with his honour, with his interests, and with the advancement of his kingdom in this world. We are intrusted as his witnesses, his soldiers &c. but let us blush and mourn, that as far as we have neglected to serve our generation, we have betrayed all his publick concerns in this world; all that he hath put into our hands. Ah! had none
none been more faithful than we, his gos-
pel, his ministry, his members had been in a condition more deplorable than they be. O that my eyes were waters! treachery is a vile blot; treachery towards God is the worst sort: And yet this have you been guilty of; yea, in saddest in-
stances, viz. belying your profession, breaking your vows, and betraying your trust. May it not well fill you with con-
fusion?

2. By your unusefulness you have dealt ungratefully with God.

Ingratitude is a monstrous crime, and becomes more so, as he deserveth well at our hands against whom we are ungrate-
ful. Where there is any ingenuity there will be relentings, to think how God hath deserveth our utmost service, and what a base requital we have made by our great neglects. He hath not spared his own son, but gave him to be a sacrifice for us when enemies; and we have grudged a few pounds, murmured at a little labour, or hazard, in serving him, who is our best friend, and daily benefactor: It is more blessed to give than to receive. God hath made us able to give, and others in need to receive, when he might have put them in our case, and us in theirs; yet we base-
ly refuse to obey him, in giving out of our abundance to such as want it. How unthankful are we to the giver of all our gifts?
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That we refuse to honour him, by instructing the ignorant, and reclaiming transgressors, when he could as easily have qualified them to instruct us, and left us in a greater need of their assistance, than they are of ours. Whatever we are, have, or hope for, are the fruits of his mere bounty, and distinguishing favour to us; that we are capable to do him any service, or others any good, are endowments he dispensed to us by name, and that these shall not be used at all for him, is high ingratitude. In mercy he hath long tried us, he hath spared us again and again, after that our barrenness hath provoked him to cut us off, as well as others whom he hath cast out, Luk. xiii. 8. and still we abuse his patience, and persist to cumber the ground, and be little profitable to any. By great rewards he invites us, by great assistances he encourageth us to that which he might bind us to, at our peril, by his mere command; yet, as base wretches, we loyter, yea, refuse his work; we wave what's hard, and think too much of what is easiest; we cast off all that we can tolerably rid our selves of.

Ought not it to be for a lamentation, and the more so if you can but discern the malignity and contempt you have expressed towards God in your unthankful returns? What's the language of your refusing to serve your generation hitherto? No
No kinder, no more expressive of gratitude, for all his favours, than this; God deserves not my pains, my estate would be foolishly laid out for him; what is he to me, that I should disturb my ease, hazard my name, displease my friends, or suffer any thing for a common good? For my part, so that all will be of my mind, let Christ the redeemer have none to honour him, let Satan carry away the whole spoil, let the gospel of Christ have no place, let his ministers and members perish as well as need, let heaven have no tribute from this world but blasphemies, let God be reproached, by intrusting such a one as I am, with what might benefit the community, let this earth of the Lord’s be a hell for misery and sin; so let all be, rather than I’ll run any danger, sustain any labour, or be at any expense or trouble. Yet this hath been the language of your unprofitable behaviour, as far as you have allowed it, and God doth so interpret it, however partial you are towards yourselves.

Is not this horrid ingratitude to our blessed Lord? And do dry eyes, or a face lifted up agree hereto? We may deservedly take up those words, We are ashamed and confounded, because we bear the reproach of all our past times. It’s time to blush when all his special favours do thus reproach us,
The Excellency of

Serm. and our returns have breathed such gross ingratitude.

3. Your unusefulness hath been the highest injustice against God.

Whilst you have refused to be profitable according to your ability, you have denied to render to God that which is his own; you have defrauded, and sacrilegiously with-held and misapplied that which was his and not yours. Whose are you yourselves? Whose are all your gifts and estates which you have thus grudged? They are the Lord's. Of every talent he may justly say, It is my own, Mat. xxv. 27.

Psal. l. 1. The cattle upon a thousand hills are mine.
Psal. xxiv. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. Hence he fastens injury on idolatrous Israel, Thou didst take thy jewels of my gold and my silver, and thou hast set my oil and my incense before thy idols, and my meat, &c. But especially bethink yourselves how many ways you, even you, unuseful ones, are his. You are the work of his hands, he gave you a being, or you had never existed; he gave you to be what you are, even rational creatures; which he was no more necessitated to make you, than crawling toads, Job xxxviii. 6.

Ezek. xvi. He sustains you in being, and in your capacity for service: In him we live, and move, and have our being. By his bounty are you provided for, and by his watchful eye

Acts xvii. 28.

Ezek. xxxviii. 6.
a publick Spirit.

You were redeemed by the blood of Christ; he bought you into a capacity for service, when you were fetter'd in prison in order to eternal vengeance, Zech. ix. 11. Luke i. 74.

You have solemnly owned the claim of God in Christ to you, by offering up yourselves, and all you possess, to this glorious One; answerably to Rom. xii. 1. whereby thou art his also by self-dedication. Seeing then his claims to you are thus various and universal, how much have you wronged him, in denying him the use of his own, and done your utmost to defeat him in the end for which he created and redeemed you? Did not he create all things for himself? to bring him glory, and do him service, to the degree whereof they were capable, Prov. xvi. 4. Col. i. 16. Christ died and rose, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. Was not this that he might rule all, dispose of all, and be served by all? How unrighteous then have you been, as far as unusefulness is your fault; you have carried it as if he could not do with his own as he pleased. You his creatures have refused to go on his errand, or work in his vineyard; you, his purchased ones, have not agreed to serve him with your bodies and spirits, which are his. His money you have refused.
Serm. fed to give as he directs; his office and power you have neglected to apply to the ends, and by the rules which he prescribes; his gifts have been sacrilegiously taken away from the service to which he allotted them. Have not your ways been in all this unequal? and can you own it without blushings, and renting your very hearts? Our unusefulness ought not to be lightly esteemed by us, when its so full of treachery, ingratitude, and injustice towards the Lord our God. Paul knew service went with God's title; That God whose I am, and whom I serve.

4. You should be ashamed and grieved for your unusefulness, because it hath been very injurious to all persons whom you have neglected to be profitable to. They have a joint charge of wrong against you, in that you have defrauded them of what was theirs in right, though you detained it. We are debtors to as many as God hath appointed us to be useful to, Rom. i. 14. God directed to them, by you, whatever help or benefit he requires you to confer on them, and therefore you have acted the part of a fraudulent messenger in disowning their claim, and withholding what's their due.

The church of God may complain, This was he who owed me great service, but he never render'd it to me in my ministers, or my members; he did nothing for
for my defence, enlargement, or improvement.

Your country may exclaim, This man enjoyed my defence, plenty, and conveniences, and was capable, by his prayers, votes, purse and gifts, to have contributed to my welfare; but he hath wickedly fought himself, and served himself of me, but I am no way benefited by him in my reformation, safety, or liberty, &c.

Your families have a right to godly education, as well as other benefits; but they do testify against you as injurious, in not instructing, persuading, and striving with them, to rescue them from the power of the devil, and to become devoted to the Lord.

The poors cries go up to heaven against you, for keeping back their portion of your substance, and denying that advice and help whereby you might have made them useful and comfortable. Such just complaints may well touch their hearts against whom they are directed; perhaps you would hate to defraud any man in what the laws of the land declare unjust; but is not the law of nature, and the positive laws of God, as sufficient to determine what's just or unjust, as human laws can be? And these do accuse you to be injurious to men in your wilful unprofitableness.

But
But besides all this, it may be many are exclaiming against you among the damned already, as accessory to their miseries, by your neglects, as well as otherwise. They are dead in their sin for want of thy reproof, and thy slackness in pulling them out as brands out of the burnings. If our hearts have any tenderness under a sense of so many and manifest injuries, we must feel this wickedness much embittered to us.

5. You should blush at, and bewail your unusefulness as it is a great hurt to yourselves.

Unprofitable persons govern themselves by a great mistake, in that they fall into mischief the way they think to escape it; to avoid self-hurt, they refrain being useful to others, but you'll find that thereby you incur a far greater damage. For fear of loss, you keep from others what you ought to have laid out for their relief, and you think its so much saved for your own benefit; but God will so order matters, that all such riches were kept to your own hurt. Whenever power is misapplied, or not exerted for common benefit, that's the time wherein a man ruleth over another to his own hurt.

Folly, when detected, is cause of shame; mischief, when perceived, forceth sorrow in him on whom it falleth. It is your blindness and infidelity, that you now find
a publick Spirit.

find not, in your great unusefulness, the plainest evidence of both; but what unbelief will not now discern, experience shortly will force the securest of you to acknowledge, and that to the filling of you with shame and grief. Oh that you would consider your latter end; that you would consider what this (selfish barren) course will come to, what it will end in. I can by good warrant assure you, it will not be either so comfortable, nor gainful, as to justify your neglects. You, perhaps, will say, With what I save by not relieving the poor, or promoting any good design, I shall get an inheritance the more hastily by so much. Is it so? Take God's word for an answer, But the end thereof shall not be blessed. Write that as a prophecy upon whatever of your estates God hath forbidden you to lay up, by his call to lay it out. The same is applicable to all that strength, safety, credit, or interest, you think you secure, by neglecting to serve your generation; the end thereof shall not be blessed.

To evidence this, and thereby further convince you that unusefulness yields reason of shame and sorrow; of shame, by your folly in it; of sorrow, by the mischief of it. Consider,

(1.) You can keep nothing with a blessing, which you have gotten or saved by unusefulness. Very often God even disappoints men of getting what they propose to get, by
Excellency of

Serm. by their unfaithfulness to him, and unusefulness to others; with Balaam they miss of what they so greedily desire, and some way or other God signally defeats them in the danger they thought to prevent, and the benefit they expected; so that they are forced to say, even at present, I have neither saved, nor gotten any thing, by refusing to serve my generation; I am as poor as if I had laid out for God what I covetously with-held, Prov. xi. 24. I am as much reproached, and as little esteemed, by these men, for fear of whose tongues, or dislike, I betrayed the truth, as if I had faithfully adhered to it.

But upon supposition you have made some present advantage, yet you may not long keep it, God may soon blast it to the terror of others. Judas soon parted with the silver he got by betraying Christ, Mat. xxvii. 34. Some have been burnt in their house, by God's hand, who refuse to burn for the truth's sake. Ananias soon lost the use of what he reserved from publick service, and his life to the bargain. Oh! how many remarkable instances are upon record, of the ruined families of such as acquired estates by unfaithfulness to God, and uncharitableness to men? Their children could not keep what their parents perfidiously heaped: Nay, examples are very many, of those that did not keep, for their own time,
time, the wealth or reputation which they secured at the price of a common harm, but became beggarly and infamous.

God hath made many mens parts to wither, and their health to decay, whose sloth made their gifts and strength unuseful to the publick. Such a method God took with Israel, when they disregarded God’s house, and over-regarded their own: Ye Hag. i. 4, looked for much, and it came to little; and 9, 11. when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why, faith the Lord of hosts; Because of mine house that lies waste, and ye run every man into his own house. What advantage they got was small, and that soon turned to no account, because of God’s blast; it was presentely reduced to nothing.

But supposing God, for wise ends, suffer you to keep what you have gotten or saved, yet I am sure you cannot keep it with a blessing. If you are ungodly, it is your snare, which is the worst of curses: If you have serious spirits, you must uneasily enjoy it, and use it with bitter reflections, as what you hold not with God’s good-will. ’Tis a defecrated accursed thing, that hazardeth and curseth the rest, which without this, might have been possesse’d comfortably and safely; yea, and have been employed to blessed uses: whereas now God disdains to accept, or succeed the residue to his service, but he embittereth it to your disquiet,
The Excellency of Serm. difquiet, as well as empieth it to your unufulnefs, notwithstanding all you can get or fave thereby.

(2.) You fhall be great losers by your unufulnefs, notwithstanding all you can get or fave thereby. No profit, by deceitfulnefs towards God, will counterbalance the losfs you will fuffer. Befink you whether you have not loft al-

more than count up the moft thou haft eaten, and lofe thy fweet words. But if thy grofs neglects be impeni-
tently petified in, thy lofges will be far greater, not only in further degrees of what's above-mentioned, but thou fhalt lofe all the good thou haft feemed to do.

John Prov. xxiii. 8.
John ii. 8. All shall be taken from thee which thou appeareth to have, yea, or really hast, Mat. xxv. 28, 29. Thou shalt lose all thy hopes, however great or confident; thou shalt lose that life which thou didst so over-fondly love, John xii. 25. thou shalt lose thy own soul, which the gain of the whole world cannot recom pense, Luke ix. 24. You shall not find the good promised to the merciful and righteous, which is no less than life, righteousness, and honour. You shall forfeit all the higher degrees of glory promised to the eminently useful; yea, and the lesser degrees promised to the faithfully useful, tho' not so eminent. You shall neither be ruler of ten cities, nor of five; no entrance into the joy of your Lord shall be admitted you. The rivers of God's pleasure you shall never taste; that beatifick vision you shall never experience; the crown of glory you shall not wear; for these God hath confined to the faithful labourer. Can you that never attempted, or soon fainted in serving God in your generation, hope to reap as they who fainted not in well-doing? Shall you who laid up nothing in store, no treasure in heaven, expect to be rich there, as they who did? Its in vain, and so rest disappointment will attend it: For the utterly unfruitful will have no interest in any of that glory; the less useful will miss of the higher degrees of it. O compute your gain
gain and loss! and what idiot could have made a weaker choice, or taken a more foolish course than you have done? Folly will put you to the blush, to see how vainly you refused to be rich towards God by publick service, that you might get a treasure for yourself by your layings up, in a neglect of common usefulness, Luke xii. 18, 19, 21. He was branded as a fool in bestowing all his goods in his barns, and laying out nothing that he might be rich towards God: And so will all be marked who imitate him.

(3.) You shall endure great punishments for your unusefulness.

Besides a privation of good, God will sensibly imbitter this sin: He often doth testify against it in the posterity of the unprofitable, who, by being so, trouble their own house. There are many curses lying on the head of such as with-hold relief from the poor, assist not in a common danger, and contribute not to publick good when capacitated for it, Prov. xi. 26. Judg. v. 23. all which you stand exposed to by your unusefulness. Have not you already met with some remembrances, that God dislikes your selfish ways and narrow spirits? Hath not he emptied your mercies, embittered your comforts, filled your souls with terrors, and encounter’d you with a frowning countenance? Hath not he let Satan loose upon you or yours?
But these are but the beginnings of sorrows, and prelages of greater woes, unless you repent; he will cut thee down as a barren fig-tree, for thy great leaves without fruit, for thy cumbrance the ground where thou mightest be useful, Luke xiii. 5, 6. How full of terrors will death present itself, when God will force thy conscience to reflect on thy many neglects, with a clear view of the hateful causes of them, and the miserable effects thereof? With anguish thou wilt then bemoan thyself, and vainly wish for the past opportunities of service, and that thou hadst a heart to have improved them better.

Death, thus full of stings, will lodge thee in the unseen state; but, alas! how unprovided and ill-prepared? The face of thy judge will be terrible, when he shall demand an account of thy stewardship, and reckon with thee about his talents, and thy occupation of them, Mat. xxv. 19. It will be in vain to deny or diminish your trust; and what answer can you find that can satisfy him, or please yourselves? If you hope his merits may be pleadable by you; he'll answer, they are not applied but according to my promises. You may as well expect they shall be imputed without faith, as to a dead faith; a faith that did not invigorate to holy fruitfulness and fidelity in my service, was a dead faith, and so no faith in gospel estimate.
To plead your idleness, fear or covetousness, will be to proclaim the provoking causes of your approaching ruin. What a heart-cutting charge will you find drawn against you, with a sentence pursuant thereto: Thou wast ashamed of me before men, now I am ashamed of thee before my father, Mark viii. 38. Thou didst deny me in the other world, now I deny thee in this world, Mat. x. 33. When I was an hungry, thou didst not feed me; when I was in prison, thou didst not visit me: depart therefore from me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Thou didst hide my talent, (yea talents) therefore cast this unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. What mind can conceive the misery included in a condition made up of all the woes these several expressions import? Were they believed thoroughly, what we may now conceive of them, would overwhelm a man that but seems in danger of enduring this misery; and being that these several places describe the sentence pronounced against the unprofitable, who have neglected a common good (as well as their own souls) and betrayed the publick interests of Christ in their day, it follows that whatever in each place aggravates their
their misery, must be put together to give us a just account thereof. Can your heart endure but the supposing yourself the person whom Christ singlet out in the view of angels and men, and thus speaks to from his tribunal, Thou selfish, false, and useless wretch, so vile, that without reproach to my perfections, to my holy word and glory, I can shew no favour to thee (which is Christ's being ashamed of him) I do here reject all thy pretensions to my image, merits, covenant and service; and do declare thou art no living member, follower, servant or witness of mine, nor is my honour, truth or fulness concerned at all in thy being happy (which is Christ's denying him.) Thou art now fallen into my hands, and the time of my vengeance is come: I pronounce thee guilty of perfidiousness to my name and interests, and unprofitable to others and thyself, in not rightly employing my talents for common benefit, as well as thine own. For this I now effectually and irrevocably adjudge thee to the loss of all felicity, glory, grace and joy, which my presence doth afford, and this without any future hopes from any further strivings with thee, or offers to thee; and be thou now sealed and separated to the height of misery (that is, depart from me, you cursed) a misery in its nature and degree so great, as what's fitted to torment those capital enemies of mine,
Serm. mine, the devil and his angels, who shall be thy companions, because they were thy rulers; so painful to thy body as the hottest fire, and not less to thy soul, else it were not fitted to torment the devils, who are spirits; so full of horror as darkness is, yea a darkness as remote and free from light as can be, (that is, outer darkness) and all so resented, felt, and afflictive, as to cause the extremest sorrow, anguish and fretting against God, thy companions and thyself (there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.) And as for duration; its everlasting fire, its for ever that this sentence shall take hold of, and be executed upon thee; which is confirmed by another place that declareth the continuance of the misery of unuseful men, under the emblem of chaff, as opposed to useful wheat; the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire; which is the same with those words, their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched. There's no hopes of an alteration of their estate, unless words cannot express the eternity of hell-torments; yea, unless sinners may be reclaimed when expelled from all the gracious influences of the divine presence (implied in depart from me.) Yea, unless there be a more valuable sacrifice for sinners, than the son of God was; for this will not relieve them, Heb. ix. 26. Yea, if there be not an administra-
a publique Spirit.

fitter than the kingdom of Christ; for this will be delivered up, when his sentence passeth the first time on sinners found, then solemnly upon the departed and living, and executed upon devils, who till then are prisoners, 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24, 26, 28. 2 Pet. ii. 4. compared with Mat. viii. 29. Ought not you to tremble at this prospect of eternal misery? Yet if you are these unfaithful and unprofitable sinners during life, you will be thus found guilty and sentenced when you die. Consider again and again what thou must hear, feel and endure, for thy unprofitableness; add this to the great things thou losest by it, and also that what now thou seest to get or save through unusefulness, cannot at present be kept with a blessing; when thou hast done thus in a serious manner, I will appeal to thyself, whether thy folly is not great enough to make thee ashamed, and thy misery great enough to fill thee with terror, that unusefulness in thy age hath been allowed by thee? Yea, I dare give you leave to put all the loss, charge, labour and danger of publique service, with all the ease, safety, and benefit of unserviceableness; and let them all against the fore-mentioned mischiefs which attend the unprofitable; and if thou believest the certainty of these, be then affected at thy barrenness, as the cause appears to thyself; nay, were there but a
probability, nay, but a possibility that these fruits of unprofitableness were true, it were sufficient to make thee ashamed and grieved for it.

Obj. Tho' I must agree that its folly to become liable to these mischiefs, yet are all who are unuseful subject to endure them? For if so, who shall escape? Supposing a capacity to service; I shall briefly answer.

Answ. There is, 1. A degree of unusefulness, which through weakness and temptation may oft befall a godly man, which indeed shall not bring eternal misery upon him; tho' God usually testifies his displeasure against it in this life.

2. There is an unusefulness which will infallibly bring eternal misery upon whoever is guilty of it. If it be not so, you must question the plainest discoveries of the gospel of truth.

Object. 2. How shall I know the kind and degree of that unusefulness that will certainly bring eternal misery, from that which a godly man may be guilty of thro' weakness and temptation?

Answ. A full answer to this and the other objections may be gathered from what is largely insisted on in the former heads. But because some may not so easily apply that to such particular cases; I shall therefore give you these short hints.

(1.) The usefulness of any good man is such
such as doth consist with an unfeigned dedication, and habitual devotedness of himself and all he hath to God in Christ, and this persevered in. He is no believer or good christian, that is not thus devoted to God; and such unusefulness as is consistent with this, is not a mark of hell. But that unusefulness which is not consistent with unfeigned dedication, and habitual devotedness to God in Christ, is an infallible mark of eternal misery, if persisted in.

(2.) He that shall escape eternal misery, is not unuseful in the prevailing scope of his life; but every son of perdition is so; the course of his life is unprofitable, and thence he is denominated unfruitful in his best state; the stated bent of his soul is to do more hurt than good.

(3.) What good he doth who shall escape hell, he usually doth it in uprightness, from love and obedience to God, with a believing respect to God in Christ; but the child of wrath, in whatever seeming good he doth, hath a greater regard to carnal considerations, and acteth not from faith, love, and obediential regard to God.

(4.) The good man repents of, and bewails his unusefulness, when convinced of it, and heartily desires to know wherein he is culpably unuseful, that he may reform, as well as by faith in Christ sue out his pardon upon repenting of it. But the
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Ser. the ungodly is hardened in his unprofitable, unwilling to know it, set against reforming, if not insensible of his need of pardon, yea oft justifies himself in his selfish unprofitable course.

(5.) The true christian is truly glad and thankful when God doth most incline and inlarge his heart to overcome his selfishness, and to act in the most useful serviceable manner, tho' no carnal respects of his own be served thereby; yea, tho' loss, reproach, and suffering attend it, so God be but honoured, and a common good subserved. But the carnal man, if he hath been over-ruled to any thing which proves useful, yet if his own credit or worldly benefit be not advantaged, and much more if he comes to suffer by it; he is grieved, and repenteth of what he hath done, whatever honour God receives, or benefit others get thereby. By these things you may know whether you are such unuseful persons as shall be pardoned and saved, or such unuseful persons as shall endure eternal misery, if you persist in this state.

Objec. 3. But tho' I continue unuseful in that manner, as the word of God declareth eternal misery will follow upon it; yet I shall be safe if I believe in Christ for the pardon of it, and that I'll do, and yet not reform my course.

Ans. Deceive not thyself with vain words, what thou sowe'st, that thou shalt reap.
And be it known to thee, that no faith in Christ will be available to thy pardon, which is not effectual to turn thee from that unusefulness, and which doth not include in it a dedication and prevailing habitual devotedness of thyself to Christ, and his service in a common good. A living faith worketh by love, and a dead faith will never justify; yea, itself is condemned as a false faith, if it want good works, when opportunity for them is afforded. And that man must impose upon himself, who can imagine that the faith which is necessary to pardon, must work by love, and yet not work in love towards our neighbours at all; but if you grant it must work in love towards our neighbour, I ask, must it not work towards all that are designed by the word neighbour, whom we are to love? If so, it includes all men whatever within the reach of my ability to do good to; and if it be by love to all them that it will work, it must express itself in those works that instance the sincerity of our love to them for their benefit; and so true faith will work towards all as far as love is due to them, and do all that sincere love to them will prompt to, which is no less than serving our generation, or that publick usefulness which you neglect. Can the tempter still delude you to think, that you will have a pardon of your unusefulness, by such a faith.
S E C T. V.

2 Exh. Resolve henceforward to be useful in your generation; yea, eminently useful, if capable thereof.

All I have hitherto insisted on tends to this, that you may resolve at last to engage in this work. For this end, I have explained this duty, and commended the performance thereof; for this I have said so much, to discover the neglects of it, and to convince of the folly and danger of those neglects: All which will be lost, if you go hence unresolved to be publick blessings in your day.
What avail all arguments, if they incline not our backward hearts to usefulness? They will do no more than discover our obstinateness, and aggravate our condemnation; but in hope of a better effect, I shall address myself to each of you.

The more remiss you have been hitherto, the more incumbent on you it is, now to engage your souls in this work; from this time, do what you can to serve the will of God in your generation; devise great and liberal things. Let nothing set bounds to your usefulness, but a natural or moral incapacity; i.e. somewhat impossible, or something unlawful. What's impossible God requires not; and to do, or speak wickedly, or deceitfully for God, he will not accept. But what's lawful, and within your power, omit not; the greater it is, the more will God be honoured, others benefited, and thy own divine temper expressed.

Be pleased with the largest opportunities of service, and faithfully answer each; trifle not, but be in earnest; move not slowly, but run the ways of God's commandments, as one whose heart is enlarged by him. Beat not the air, as if uncertain of the nature or tendency of thy work; its for God, it will end in glory, 1 Cor. ix. 26. Let us each in our places say, with Nehemiah, cap. ii. 20. The Lord will prosper us,
That I may more usefully urge this general exhortation, I shall direct it according to some different circumstances, which you may be in, and answerably direct and plead with you.

1. To such as are still unwilling to serve their generation.

Either you are convinced that this is your duty, or you are not; if you are persuaded it is your duty, what peace or hope can you possess whilst you live in the neglect of it? If you think it is not your duty, what sense can you put upon so many plain scriptures that command it? That promise such rewards to, and assistances in it? That threaten such sore miseries to the neglecters of it? That so approve of, and praise the practice and practitioners of it; and brand the name of such as accursed, who refused to do so? If these things suffice not to prove a duty, nothing can; and I am sure, God hath not excepted your names from the obligation to obey it any more than others. But whether convinced that this is your duty, or unconvinced, pray consider, as you are men, you are not born for yourselves, but for your country too: Nature dictates this, heathens assert it, your own hearts commend it in others, and disapprove the contrary; yea, many brutes reproach.
proach you, when they’ll hazard them- 
Serm.

eftelves to defend their young, and secure each other against a common enemy or 
mischief.

As you are men created by the living 
God, you are accountable to him; you 
ought to answer the ends for which he 
made you, which were to serve his pur- 
poses, and bring him glory. He was too 
wife and holy to make you lawless as to 
himself, or to the community of which you 
are members; nor is he so remiss a go-
vernor, as not severely to animadvert on 
offences so publickly mischievous.

As you are called christians bethink 
yourselves, the Lord Jesus redeemed you, 
that you might return to a state of sub-
jection and service, and under that law 
you are to him, Rom. xiv. 9. Its no small 
mercy that he calls you to this, consider-
ing you were condemned rebels, and that 
he is ready to accept it, and assist you in 
it. What ingratitude is it to live to your 
felves, and not to him who paid so dear 
for your ransom? i Cor. vi. 20.

FurtheR, consider the before-described 
miseries, which you wilfully choose, 
and the glorious blessings you certainly 
forfeit by your unprofitableness; herein 
you are cruel to yourselves, when you 
fondly think it is self-indulgence; you de-
stroy yourselves, and yet weakly pretend 
't-advantage. Reflections upon your 
madness
Perhaps you have not thought what you expect from others, tho' they must be unobliged to you, upon the same reasons as you can give for your being free from the duty of usefulness to them; to say nothing of what you expect from the blessed God, and what every moment you receive, tho' you so ill requite him. Did not you expect your parents care, the magistrates defence, your ministers labours, your neighbours favour and help? How would you be dealt by, if you were in the case of the poor or distressed, and they in your's? Would you think it well done in all, or any of these, to be as unconcerned, selfish, oppressive, cruel, or useless, as you resolve to be to them, in whatever capacity or relation you stand. Our Lord's rule was approved by Pagans, tho' condemned by you, Mat. vii. 12. What would become of the interest of Christ, the welfare of the nation, the good of societies, religious or civil, if every man were as selfish and unconcerned for a common good as you resolve to be? All safety, harmony, liberties, order, and comfort, would be expelled, and their contraries alone take place: But, if this state of things be thy abhorrence, ask thyself, why should not all others be as selfish as I am, if it be justifiable in me? Or, why should not
not I be as publick-spirited as they, if it be praise-worthy and useful in them? Are you an ill magistrate, why should any others be better? Are you an unfaithful minister, why should any others be more faithful? Are you careless of the common liberties of your country or city, why should any other, in your station be more concerned? Are you strait-handed to the poor, wherefore should others of your estate be more liberal? Are you indifferent about the truth, interest and gospel of Christ, why should any other in your circumstances more expose themselves? You must consent that all these may as justly excuse themselves from benefiting others as you can; or else you are most basely spirited, to think others should serve a common good that you may share therein; but that you must be excepted from contributing to that service, that so you may pursue your own private interest the more.

Directions. Weigh these things often, and deliberately judge of thy resolves not to serve thy generation. Go and humble thyself before God, and earnestly pray to him, in Christ’s name, to change thy heart, subdue thy lusts, and give thee another spirit: Enter into covenant with Christ, to deny thyself, to take up thy cross and follow him. From this time firmly engage in Christ’s strength, that thou wilt not consult.
Serm. consult thy flesh in thy undertakings, but keep thyself from under the influence of a narrow spirit, and base lusts, as being very ill advisers in thy course of life, and as unfit disposers of thy estate, gifts, or power. Set upon doing publick good presently, tho' it be with great reluctance at first; the less good thou hast hitherto done, now attempt to do the more: And the later you begin, redeem the remainder of your days by the greater projects and more vigorous endeavours. Pray earnestly, and attend gospel means for sincere love to God and man, and for a believing sight of invisible things; and keep your consciences under a tender, lively sense of God's authority, and the day of judgment.

2. To such as are unfeignedly willing to serve their generation, and account it a greater mercy than the greatest estates or abilities with a narrow soul, which thereby would be a snare, Abhor a suggestion as if God dealt hardly by you, in making service your duty, or inclining you to it; for, in the first, God's wisdom and goodness in the government of this world appears: In the last, he hath honoured and benefited you, in anointing you his instruments. Our Lord Jesus was wont to say, *It is more blessed to give than to receive.* Which the apostle useth as a motive to mens labouring, that they might support the weak, relieve the needy, &c. We
We imitate God as far as we are beneficient, for he is the fountain whence all wants are supplied, tho' he is benefited by none; and yet, for our encouragement in doing good, he is pleased to account himself a borrower; *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord.* Not that you can give what is not his already, but that he is as sure to repay, as if you lent it to him.

But this head being too general to admit so distinct an application, as the several sorts and conditions of such who are truly willing to serve their generation requires; I shall address myself to them in these several instances, which distinguish their cases, and give suitable directions.

1. To such as are capable of no very great service to their generation; as being of small estates, low parts, and the like.

Serve you your generation as you can in your lower place: To which end, beg God's direction that you may not mistake your place or work; nor be left to your self in the meanest service. *Go not out of your own calling,* for God will neither accept nor bless encroachments on other mens work, nor your usurpation of power of your own heads; no, nor at their pleasure who are not authorised to give it. *Do not presumptuously attempt what is above your ability, for that's not your duty,* and
The Excellency of

Serm. and it may turn to publick detriment.

V. Take care that you pretend not publick usefulness as a cover to an idle neglect of your callings, or pragmatisical business in what belongs not to you: For this discovers your corruption, and will end in hurt and scandal. Be sure that what you give to good uses be your own, and not what is another man's: For this is fraud and not charity; and instead of being liberal, you will be unjust. And yet be conscientiously ready and vigorous to do all the good you can; your lesser ability must be as faithfully used as if it were greater; nor will your having no more, excuse your unprofitableness with what you have. Instruct your family, tho' you are not preachers; pray for, and be affected with the state of the church of God and the nation, if you can do no more; vote for good men into office; encourage faithful ministers as you are able; give to what poor you can, and acquaint others with the case of such you cannot relieve yourselves. What little good you can do, let it be done cheerfully, and from love. See that you use diligence, and avoid all waste in your persons and families, that you may be capable of doing the greater good. Be favoury in discourse, ex-emplary in life, and ready to help those who know less than yourselves. And, last-ly, do not envy others, nor murmur that you
you are in no higher station than you are, for God knew what place of service you were fittest for: if you be faithful in that, he will accept and reward it; and if fit, he will capacitate you for higher work. Nay, you may prove of far greater use in this station, than you can now perceive: Who knows what success God may give to thy advice, or other endeavours? To thy children, servants, &c. and how eminent they may prove?

2. To such as are capable of eminent service to their generation, and willing to it; keep a humble sense of your unworthiness, that God should make you able and willing to do him greater service than others, and answerably praise him for it as the sovereign bestower both of ability and willingness. Be watchful over your hearts, that your ends be upright in whatever service you perform, and abhor an opinion of merit from God by the most you do; in all which you have David for a lively example: We thank thee, and bless thy glorious name: But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee; all this store cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness, &c. Do not judge it enough that you perform as great services as others, when you
Serm. are capable of, and called to more; nor let the less useful (however many) of your station, prescribe to you, for they will not justify your neglects. Let not mere difficulty, danger, nor expence, cause you to conclude, yea, or to suspect, you are not called to this or that eminent service, for your call must be adjusted by other rules (of which before). Where opportunity for great things offer, delay not, lest that being lost, it may not be recalled, or more hinderances intervene. Judge of unusefulness and incumbent service, by what your consciences suggest in great dangers (as on a sick-bed) and in the liveliest frame by fullest communion with God (as after the Lord's-supper, &c.) for these are seasons to make the truest judgment in what concerneth eminent usefulness. Never make your abilities or activeness serve a faction as distinguished from, much less as opposed to a publick interest; for hereby you act selfishly, and not as christians, and will be more hurtful to the publick concerns of Christ, than if you did nothing at all; and be the more guarded against this, because the heads of factions will solicit such as you, and satan will set in with your misguided zeal, as knowing he can make no other use of you, now that you are honestly willing to be serviceable. If you are persons eminently useful, do not hastily govern your activity by
by the opinion of others; if weak men misinterpret your well-adjusted attempts, be you resolved, should many good men blame you never so much for your performance, adhere to, and still pursue it whilst you have good ground to believe its the fittest means to prevent a publick mischief, or produce a general benefit. The reasons of this direction are these; the opinion and censures of most men are very weak and misguided; satan hath access to the imagination of good men, and often employs such to obstruct great designs, Matt. xvi. 23. And men entirely devoted to God in the service of their generation, after some time of faithfully acquitting themselves therein, they stand more in God's secret, and by experience are fitter to judge of publick good and hurt than other good men be.

Whatever offers as your present work, do, not thinking lesser things needless, when you have not greater things at present to undertake; for you know not what great good a seemingly small endeavour may do (as advice to a child). This is your present work; the most of your time is not filled with opportunities of very great services, these lesser attempts being very frequent, as taking up so much of our time, will amount together to great service, a very great part of our lives will be
be unprofitably spent, if we neglect these lower endeavours, and most mens unusefulness is greatly owing to a disregard to these. But yet see the greatest services are still preferred to lesser when in competition. Keep a jealous watch over yourselves, that no lusts prescribe your work, be admitted into it, or nourished by it; to which end, see that you do nothing through strife or vain-glory, or for covetous ends. Despise not others who cannot equal your service, or do need it; think not your great services give you an allowance in any way of sin, or that they are a compensation for it, or will be accepted in commutation for the opposite duties, &c. I give this direction, because satan's wiles are deep, and his attempts on the eminently useful are many, various, and unwearied; the remains of corruption are great in the best, lusts are deceitful, and signal service is an apt occasion to be improved.

Look to Christ for strength and favour, for fresh anointings, and continual conduct, that you may omit nothing which God assigneth you to do in your generation, nor take up with any excuse which he will not approve of when he comes to judge the secrets of all hearts; because of ourselves we can do nothing; by his strength we can do all. We need new supplies in every new business, and the more as its importance
tance is; and by dependance we shall and must receive it.

3. To useful persons under discouragements in their service.

Still persist in your work; for the greater opposition you meet with in it, the more likely it is to be subservient to Christ's present designs, and to produce the greater effects in a common good, since satan is so active to obstruct thee: Gird up the loins of your mind, and hope to the end. 13. Whatever is a plain duty, will bring with it sufficient fitness, and not want success in due time; no rightly directed labour in the work Christ hath upon the wheel will be lost, tho' success may be delayed, and the work seem dead for a season, that so the world may be prepared to submit to it, and Christ's victory may appear the greater, as it baffleth the confidence of satan and his instruments. When ready to faint, tell thy soul, I must not be weary in well-doing, for I shall reap if I faint not. You have God as eminently concerned for you, and in you, as you can be engaged for him; his perfections will uphold you in all that which his authority sets you upon; and he allows you to place to his account the losses, reproaches, and hardships you sustain in his cause, neither shall you lose thereby, Mark x. 29, 30. Search left there be any sin unrepented of which interrupt his supporting comforts,
Serm. or that you have too much confided in your own abilities, or ascribed the honour of past successes or performances to yourselves. Pour out your complaints, and your apprehensions of your own weakness, before the Lord, who is full of pity and faithful, and whose strength is manifest in our weakness. Be much in the contemplations of heaven; review your own experiences of seasonable sufficient supports, when your fears were as great as at present, and attentively think its but a little while and my work is over: He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry; and all the promises of perseverance were made to souls in eminent service by doing and suffering, which you may safely apply to yourselves, expecting those greater consolations and supplies which God will not disappoint you in.

4. To useful persons inclining to remissness in the service of their generation.

The greatest part of this discourse being so much directed to your case, I shall only advise you to renew your covenant with God in Christ. Reflect on yourselves, what you found when vigorously useful, and what you feel now in this declining frame: Enquire what forfeitures you have made of the Spirit's quickening influences, or what lust begins to invade your souls, or what carnal thing is setting up for an idol. Pray earnestly for exciting grace,
a publick Spirit. 361

grace, and be much in such soliloquies as Serm. these, Am not I a redeemed sinner? and
shall I neglect the interests of my Redeemer?
Shall I disregard the end of my being, break
my vows, be false to my trust? Is it not in
well-doing that I grow weary? Are my ta-
lents less accountable for than they were?
or have I now more reason to think that
my abilities were not given for publick
use? Where shall I stop, if I recover not?
What shall I be doing the residue of my
time, if I cease to be useful? What may
I meet with to awaken me out of this
slothful sleep? Do others less need my
help, or have I the leave of God to be
remiser? Can I think Christ a worse mas-
ter than before, or heaven less worthy of
my pains? Dare I commend the unprofi-
table part of mankind, that I am thus about
to justify; or condemn the eminently use-
ful, whom now I seem resolved to censure?
Must not I shortly, on a death-bed, reflect
on what a barren life I am going to live,
and the blessed courses I put a stop too?
Have I done more already than Christ de-
serves at my hands, who died for me? or
would I be content he should now more
remissly intercede in my behalf? Plead
such things closely and frequently with your
hearts, and force a deliberate answer, that
all may issue in fresh resolves to be more vi-
gorous than ever, and in shame and grie
that you could be inclinable to remissness in
publick service. I shall
I shall conclude the whole with three cautions, to all who are willing to serve their generation.

1. **Equal** nothing with the publick which is short thereof, especially yourselves. Let every thing have its due regard, and no more. Our esteem of things should be according to their value, and our concern is irregular, if dissonant from our just esteem. Moses's words, *If not, blot me out of thy book*; and St. Paul's, *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren*, were not absolute desires, but the regular indications of a publick spirit adjuting things as compared together: A common good is above a particular, and the more common still the more estimable. The very reason why divine worship is proper to God, is, because he is author of all, above all, and infinitely more than the whole creation; yea, and we cannot but most intend his glory in our undertakings, as our regards are most extensive; and make every thing a selfish idol, as we postpone what's more publick to it. Nevertheless, the true order is generally inverted: Most men do not account a mischief or benefit to be greater or less, as they affect the publick, but as they affect themselves; we begin and end at the wrong point, and erect a false standard when our main concern is, how will such publick affairs profit or damage...
Be warned against this preposterous course; look at yourselves but as small parts of the whole, and to signify no more than as the publick is advantaged by you. Acknowledge the interest all have in you according to their true order, and your capacity, and obligation to be serviceable to each. Be uniform in your course, and let God in a common good (as such) be your governing end. Fill up each place and relation you stand in; let each have a due regard, and no more: Your own families, the particular church you belong to, and the Catholick church above that; also your own city and nation, and the world; let all these have their due, and this in just order and proportion, not exclusively of each other. Your prayers must reach the world, your mental communion the catholick church, occasional communion must extend to other churches, besides that wherein you are stated members, (tho' in many things they differ from you.) In short, confine not your care, estate, or advice, below, or otherwise than that mind will dictate, which accounts the body more valuable than a member, and a common good than a particular. If you are ministers, abhor a thought that
that your office obligeth you to mind no more souls than your own flocks.

2. **Neglect not yourselves** whilst you mind the publick.

Do not disregard your own soul, no nor body neither; keep the last in a fitness for service, and be ever watchful that the first be in a meetness for glory, and improving for it: *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* Receive yourselves the Christ and mercy you offer to others; look not so abroad, as to forget you have a home; yea, labour to affect and profit your own souls, by all your endeavours to profit others; to walk in the light you give, and to grow in grace by doing all the good you can. If you are ministers, oft think of, *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.*

3. **Disregard not the first or least declinings,** in those graces that are the springs of publick service; but be intent to get their vigorous exercise restored as soon as you perceive abatement.

*Very imperfect acting* will follow decaying graces, and strengthening the last is the way to perfect the first, *Rev. iii. 2.* As *Ephesus* decayed in her first love, she abated her first works, which were labours and sufferings for publick use, *ver. 3.* Unbelief, enmity to God and man, and a narrow
narrow spirit grow, as faith, love, and a Spirit.
publick spirit weaken; and those will as much obstruct your usefulness, as these contribute to it; they will pervert your judgment, abate your delight, aggravate your difficulties, frame excuses, find diversions, enervate motives, and many other ways lessen your service; and as they grow, they tend to still further abatements in the opposite graces. Oh! where will these declensions stop, if you allow them? And every day you will be less able and disposed to recover your former strength; and consequently be less sure and fit to serve your generation.

S E C T. VI.

2 Obs. The usefullest persons die.

David fell asleep. Shall I represent this as a warning, or as an encouragement to service? It hath something of both, and in each respect its a strong motive to serve our generation.

1. It is a warning to be useful whilst you live; for work, or loyster you, death is daily making its approaches, and when it seizeth, it will be in vain to wish to be spared for greater use, or resolve to do what you hitherto neglected. Death sets a period to our endeavours to benefit the church or nation, our friends or relations; they can expect no further advantage by us.
Serm. us. Therefore in a sense of your own frailty, and the certainty of dying within a short while, resolve with our blessed Saviour, I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work. Its a mercy to have nothing undone which God gave us life for, and to be finishing it when the arrest of death is felt.

2. Its an encouragement to such as faithfully serve their generation. The useful left fall asleep; not, indeed, if it were such a sleep as rendered the separated soul inactive, for continued service here would be more pleasing and profitable to them, than such a sleep as that; but its a rest from labour, tho' not from work; from pain, but not from pleasure to the departed soul, which will be with Christ; and tho' seperated for a while, is sure to be re-united to the body at the resurrection. Its a woe to the unprofited world, that eminently useful men are dead, for you can hope for no further help, nor expect any benefit by them; they left you barren and miserable after all their labours, and must be terrible witnesses against you. Its a loss to the church and nation, that such eminently useful men must die; the defence, glory, and blessing of a people are removed; what an open breach is made? The earth is endangered by removal of such pillars. These are the chariots of Israel.
Israel, and the horsemen thereof. There be but few such among the multitude of christians, and their los is not easil made up; but to the faithful eminently useful faint, its a privilege that he shall die, (being all such are not to be translated.) He would not live always: For by death he goes into better company; he'll be free'd from a weight that clogg'd him tho' he moved so fast; the sin and sorrow he felt he is to feel no more; he shall enjoy Christ in another manner, relish pleasures in a higher way, and possess what he hoped and waited for. Death must be his great advantage, to whom faithful and publick service is his very business and trade whilst he liveth: To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Instead of the application of this doctrine, I shall turn my discourse to the occasion of our present meeting, the death of your pastor Dr. Samuel Annesley, in whom we have the whole text exemplified; He served his generation, and he is fallen asleep.

In the last part, a just cause of mourning is presented, with respect to many more than ourselves; in the former, a lively example is proposed for our imitation; as to both, here's a convincing instance. We see its possible for men in our age to serve their generation, and yet the greatest usefulness prevents not death; for
for he, who was so eminently useful, lies now dead. He began early, he continued long, and never ceased to serve his generation, until by death he was allowed to rest from his labours.

He was born of very godly parents at Kellingworth near Warwick, Anno 1620, and their only child. The name Samuel was appointed for him by his eminently pious grandmother, who died before his birth, and gave this reason for her desire that he should be so called, I can say I have asked him of God. His infancy was as strangely impressed with the thoughts of being a minister, (to which his parents dedicated him from the womb) which so transported him from five or six years old, as to engage him to unusual industry in what improv'd him in order to it; then it was he took up a custom which he always observed, viz. reading twenty chapters in the bible every day. Our God, to whom the end is known from the beginning, was as provident in forming him for great service, as he was forward in those indications that he should be employed therein; this appeared in the hale and hardy constitution of his body, which was such, as to endure the coldest weather without hat, gloves, or fire. For many years he seldom drank any thing besides water; his sight so strong, that to his death he read the smallest print without
without spectacles, and in a life lengthen'd Serm. to his seventy-seventh year. He was rare-ly sick; his natural capacity was good, and his temper vigorous and warm which his grace over-ruled (mostly) to undertake those excessive labours, and sustain the difficulties, which, without a body and mind so fashioned, had been impossible, in so long a course of service. And this vigour he so retained to his very death, as if God would give an instance, that the fervour of some mens souls in his work, were either independent on the body, or their bodies (with Moses) were still repaired even to old age, when he designeth extraordinary services by them.

But which was more, he was (not only thus separated) but also sanctified from the womb; often since declaring, He never knew the time he was not converted.

About fifteen years of age he went to Oxford, where he gave such instances of his piety and diligence, as would engage a recital, if I resolved not to omit these, with all other things, (tho' very laudable) except his usefulness; his ripe fruits, which fed so many, my regard is to.

A heart so naturally bent for God's glory, and the good of souls, could admit no longer delays from work, than what a due fitness for it, and a regular call unto it, made necessary; yet so long, conscience obliged him to desist, he well knowing
that the strongest desires of ministerial work, in the unqualified and uncalled, will not justify their usurpation of the office, nor prevent disorders and damage to the church and themselves, by their publick performances.

He began to cast his net as chaplain to the earl of Warwick (then admiral) and thence removed to Cliff in Kent, where he met with a storm more tempestuous than at sea; for the people of that place being fond of their ejected minister, as greatly pleasing them by his company at their dancing, drinking, and merriments on the Lord's-day, they were so prejudiced against this his successor, as to rise against him with spits, forks and stones, threatening his death at his first coming; a hard province for a divine not much above twenty-two years of age! But here God gave him room for his intense zeal, fit objects to direct and engage his ministry to conversion work, and an early specimen of his own resolvedness in God's work, as well as experience of the good God designed by him, and care he had of him; for having some prospect of doing good among that people, (who tho' ignorant and profane, yet not hardened by resisting gospel light) he told them, Let them use him how they would, he was resolved to continue with them, till God had fitted them by his ministry to entertain a better,
better, who should succeed him; but yet solemnly declared, that when they became so prepared, he would leave that place. Here his labours were unwearied, and such efficacy accompanied the word preached, and his winning behaviour, that in a few years the people were greatly reformed, their enmity changed into a passionate kindness, which appear'd, as in many other instances, so in their loud cries and many tears, when he let them know he judged himself obliged to remove, according to his former declaration, (not to decide whether such a promise was obligatory or no.) His tender concern left any seeming lightness of his might prove a scandal to his young converts, so governed him, that he left this place with 400l. per annum; but divine providence had great purposes to serve hereby.

Cliff was not a stage large enough for the uses God designed by this active soul, nor a hill high enough for the notice of one so exemplary. Having procured a successor fit to build on the foundation, so prosperously laid by him, he resigns himself to divine disposal, to be employed wherever his call should point with the clearest evidence. A very signal providence directed him to a settlement in London, anno 1652. by the unanimous choice of the inhabitants of John the apostle; soon after he is made lecturer at Paul's.
And in 1658, Cripplegate was made happy by his settlement there. In this place he continued a most laborious faithful preacher (tho' removed from his lecture in the year 1660) till that twice unhappy Bartholomew-day, 1662. the first by the Parisian massacre, this last by the silencing of about 2000 faithful ministers in this kingdom, where their labours were far more necessary than the ends pretended for their ejection were valuable. His abode hath been ever since in this city, where he finished his course, December 31. Anno 1696.

Having briefly represented the sphere wherein he moved with respect to his office and places of abode, &c. it remaineth that I give some hints of the nature and manner of his motion therein. Where shall I begin, when so many things present themselves? Its hard reducing them into order, when such a variety of great things meet; its not easy to judge which most contributed to his just character, viz. an eminently useful man in his generation. In most things he was a pattern worthy to be imitated: In many things it will be difficult for most I know to resemble him. And in what few things he came short of some, yet his integrity, zeal, and publick spirit, render'd him in extensive usefulness more than equal. In ministerial labours he was abundant; where was
a more constant preacher? Very oft, before his silencing, thrice a day; in the late troubles almost every day; since this liberty, twice every Lord's-day, (too long) even to his last sickness; being dissuaded from the last sermon, because of his illness after the morning's, he was unpersuadable, saying, *I must work whilst it's day.*

Whoever knew him, from his very youth, refuse to preach in any place when asked? Few, if any, so ready to afloat in facts and lectures. The sick were sure of assistance if they sent to him; doubting souls never were denied access, or found discouragement, harshness, or treachery, when they made their cases known. Did his many labours abate their substance and tendency to common good? No, he so redeemed time, that his sermons were not raw, but well studied and substantial; his utterance not remiss, but earnest, as one concerned to profit others, being himself affected, and having something that very peculiarly expressed his heartiness in all he said. By his very often reading over the scriptures from his childhood, he became a great textuary; and by aptly produced texts, he oft surprized eminent ministers; as his solution of cases of conscience (which his sermons much consisted of) did instruct and satisfy them.

His care and toil extended to every place where he might be profitable: Of whom
whom in an equal station can it be truly said, On him was the care of all the churches? When any place wanted a minister, he set himself to get them one; when any minister was oppressed by poverty, he soon employed himself for his relief. O, how many places had fate in darkness, how many ministers had been starved, if Dr. Annesley had died thirty-four years since! The gospel he even forced into several ignorant places; and was the chief (oft the sole) instrument in the education, as well as subsistence, of several ministers.

The Morning-lecture (so profitable to many) he alone supported; I wish it die not with him: For what one man hath zeal and interest enough (with leisure) to keep it up? It was by him the meetings of ministers, before this liberty, were kept up; and since the union, in his place and to his expence, they have been continued. What a multitude of all sorts were supplied by his care! Bibles, catechisms, and all profitable books, dispersed far and near.

The sick, the widows, the orphans were innumerable, whom he relieved and settled. By the poor he was crowded as a common father. You may well ask, how could all this be done by him? I answer, of all gifts, salary and incomes, he always laid aside the tenths for charity, even before any were spent by him; which is the greater instance of his bountiful mind,
considering his numerous family, many publick Spirit, offering and great streats: Thus his light directed; and then he would be faithful to it, whatever expence or hardship followed. And being satisfied it was just to do so, his fervent love to God and man prevented all repinings, and made him a moft cheerful giver. But this, since he was silenced, bearing no proportion to the great things he constantly undertook, to supply it he was the faithful almoner of many; and to importunate a petitioner for charitable uses, that few could escape or deny him; and moft of his own people he had instilled his own charitable disposition into (who are apt to be of the fame spirit with their admired pastors.)

These affiduous labours, and extensive beneficence were accompanied with several excellencies which sustained them, and tended to make him a successful blessing or his heart and hands had failed.

He was a man of great uprightness, he squared not his profession by his secular interest, tho' he had a large family; yet he quitted a full maintenance rather than sin against God by conformity. Before then he was turned out of his lecture, and kept out a while, because he could not comply with some extravagancies of the late times; and since hath he suffered, because he must witness for the old truth against antinomianism. His integrity
The Excellency of

Serm. integrity made him a stranger to all tricks, and sometimes his charity betrayed him to be impos'd on by such as use them.

His humility was signal, he seemed to have the meanest opinion of his own gifts, and labours, highly esteeming others, and envying none; no, not the acceptance of our promising young ministers. He might say, with David, I pray; as if made up of that. Every day he prayed twice in his family, to the last moment that he was capable. His usual way was to pray three or four times a day in his study. Upon every extraordinary occurrence in his house he kept a fast. Under every affliction, before he would speak of it, or pitch on means to redress it, he spread it still before God in prayer; which brought him, tho' a most affectionate husband, to bear the news of his wife's death with that composure, as calmly to say, the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. And after the greatest losses, he used to speak of them with an unconcernedness, as if another's, not his own. In prayer he was mighty, and the returns remarkable and frequent. He could trust God with all, and was still resigned to his will. His solicitous concern was, that God might not be dishonoured. When he lay sick, this was oft repeated, Oh! that I may not dishonour God in my last moments, whom, in my poor manner, I made it the business
business of my life to honour. Oh! that I may not dis honour my God by my impatience.

Being one night under exceeding torture, he called his daughter, then present, and charged her not to entertain one hard thought of God, by any thing he felt, but be assured he is infinitely merciful, and none are happy but those that serve him; he gives peace of conscience, that's beyond all the world can give; none can die cheerfully but a christian; he shines on my soul through Christ. God and heaven were so habituated to him, that in some disorder in his head, by his distemper fixing there, he still kept the same favour, breathed the same spirit, and spake of divine matters most consistently. His head was not free of those projects for God, which in health it was ever full of. I'll end this with Mr. Baxter's account of him (who knew not how to flatter or fear any man) Dr. Annesley is a most sincere, godly, humble man, totally devoted to God. (Mr. B's life.)

Having hinted some things that respect the excellency of this person, some may whisper, But what tokens of God's favour had this useful man more than others, he had many troubles and exercises? God testified his favour to him in instances which he most esteemed, and pursued above all things; yea, he despised and renounced all compared therewith; which is enough to testify him a happy man, what-
The Excellency of

Serm. whatever he endured or wanted; God kept him faithful in his work to the last; for which he thus thanked God on his death-bed; Blessed be God, I can say, I have been faithful in the work of the ministry above fifty-five years. He had great success in his work; many called him father, as the instrument of their conversion; the worthy Mr. Brand was one; many called him comforter.

In all his sufferings he found supports which kept him as cheerful as his office and age allowed under all; yea, in seventeen weeks pain he was without a discontented word or thought. Signal returns of prayer he frequently had; and very close communion with God in Christ. His charity and care wanted not comfortable effects. How many whom he contributed to the education of, are useful ministers? In how many places doth religion flourish by his means? God gave him a great interest in the hearts of most ministers and serious people. How oft and long did they pray for his life, as a publick blessing? And how generally is his death lamented? He thankfully owned God in all. He signal witnessed for him in his judgments on several of his persecutors. One died signing a warrant to apprehend him. Many might be instanced, but its fit we cover such in acknowledgment of present quiet.
He had uninterrupted peace and assurance of God's covenant-love for above thirty years last past. It's true, he walked in darkness for several years before that, which is common to those who are converted in childhood, their change not being remarkable, and so apt to be questioned; and they often make up, in a long time, by frequent returns, the sad hours that others have pressing in at once. But God had a further design, viz. the fitting and inclining him to relieve wounded consciences by his ministry and discourse, wherein he was so eminent, that most troubled souls resorted to him. He used to say, that this made him unable to preach a sermon without some word to them.

This assurance had not one cloud in all his disease. He often said, I've no doubt, nor shadow of doubt; all is clear between God and my soul; he chains up Satan, he cannot trouble me.

To conclude all, He had an abundant entrance into God's kingdom. He was reconciled to death, yea, so desirous of it, as hardly induced him to have his life prayed for. But hearing some ministers had been fervently praying for his life, he replied, I am then more reconciled to life than ever, for I am confident God will not give a life so eminently, in answer of prayer,
Serm. as mine must be, if he would not use it to greater purposes than ever before.

Yet some little time before his change, his desires of death appeared strong, and his soul filled with the foretastes of glory, often saying, Come my dearest Jesus, the nearer the more precious, the more welcome. Another time his joy was so great, that in an extasy he cried out, I cannot contain it; what manner of love is this to a poor worm? I cannot express the thousandth part of what praise is due to thee; we know not what we do when we offer at praising God for his mercies; its but little I can give, but, Lord, help me to give thee my all. I will die praising thee, and rejoice that others can praise thee better. I shall be satisfied with thy likeness; satisfied, satisfied! Oh my dearest Jesus, I come.

Now do not you think Christ is worth the faithfullest service which ends in this manner? To you of this congregation, (for whose salvation he was so concerned) shall I say, bewail the loss of him, when you are so sensible? Yet that's but just. Bless God for your enjoying his faithful labours so long; see that none of you perish, after such pains to save you; be established in the truths you have heard, which you see governed his life to such great purposes, and helped him to die with sure triumph: Shew your regard to his memory by kindness to his family, and by not breaking
breaking off from this church, that he may not be reflected on by your giddiness, as if he taught you no better, or established you no more, than to be seduced to serve a carnal turn, in pretence of greater purity. You, his children, live your father's advice and example, or what a witness will he be against you? Let us all go hence with a due sense of it. The world hath lost a blessing, the church hath lost a pillar, the nation hath lost a wrestler with God, the poor have lost a benefactor: You, his people, have lost a faithful pastor; his children, a tender father; we, in the ministry, an exemplary fellow labourer.
A SERMON
PREACHED TO THE
SOCIETIES
FOR
Reformation of MANNERS,
May 16. 1698.
VERSES

SACRED

TO THE

SPOCK

OF

A LONDON

May 17

and 1801.
TO THE

SOCIETIES

FOR THE

Reformation of Manners,

In the CITIES of

London and Westminster.

HEN first desired by you to preach the ensuing sermon, my compliance would have been more difficultly obtained, had I taken time to consider, that it came within the number of the discourses that were to be printed at your request; yea, to be the last of them. A subject exhausted by eleven divines of so great name and
and worth, can receive little advantage by the succeeding attempts of
a head so barren, and a heart so cold as mine. However, my promise being given, I intreated his assistance whose cause I plead; and the event I commit to him.

If I have insisted on any thing said by others (as its scarce possible to avoid) its not borrowed from them; for I consulted none of the former sermons in preparing this.

The medium which runs through this discourse is very fit, I'm sure, to inforce what is said before, and notwithstanding the defects of my management, I can say, I believe what I deliver, and approve heartily of your good design, and what's better urged by others to promote it.

Its matter of deepest sorrow, when villainies of all sorts abound, when men declare their sins with Sodom's insolency, when our settlement is thereby so exposed, and a probable
probable safety from the awfullest woes, is held by a thread so tender as the life of his Majesty King William; that yet some persons of note require other motives to espouse this work of reformation; and many magistrates shift off the execution of the laws, tho' the oath of God be upon them.

How rare is a zealous Nehemiah? Nay, symptoms of our condition were less dangerous, if all who served at God's altar admitted Phineas for a pattern of concernedness in resisting sin as they are capable, tho' he is not to be imitated in the manner of his execution.

But amidst great causes of fears and lamentation, let us not ungratefully neglect to adore God's undeserved goodness, that our constitution retains so many good laws against gross enormities: The parliament hath made an address, and the king pursuant thereto, published
PREFACE.

a proclamation, so excellently acknowledging the dueness, necessity, and value of reformation, with resolves of promoting it to the utmost. It were very afflictive, as well as uncharitable, to think a stop could be made here, and the execution of the laws suspended as formerly; for this would turn to the nation's reproach, and be an aggravation of its guilt, by rendering the forecited instances, a mere testimony against future neglects, and a cause of severer judgments.

Nor is it an inconsiderable presage of good, as well as a probable means of England's amendment, that you have formed yourselves into societies for the reformation of manners, a title becoming a christian name, an enterprise alike owing to flagrant zeal, and amazing courage; an ordinary spirit under common assistances had been overwhelmed with the very view of the strength of
that tide of uncontrouled wickedness, which was at first to be stemmed by so very few.

How soon did divinely inspir'd minds coalesce in this undertaking?---And easily made it evident, that there is no such difference between the members of the established church, and the dissenters, that will not be overlook'd by all serious persons, when the undoubted concerns of Christ and practical godliness are in danger.

By an union founded on a bottom, and designed to ends so truly Christian, your numbers were soon increased; very many magistrates and persons of eminent figure gave up themselves to this undertaking, fit rules were adjusted, and the strange successes which encourag'd your early attempts, do still grow more and more amazing, being as much beyond the hopes of your timorous friends, as the expectations of surprized offenders, who as such
only, can be ill-willers to this design.) Nay, men strong in faith, are as in a dream, to see the work of reformation advanced thus far, in so short a time; and induced to hope this to be the dawning of that season, wherein reforming attempts shall succeed to those higher degrees of purity which are prophesied of; altho' awful dispensations may shake the frame of things to introduce it.

Besides, it is no mean effect of your successful example, that men of the same temper in other places in this nation, are awakened to exert their united strength in pleading the cause of Christ against profaneness.

Yea, Ireland, as if blushing at engaging so late, when their distress and deliverance had been so astonishing—do even exceed your fervour, and Protestants of every communion in Dublin, account reformation their greatest business.

May not we hope that your influencing president may in time extend to
to all other Protestant countries; that none called reformed, as to their faith, may wear the reproach of neglecting a reformation in their manners. They owe the same love to their neighbour as you do, their municipal laws against vice, are a talent for which they are as accountable as you for yours: Gross sins will be as dangerous to every nation which has equal light, as they are to England, and the heart wherein a divine principle reigneth, will naturally prompt to the same zeal against sin, as they shall hear to be now at work in your societies.

But let the happy issue of your undertakings be more or less extensive; bless you the merciful God for inclining your hearts to this work, and giving you the present opportunity to express your good intentions, and not denying you such encouraging success.

Be conscientious in observing the directions given you in the sermons
of all those ministers invited to your assistance, and neglect not to apply their encouragements, that you may be strong and faithful in what respecteth your own duty in this glorious attempt; so you will die in peace, in a review of upright vigorous endeavours to serve your generation.

That this discourse may among the rest, contribute somewhat to your good designs, is the prayer of,

Your Servant in the Gospel,

Daniel Williams.
Matth. xii. 30.

He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.

O understand this text in its aptness to excite your promoting a reformation of manners; we must consider the occasion of these words, which you'll find in the foregoing verses, v. 22. Christ healed a man possessed with a devil, who had deprived him of both sight and speech. The hand of that enemy is sometimes great in bodily diseases, and when they come by his immediate agency upon any person delivered up by God to endure statedly such effects of his power; so far, and so long, that person is said to be possessed with the devil, who is commissioned thus to vex and hurt him. In this condition the man was brought to Christ, who not only removed the
the diseases, by restoring his sight and speech, which was a cure; but therein he overcome the resifting power of the devil, and expelled him; so that he could no longer have access to the person as his own privileged place, to make him blind and dumb; which connotes the devil's agency in this disease, and Christ's conquest over him in his healing the diseased person, v. 23.

And all the people were amazed, and said, is not this the son of David? This miracle filling them with amazement, induceth them to receive Christ as the promised Messias: q.d. Who should he be, but that rod out of the stem of Jesse, prophesied of, Isa. xi. 1. 10. Matth. xxii. 6? Could any below him perform what we have seen and heard? What more miraculous can the Messias do? The power of God would never work such a miracle to favour an impostor; and no power below what's divine, could possibly effect it; and seeing his doctrine agrees with the old testament, and these his works are so plain a testimony of the Spirit to his being sent of God, he must be what he declares himself, viz. the promised Christ.

The Pharisees, not able to deny the fact, attempt to enervate the inference the people made therefrom, v. 24. But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, this fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils: q. d. We grant there
there is a power more than human, in what this man hath performed before you, but it's a diabolical power this work is owing to; and it's to serve the purposes of the devils, and under the conduct of their prince, that this contemptible man, unworthy of any name, is employed even in what you are so amazed at. Therefore instead of thinking him to be the Messias, you ought to conclude him a grand impostor, and reject him as such, and the more for these infernal assistances you see afforded to him.

This was a conclusion too malicious for an apology from mere ignorance, which, with what our Lord applieth to these men, v. 31, 32. gives a probable reason to conclude, that the sin against the Holy Ghost is a wilful ascribing to the power of the devil, those evident miracles wrought by the Holy Ghost in testimony to Jesus being the Messias, that so it might be concluded, Jesus was not the Christ, but an impostor.

It's no wonder, that it's impossible to bring such as commit this sin to repentance, and consequently to obtain pardon, because they hereby deprive themselves of the advantage of miracles to subdue their unbelief; yea, they employ them to harden themselves in infidelity against him, who is exalted to give repentance, and deliver the will of God to mankind.

Our Lord Jesus answers this wretched assertion, by detecting its weakness, falsehood
Sermon to the Societies for

Sermonhood and impossibility; and thereby justifies the people's conclusion, from v. 25. to 29. not to mention his reasoning, v. 27. from their children's practice, the principal argument is thus drawn *ab impossibili.*

Satan must be a designingly wilful destroyer of his own kingdom, if Christ did cast out devils under his conduct, and by his virtue, which was a thing of which Satan, who was such a self-lover, and had so great a reach, could not possibly be guilty. No, the devil is too wise not to understand his interest better than thus, especially in a case so obvious, and so nearly concerning himself.

Our Saviour, to clear the force of this argument, declareth,

1. **That** God and the devil have two very distinct kingdoms, which are constituted, ruled, supported, and propagated by ways, and in a manner extremely different, v. 26. *If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then can his kingdom stand?* Here is one kingdom, *viz.* the devil's, v. 28. *But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come among you:* This is the other kingdom, *viz.* God's kingdom.

2. **There is** in this world so fixed a war between these two kingdoms, that the one grows upon the other's ruins.

3. **The way of Christ,** and the tendency of his doctrine, and scope of all his attempts,
were utterly to overthrow Satan's kingdom, and advance the kingdom of God.

4. Satan's kingdom was effectually weakened, and the kingdom of God advanced, and enlarged by all that power which Christ had put forth in this and all other miracles.

5. Whatever Christ did contribute by his exerted power to the destruction of Satan's kingdom, was in a way of force and violence upon Satan, and not with his consent.

All these things are implied in v. 26, 28. and most expressly, v. 29. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods; except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house. The sum of Christ's plea is this; it's impossible the devil, who is a being so sagacious and experienced, should wittingly help me to offer violence to himself, and thereby enable me to force him out of his throne, rescue the prey out of his jaws, pluck down what he hath so studiously erected, defeat his chief design, and advance God's throne and interest, upon the obstructing whereof Satan is constantly and maliciously intent. These are things so inconsistent, that without inveterate malice they cannot be surmised: Nay, I am so far from working miracles by the power of Beelzebub, that it must be evident to every prejudic'd person, they are wrought by the power of God, in whose interest
H A V I N G given you this account of the matter our Blessed Saviour is treating of, I shall consider the text; *He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.* Herein several things seem designed.

1. **An enforcement of the forecited argument:** *q.d.* Satan is so far from concurring with me in my design, or yielding me assistance by his power, that he would employ his skill to support what I am casting down, he would neglect no method to pull down what I am building up: And instead of favouring my attempt, his power would be engaged against it; the utmost strength possessed by him, he would be sure to exert, to obstruct mens faith in me, and not to induce them to believe; he would prove me an impostor, instead of attesting my commission. Who then can surmise that my miracles are wrought by any virtue deriv'd from him? *seeing he must be against me, if he be not for me.*

2. **Another thing design'd is to assert,** that the Lord Jesus is the head of God's kingdom in its present oeconomy. **This is evidenced by the alteration of the terms; for in a strict connection with**
the foregoing passages, the words would run thus; he that is not with God's kingdom, is
against God's kingdom. But instead there-
of, they are, *He that is not with me, (the
Christ) is against me*; to denote, that the
administration of God's kingdom is com-
mitt ed to Christ, God-man, the mediator:
q.d. Legislation, dominion, judgment, the
care and dispos'd of all persons and things
which appertain to the divine kingdom in
this world, I am entrusted with; to me
they belong: *The government is upon my
Shoulders.* I am the King; and the interest
of the deity among mankind is lodg'd in
my hands; and therefore mens adherence
to God's kingdom, is determin'd by their
adherence to me, to whom the authority
therein is delegated.

**Christ** consider'd abstrac'dly as *God,*
is of the same essence with the Father, and
so original'y possess'd the kingdom of God
as Creator, in the same very respects as the
Father did; he had the same absolute royal
dominion, and rectorial authority was essen-
tial to him without a delegation.

**But** to Christ as *Mediator,* this kingdom,
which refers especially to the recovery of
fallen men, and the government of them as
redeemed, is given as a reward: *Jesus* John xiii.
knowing that the Father had put all things into his hands. *For the Father judgeth no John v.*
man, but hath committed all judgment to the
son: And hath given him authority also to
execute
execute judgment, because he is the son of Man. All power is given me in heaven and earth.

Matthew xxviii. 18.

This is that kingdom which was erected to reduce apostates to a subjection to God, against whom they had rebelled; this, as wisely, justly, faithfully, and perfectly administered by Christ, shall be delivered up after all men have been tried at this redeemer's bar, and the equity of his procedure is solemnly vindicated, 1 Cor. xv. 24. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9, 10.

A due consideration of this kingdom, as in Christ's hands, and as it is his kingdom, would evince his divinity, as well as his mediatorial administration: For were not he truly God, he could not know, and influence so many minds; direct, inspire, uphold, defend, restrain, succeed and accommodate such a multitude of persons, in such variety of exigencies, at the same time, in different places, and judge the secrets of all men at last.

It would also force mens acknowledgment of a Gospel Law, without which the notion of a Gospel kingdom would be in many respects incongruous; and a judicial proceeding upon sinners, as believers, or unbelievers, penitent or impenitent, were impossible: For by the law of innocency, the penitent believing sinner would be as infallibly condemn'd, as he who is not a believing penitent.

Neither
Neither would it be such a difficulty to comprehend how an obedience, short of legal perfection, is acceptable at a Redeemer's bar, as a condition of a sinner's possession the effects of that Redeemer's righteousness; for his righteousness being the sole meriting cause of those beneficial effects, the impetration of them is confined to his obedience, which was more than adequate to the law of innocency; and so there is no room left for our meriting by our obedience to the Gospel, which is the rule by which Christ only applieth the blessings purchas'd by himself. But yet if that Gospel do not entitle us to those blessings upon our compliance with the conditions whereupon it offer'd them to all sinners, and exclude not them who refuse to comply; then Christ's Gospel kingdom is a mere physical kingdom, wherein benefits are no motives to duty, nor danger a diffusive from sin. Gospel pleadings, persuasions, and authority, have no more place with, and are as improper to them, as to the raging sea, or hardiest stones; the influence of consideration is totally excluded, and some are hailed to heaven by mere external power, without any regard to their voluntary subjection to the Gospel; and others thrust into hell, without any respect to their wilful refusing of the remedy, and self-hardening against repeated calls, and the grace offered by the Redeemer. Such thoughts could scarce be conceivable.
Sermon to the Societies for

It is possible to one who ever read the holy Scriptures, unless an occasional obscure passage must govern against the whole and plain scope of the Bible; where a rectoral administration towards fallen man, in order to his recovery, is so constantly expressed, and our Saviour is found designedly to call this so very often by the name kingdom.

Should any sinner object, If I should be cast into hell from under the Gospel, I shall be so dealt with because the curse of the law of innocency lies against me only as a fallen sinner. I answer, That sentence took hold of you as fallen sinners; but with that, there shall be a forer destruction for refusing Christ, and rejecting the mercy of God, which offer'd you a freedom from that first condemnation. And that very offer of deliverance upon Gospel terms, the earnest pleadings of Christ with you to accept it, his complaints of your refusal, his threatenings of forer punishments to excite your minds, his laying your continued and aggravated ruin upon your wilful disobedience, and for that, as judge, condemning you at last as unrelieved; do fully demonstrate, that Christ's Gospel kingdom is a rectoral constitution, adapted to subjects capable of moral government, notwithstanding your apostacy; and that by these methods, joined with his assisting grace, he was treating with you as such, in order to your salvation.
3. A third thing designed by the text, is a distribution of all persons into abettors of, and contenders for Christ's kingdom on the one side, or the devil's kingdom on the other. q.d. All are with me, or against me, as the head of the gospel kingdom; and he that is not for me, is against me, and for my competitors. They who gather not with me, i.e. they who do not under my conduct assist and propagate the divine interest, which I am managing, such scatter abroad, i.e. they oppose the interest of God, and in conjunction with satan, they exalt his dominion and purpose. None are neutrals, each is engaged and suitably employed.

From the text in connexion with the foregoing verses, we have ground for these following observations.

I Obs. There are two kingdoms, with their several interests, in opposition and contest against each other in this lower world.

The one is a kingdom of light, the other of darkness; the one of truth, the other of error; the one administered by holy laws, the other by diabolical and carnal maxims:—The one a kingdom of love and peace, the other of enmity, cruelty, and discord. The encouragements in the one are rational, spiritual, and heavenly; in the other they are vain, sensual, and earthly. As the one prevaleth, men become just, kind, temperate,
temperate, humble, pious, heavenly-minded, and adorned with every grace; as the other obtaineth, men become unjust, malignant, intemperate, proud, impious, earthly-minded, void of every grace, and universally vicious. The voluntary subjects of the one kingdom, are men sober, regular, useful, good, and truly religious; the subjects of the other are all either wild, irregular, mischievous, as well as unuseful, bad, idolatrous, profane or irreligious. These kingdoms so extremely opposite, are in perpetual war, one growing upon the others decay; as the one prevails, the other loseth ground; peace is impossible between them, yea, a truce or cessation cannot be admitted for a moment, tho' the struggles sometimes and in some places, are more visible than in other.

2 Obs. The rulers of these contending kingdoms and interests, are Christ, God-man, our mediator, on the one part; and the devil, consider'd collectively as the head of the apostacy, on the other part. The Lord Jesus in the human nature opposeth Satan, and invades the territories he long possessed, and erects his throne where his seat had been.

The devils severally under whatever conduct the superiority in order, power, or office among them doth adjust, do oppose Christ's attempts, secure their own conquests, defend the degeneracy introduced by
Reformation of Manners.

by them, promote man's hostility against heaven, closely guard their prisoners, and recover whatever of their image or dominion Christ at any time impaireth. Satan is the ruler with whom Christ stands competitor in every age.

3 Obs. All men are divided into two parties by their adherence to these two opposite rulers, in their respective interests and designs.

The one party is for Christ, and the purposes he pursues; in this are included all good men, and whatever good they do, especially of a publick nature: These under the conduct of Christ, advance what he is building up, and extirpate what he came to destroy; they imbark with him, and fight under his banner, from an approbation of his design, as very agreeable to their own renewed temper.

The other party includes all such who yield up themselves to Satan's conduct: these have an aversion to Christ and his interest, from their own corrupt nature, and no less a fondness for those things he attempteth to destroy. By this their vile disposition the devil easily actuates their faculties, and employs their powers, and so they become his ready instruments, tho' they see not that it is he who employeth them.
Any man's neutrality between these engaged parties and opposite rulers and designs is altogether impossible.

Every person is in the one kingdom, or the other. By nature all men are in Satan's interests, and under his power, *Eph.* ii. 2. He ruleth in the children of disobedience: By grace we are delivered from Satan's power, and translated into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus. Christ by the gospel inviteth and preslieth all to side with him; but until they obey his call, they remain in Satan's kingdom, they continue on his side in this war, and hinder what they can the success of Christ's attempts against the devil's usurpation.

Some please themselves with a conceit, that they are not of a party with the devil against Christ, tho' they are conscious they are not engaged on Christ's side.—But the vanity of it is apparent from this, that their very furmized neutrality is really their being a party with Satan: for, they were originally bound to be God's subjects, because they were his rational creatures; and tho' by their rebellion they forfeited the immunities of his kingdom, yet an obligation to continue his subjects, ceased not thereby.

Nay further, Christ by his merits having procured a restoral of their forfeited privileges, if they will return; and offering his assistance to enable them to return, he
Reformation of Manners.

If therefore, after this claim, men shall refuse to join actually with Christ, and to give up themselves to him, must not every man confess they continue in actual rebellion? Keep they not still in the enemy's camp, whilst they lift not themselves in Christ's army?—Are they not there, however they lag or hide, till they come over to our Lord, whom God hath sent to bring them back to him?

All of you therefore have reason to assure yourselves, if you are not actually and explicitly for the Lord Jesus, you are against him; yea, the devil is your leader, you and he have the same common interest, and drive on the same design. These words, He that is not with me, is against me, prove what I say, and should awaken us to deep thoughts when we neglect an explicit dedication of ourselves to Christ; and also whenever he hath any momentous concern in agitation in our day.

5 Obs. It is in vain for any man, to profess to be on Christ's side, or harmless to his concerns, if he do not in his place contribute his utmost to serve Christ in promoting his interest, and in pursuing the designs he is carrying on against Satan's kingdom in this world.

He that gathereth not with Christ, scattereth abroad, and is not with him, but against
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Serm. against him. By these words he determineth that they who are indeed with him, must be active in his cause, for he will use their service, tho' he do not need it: They must gather with him, or he deems them to be his enemies; and adjudgeth them obstructors of his work, if they statedly neglect to contribute to it, according to their power. Nay, in his account, if his interest grows not by their labour, they are accessory to its detriment; and they subserve the devil's purposes, tho' they own it not.

Somewhat all men are doing and pursuing as the scope of their lives, which fails not to be pernicious, if it be not profitable. It is our Redeemer's demand, that men be entirely and heartily devoted to his cause, which will not fail to command their time, and employ their talents, in his service. Idle intentions, and unactive wishes, are not sufficient testimonies against hypocrisy in their professed regards for him, nor fit evidences that they are sincere.

And as vainly do men hope to escape the odium of being of a party with the devil, because they do not professedly abet his cause; or to be unhurtful to Christ's designs, if they make no direct and deliberate opposition thereto. Alas! you will find your state will be determined by more close and substantial indications. Our Lord, who
who required Peter to evidence the truth of his love to him by feeding his sheep, John xxı. 16. expects our discipleship shall be instanced in a vigorous advancement of his conquests.

We must not only cease to provoke him by our own enormities, but we must help on the reformation of others: we must increase his kingdom, by lessening the number of rebels; and vindicate it, by restraining mens profligate disobedience, as far as we are able. This is gathering with Christ, which, if we omit, we do one way or other promote mens rebellious disobedience, which is scattering abroad; whereby we make Christ's building more difficult, and less probable; we make havoc in his heritage, pull down what he is so studious to erect; and disperse into the open wastes (where Satan presides) those whom Christ is bringing into his own enclosures.

The subject would require my enlargement on each of these observations---But one discourse will not admit a prosecution even of this last to its full extent. Therefore I shall satisfy myself to have laid a foundation for what may be most properly directed to your assistance, as societies attempting the reformation of manners, by putting the laws in execution against sundry open immoralities.
Sermon to the Societies for

Serm.  

What can engage you to, or encourage you in, this undertaking, yea, or oblige you to diligence and accurate circumspection in the prosecution thereof, like this? In this your attempt, you have Christ for your head, and his kingdom and designs to promote, and this in opposition to Satan and his kingdom: Also, that to neglect it, would place you on Satan's side, and for his interests, in opposition to Christ, and his kingdom.

How forcible is any one of these considerations? how much more, all of them joined? as indeed they are in favour of your blessed enterprise. And this I hope to evidence in the following propositions, which are founded on what I have already spoken to, and will lead me to re-assume and improve those observations I more hastily passed over.

I Prop. The reformation of the manners of mankind, is a considerable part of the design of Christ, as head of the divine kingdom in this world.

By reformation of manners, considered as the adequate design of Christ, I mean the turning of men from sin to holiness. This, I confess, is beyond a restraint to such flagitious open enormities which limiteth your undertaking. And therefore I shall say little of reformation, but under a respect to such open evils. Our Lord finds the world grossly depraved——Serving divers
Reformation of Manners.

The gratification and fulfilling of carnal and spiritual lusts, make up the sordid employment of apostate sinners, and this often in open defiance of God's authority. Some are mad upon their idols; some are blaspheming the sacred name of God, from their contempt of, and enmity against him; some profaning his sabbath and worship; others destroying the harmony of this lower state, by violating the laws of those several relations men stand in to each other; some guilty of blood, others of filthy fornication, and adulteries, or defrauding their neighbours, or lying, flandering, and the like.

The prevalency of such crimes argueth the devil's empire, and as far as they obtain, he reigneth in any place; but when these are reformed, his seat so far is overthrown, and the kingdom of Christ gets ground.

To reform a world so corrupt, was very becoming a holy Jesus, but possible only to an almighty Saviour, when all that was in it is lust; and the whole of it is so easily, agreeably, and deeply fixed in wickedness; yea, in that wicked one, who introduced, excites, and maintains this corruption, in to περα καται, John v. 19.

Among other designs for the glory of God, and the benefit of the creation, Jesus Christ resolveth the reforming of mankind: He came to bless us, in turning every one of
Sermo7t to the Societies for Serm. of us from his iniquity: For well knowing VI. impurity would make no man happy, whilst his temper and course of life is wicked, he will bless us by reforming us; and to effect this, was a considerable part of his errand. The same is attested, 1 John iii. 8. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil; i.e. unrighteous, wicked works; these devilish bands wherein satan held men, Christ came to unloose.

The methods Christ took to reform the world, are greatly adapted to this end, as well as expressive of his concernedness to accomplish it; consider his gospel, That teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. And if you will examine this as the standard, it will be found, that the highest profession of religion with a bad life, and the greatest pretences to grace, where vices are indulged, make up no more than a dead image, and will prove no other than damning hypocrisy.

The same gospel-light will convince you, that the doctrinal opinions which tend not at all to promote practical godliness, are but vain notions; the most plausible speculations which obstruct it, are destructive errors; yea, the most orthodox conceptions which influence not to a sober behaviour, will eventually increase mens condemn-
condemnation. Nor can any man wisely examine whether his knowledge, faith, or love, be saving, or not saving, unless he try them by the efficacy they have upon the scope of his practice; for they will never prove saving in that man whom they fail to reform.

Our blessed Lord did not only adapt his doctrine to our reformation, but he also suffered death to remove the obstacles to it, and to procure the Spirit's operations for restoring the divine image, and turning men from their wicked course. He spoiled the devil of his power to that degree, that he cannot compel men to transgress, as otherwise he had been able.

Wickedness he put to the blush by his own holy example, and provided a barrier against it, by the authority enstamped on both magistracy and ministry.

Need I add, his continuing (if not a new implanting) such notices and instincts in fallen men, as render them shy, ashamed, and afraid of gross wickedness, till they are hardened by custom; and even by this scarce ever brought so far, as not secretly to disallow their own vicious courses, and approve the contrary.

Not to mention his providential restraints, and sensible rebukes to flagitious evils, nor his clear explication of God's laws; let us note how full and plain an account he hath given us of heaven and hell,
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VI. Hell, whereby sin and holiness must be far enough from being indifferent matters to immortal souls; for as either of them do govern, we shall be eternally lodged in the one or other of those two places, Rom. ii. 7, 8, 9, 10.

And for what is this, and the rest which our Lord hath done, but that profaneness and immorality may be expelled, and true religion, justice, truth, love, purity, and temperance, might again prevail, with an acknowledgment of himself as the great means of all? How happy will this earth be, when his kingdom overcomes? That is, when this designed reformation universally prevaleth—the natural, as well as the moral effect of it, will be a stop to the miseries, and the improvement of the truest welfare of mankind.

2 Prop. All they who promote the reformation of the manners of mankind, are so far with Christ and his kingdom, and against the devil and his kingdom.

This determineth whom they follow as their leader, and what end they live to. Whenever you put a stop to sin by advice, reproof, or restraints, you are opposing what Christ came to destroy; and when you contribute to the advancement of piety and virtue, you concur with Christ in what his heart is set on. You may say, We are workers together with Christ, and this in what he will own at last. Nor
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Nor need you fear opposition therein from any besides the devil, and such as he can influence. You fight under Christ's conduct, and this is the truest indication that you are his subjects and followers; yea, if you do it heartily, and for right ends, it is an infallible evidence you are his disciples in sincerity. To proselyte men to a party among christians, will be found no such testimony of your being for Christ, as this faithful endeavour to reform mens ways.

3 Prop. Every man, in his proper station, ought to be for Christ, in promoting the reformation of others. To take the sense of this, you may observe the extent of the obligation; its all men, each should do somewhat. The measure and limitation of mens attempts, that's to be according to their proper station; the kind and degrees of service in this work, must be accommodated to your abilities and opportunities. Any neglect is culpable, utmost endeavours will be accepted, and order must be maintained.

This is part of the charge that accompanies every office of divine appointment. Magistrates have their power and honour, with this affixed thereto, That they be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well. The supreme magistrates should enact laws against immoralities and profaneness; and all in power must execute
Ministers are appointed by reproof, threatenings, instructions, and censures, to dissuade from all iniquities, and prevent them what they can; and a woe is denounced expressly against such as omit this, Ezek. xxxiii. 6. It were easy to prove that masters are to restrain impiety and vice in their servants, and that its incumbent on parents to use all diligence to subdue transgressions, and encourage virtue in their children.

This charge is so evident, that one would think a claim to honour and duty, as by divine appointment, were disingenuous in any in these superior relations, who disregard that reformatory work, for which God appointed the said honour and authority. Nor is it any wonder that providence often permits the inferior correlates to despise and disobey them who are over them, when superiors suffer vice in them to go unrestrained.

But the obligation of such superiors to reformatory work, is too obvious to insist on; the scruple may appear greater among equals, and such may be ready to excuse themselves by saying, I am a private man, without power over my neighbour, and therefore free from all obligations to endeavour their reformation. To such I answer, either reforming others is not Christ's interest, or
or thou according to thy station, art oblig'd to do it; and thou mayest innocently obstruct the amendment of others, or it's thy duty to promote their amendment: For the text is thus extended, *Whoever is not for me, is against me; and who gathers not with me, scatters abroad.*

**True,** the magistrate's sword is not thine to do execution thyself, but Christ by the magistrate calls to thee, as *Exod. xxxii. 20. Who is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me.* It is the recorded fault of the common people, as well as of others, *none calleth for justice against atrocious criminals, Isa. lix. 4.* and you may as well say, none except the magistrate, should help to apprehend the flying murderer; as that no other should assist to convict the drunkard, fornicator, sabbath-proflater, and blasphemer. If there were no *laws* to punish these offenders, thy private reasonable reproof, and forbearing their company, would be thy last relief: But when there are laws against such; nay, when the laws expressly encourage private mens prosecution of such, what can be pretended to exempt you from doing so small a thing as informing against transgressors, that they may be reclaimed, and the land acquitted by their punishment? The same providence that led thee to behold that offence, (if private reproof recover not the delinquent) dictates to thee, that thou art the person design'd to embitter his sin to him by publick punishment, and so prevent
prevent the contagion by his indulged example.

The ends of good laws are frustrated, if private men must not convict offenders; for what great use are our laws against vitious practices and prophaneness, if multitudes may offend, and none be punished, unless they perpetrate their villanies in the fight of some zealous magistrates, who are nor many? Moreover, the obligation of private persons to restrain sin as they are able, doth result from that duty of love you all owe to your neighbours: Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thy neighbour's amendment is the end, rebuking him the means—But what is meant by this rebuking? No less than that just severity which is sufficient to reclaim him be used, when gentle reproof hath been tried in vain—For you may as well say, to reprove him by word is no duty, if you may stop at that, when you can lawfully bring him under methods more severe. For to rebuke him includes the last as well as the former—Nor is it less hatred to deny him the help of legal punishments, to affright him from them, than to grudge him the assistance of a few words of thine own.

But to issue this point. I put it to your consciences, is not every private person oblig'd to do all which he hath both right and ability to do, for the dethroning of Satan,
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tan, advancing of Christ, serving his coun-
try, and saving his neighbour? Will any man deny this?—Now reforming others by judicially prosecuting the flagitious, tend to these good ends; and that the meanest among you have not a right and ability to convict such criminals, which is a fit means to the reformation, you cannot pretend. What pretence then will the obscurity of your condition yield against the convicting them, being your duty, as well as others, especially when any man's testimony for conviction, is but as a private man, and the law authorizes you therein, as much as if you were a magistrate; therefore you are as much obliged to witness, as any magistrate. And you have no plea against engaging there-
in, but what might command a blush; for he that pondereth the heart, sees, and will force yourselves to own, that you omit it, because you secretly favour satan's empire against Christ, you make a light account of the evil and danger of these sins, you are under a cursed indifferency for Christ's in-
terest, and prefer your gain, ease, and safety above 'em: Nay, you hate your brother, and are well content that satan's depraving and destructive ways should abide and prevail.

Therefore lay by your excuses, and say no more, Am I my brother's keeper? Why should I intermeddle?

4. Prop. Every faithful Christian and follower of Christ, must and will subserve Christ in the work of reformation.
My text will bear this connection, be that is for me, will gather with me: If any man be truly devoted to me as his head and leader, he will concur with me in promoting religion, truth, righteousness, temperance and purity, upon the ruins of irreligion, prophaneness, falsehood, injustice, drunkenness, and debaucheries. And, my friends, this is so far from contingency, that there is a necessity, and a certain futurity of it from the very constitution and essentials of a true Christian, even such, that he cannot be a Christian indeed, who statedly, and altogether omits it.

For, 1. It is implied in our dedication to Christ. We become Christians by our dedication to the Lord Jesus, and that dedication can amount to no less than that we do renounce the world, flesh and devil, and will fight under Christ's banner, and stand by his cause and interests against Satan and his usurpations; which interpretatively is not only, that the devil and the flesh shall not govern me in particular, but that as far as I am able, they shall govern no other person; they shall have no place whence I can expel them; I'll adhere to Christ, and vigorously follow him in all just attempts for their restraint and extirpation.

You wear a Christian name, and you own that you yielded up yourselves unto the Lord Christ by covenant-engagement: How then is it possible, if your hearts were right, to hear his name blasphemed, see his
his day unhallowed, his laws trampled on, and what he came to destroy, maintained with defiance; and you connive at mens doing it without controul, when you have the happy advantage of good laws to put a stop thereto?

To reconcile this to Christianity, you must reckon that prophaneness and sacrilege are part of your christian vow; or that hypocrisy in vowing is allowable; or else that in giving up yourselves to Christ, you truly intended no more than what may be thus expressed: Oh, thou my Saviour! To thee I yield up myself, that by thee I may get safety, and life eternal; but I am not so much as to offend a wicked neighbour, or at all to expose myself in resisting thy enemies, avouching thy interests, or pleading thy cause: I must be exempted from all labour, expence, and hazard, in following thee as my leader; I will be neutral in thy undertaking to reform the world, and excepted from pursuing that design. With these limitations, I'm content to give up my self to thee, this is all I mean by my Christian dedication, and if therein thou insistest upon more service on my part, I disavow and renounce that dedication, and shall shew that I do so by my indifferency and neglect, whenever thou puttest me on helping forwards the work of reformation.

Whatever you may fancy, thus your foederal transactions with Christ must be interpreted, if you esteem yourselves unoblige
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Serm. VI. ged to restrain other mens oaths and enormities. But how are you imposed on by satan and your own carnal minds, if you can imagine that this is to be baptized in (or into) the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; or that a good conscience answers to no other demands in that baptism which saveth? Read the Gospel again, and you'll soon find it condemneth such a heartless and deceitful sense of devotedness to Christ, a sense which every gracious soul must abhor; yea, common ingenuity will detest, as ungrateful and base, and too mean for a Christian to offer, or a Blessed Redeemer to accept. Every real saint will reckon himself separated to Christ, and that Christ hath thereupon an absolute propriety in him, and that it's by the utmost services this propriety is to be acknowledg'd; his language is, the God whose I am, and whom I serve, Acts xxvii. 23. To me to live is Christ, Phil. i. 21.

2. A regenerate nature impels a Christian to further the work of reformation.

Every true christian is partaker of the divine nature: By this he is denominated the regenerate seed of Christ, because he is in a degree truly conformed to Christ in his temper and inclinations, and thence he loveth and abhorreth things correspondent-ly to what Christ doth. Upon this very account the reforming designs of Christ are lovely to the genuine christian, and all daring wickedness is detested by him; yea,
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a zeal for the restraint of sin, and for promoting holiness, is become his natural instinct; and therefore he suffers in the criminal exorbitances, he beholds and must offer a violence to himself when he testifieth not his dislike against open wickedness, as well as his approbation of what is virtuous and becoming.

How impossible then must it be to such a man to have a prospect of reforming the flagitious, and a certainty of restraining their open and daring villainies, and yet neglect the means which are in his hand to effect these things? You must suppose the judgment, conscience, will and affections of this man altogether unactive; nay, himself to move statedly against his strongest byass, and divine influences, neither to yield, nor excite any holy propensions, if sloth or carnality can reconcile him to indulge what he so abominates, and to neglect what his heart is so intensely bent for.

Moreover, you must conclude this man to pray in a deceitful manner, and to counteract his own petitions; for he daily prayeth, thy name be sanctified, and yet suffers it to be blasphemed: Thy kingdom come, and yet countenanceth rebellion: Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven, and yet conniveth at the daring violation of God's plain commandments, and is content the earth shall be an emblem of hell for villany, Mat. vi. 10. A good man from the instinct of a holy nature faith, Dd 4. Rivers
Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy laws. And is it possible he should refuse labour and expence to ease himself of what he thus heartily complains. What costs him floods of tears when he cannot prevent it, must force his utmost endeavours to subdue it.

Whenever you determine that a regenerate person may neglect to help forwards the work of reformation, you must account him to frustrate his greatest hopes, which are, that there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. He must be reckon'd free from the impress that every nature is under the power of, *vix.* an abhorrence against what is destructive to it, and an aptness to propagate itself.

3. The reforming of the world is one great design of Christ's disciplining and gathering men into his kingdom.

This is the charge they receive, this is a great part of their trust; and they must be treacherous to him, and unfaithful to that trust, if they omit to enlighten, cleanse, and reform the world to the utmost of their capacity. Christ as the head of the human nature, is engaged in a war against the devil, to rescue sinners out of his power, to divide the spoil.

He might have employed angels alone in this contest; but he will put an honour upon sinful men also in the affair. He could have furnished all the men he em-
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employ'd, with the dignity, force, and authority of princes; but for the generality he makes use of a few mean ordinary persons, that Satan's defeat, tho' assisted with the scepters of most kings, might be more tormenting to the devil, and more honourable to Christ. Of this number assisting Christ in this war, is every real christian reckoned, and upon his efficacious call, he enrolls them his subjects, and by making them christians, he lifts them soldiers; not only to fight their own way to heaven, but to assist Christ's cause, and extend his conquests as far as they are able. 2 Tim. ii.

Very often they bear their testimony for Christ, by enduring only a fight of afflictions; and thus overcome by dying, Rev. xii. 11. The more qualified among them defend the faith by arguments as well as by sufferings, 1 Tim. vi. 12. 2 Tim. iv. 7. But the summary trust of each christian, and at all times, and by all due ways, is no less than this, viz. That in defence of the laws of Christ, they strive against sin; (which must oft be other mens sins, or their blood had not been in apparent danger to be shed for striving against them.) And that with the doctrine of Christ, they promote piety and virtue, which that doctrine fails not to produce, wherever it is sincerely received.

At some seasons Christ gives an advantage to his followers, by wholesome laws and godly magistrates.---And when its
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Serm. its fo, can you think their own safety sus-
pends their trust? Or that he who was

\( \text{to die a martyr, for testifying against sin, must not oppose } \)\n\( \text{sin by endeavouring to put those laws in execution which are } \)\n\( \text{enacted against it; such a supposition ar-} \)\n\( \text{gues their quiet is dangerous to the church in a } \)\n\( \text{worse sense than it hath been as yet } \)\n\( \text{accounted, viz. that it relaxeth all obliga-} \)\n\( \text{tions on } \)\n\( \text{private christians to endeavour faithfully the world's amendment. } \)\n
They that govern themselves by this notion, would scarce have been martyrs for any concern of Christ in a day of suffering; for if idleness, or a scoff be e-

\( \text{nough to deter from resisting sin, surely a flame, a gibbet, or loss of estate would } \)\n\( \text{prove sufficient to make them commit those sins, and condemn all holiness. Had } \)\n\( \text{former martyrs lived in our days, that zeal which governed them to die for Christ's truths and laws, must have compelled them now to act vigorously for his laws, and never cease to adore that grace which afforded them the protection and assistance of magistrates in so acting for Christ against sin and satan. } \)\n
Put these three heads together, and judge whether he deserves a christian name, who will not engage on Christ's side to reform the nation, and whether there be any danger that a true Israelite can refuse it, unless his dedication prove a nullity, his regenerate principle lose its power, and the
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the design of his christian calling be dis-appointed?

S E C T. II.

Application. Infer. I. Real christians are united in the greatest things.

They are for Christ and his interests, against Satan and sin, in the bent of their hearts and scope of their lives, *To me to live is Christ*, hath their joint consent, *Phil. i. 21.* His kingdom they endeavour to advance, his royalties they would maintain, and what oppugnes him they would overthrow, they would make the world wiser and better, and set all men free from Satan's empire, which is upheld by, and expressed in the dominion of mens lusts.

UNION in these great things may well consist with difference in less considerable matters, and is more christian and of higher consequence than agreement in many disputed notions, or accord in a ceremony. How mean a thing and unprofitable is it to be of one faction, or party, yea, or communion among Protestants, compared herewith? Let men agree in these never so much, they are departed from Christ, and carnally joined together, if they are divided in a resolvedness to reform the nation. And what a pity is it, that they who are joined in Christ their head, and in this his interest and design, should be divided in lesser things, especially to mutual hatred and detractions?
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And more is it to be bewailed that any persons who honestly aim at the promoting of Christ's interests, and opposing of sin, should by mistakes and temptation at any times be employed by the devil in serving his purposes, and diserving Christ, which too too often happens; and ought to caution the most confident to try their own spirits, and examine their proceedings, especially when vehement: Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, was a charge against better men than us.

Inf. 2. Encouragements in promoting reformation work, are very great, notwithstanding the greatness of the difficulties.

Difficulties I know are apt to deter from beginning, and to discourage you from proceeding in this work, tho' honourable; and he is unthoughtful who acknowledgeth not the difficulties to be great. Great are the struggles of corrupt nature; violent, unwearied, and various is the opposition of Satan, that we may say, as St. Paul, We fight not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. In our land custom hath heightened the torrent of profaneness and irreligion, and makes feeble means incapable to put a stop thereto. Greatness and multitude still too much support these, as former authority for unworthy designs, had a great hand in introducing and making them fashionable.

But after all, if your eyes were open, you
you would perceive that more are for you, than can be against you; and the ground for courage much exceeds that of despondency. For this end review a little,

1. Who he is that you are for, and with you. 2. What you are striving for, and against. 3. Whom you have to oppose and fight against you. 4. What present advantages in this work you have at this time.

1. Whom you are for, and is with you.

My text tells you it is for Christ; he is your head, to whom the kingdom is given, Eph. i. and who is far above principalities and powers. You have him for your leader, who hath the security of heaven, that he shall reign and overcome; and of whose kingdom there shall be no end. In the fight you are sure to prosper in the proper season, which if delayed, he will alike own and reward your faithful endeavours, as if your success were greatest. Cause of fear in this enterprize you have none, when he can protect you in the utmost danger, and hath a right to admit you into his heavenly kingdom when your work is over, both which he will infallibly do, for he hath the keys of David, Rev. iii. 7.

Go on then, for no faithful followers can ever be ashamed of this general; nor will he be ashamed of such. His eye is still upon you, and his presence ever with you, to renew your strength, and afford supports. Angels think this employment for
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for him to be their honour, Rev. xxii. 9.
and can you disdain it? Millions of Martyrs have esteemed his service safe, even when they suffered, and how can you be afraid? You are for him who is the God of the spirits of all flesh, able to alter tempers, and change mens minds; yea, can command unexpected success to the poorest instruments.

2. Consider what you are striving for, and against what.

'Tis for what God, and angels, and all good men approve; yea, 'tis for the interest of Christ on earth; things, that when they prevail, will make mankind happy; and they are what shall most certainly prevail against the utmost opposition of earth and hell; what you attempt to advance, will justify the greatest expence, labour and hazards.

But against what do you contend? Its against profaneness and debauchery; not things good, nay, not disputable, or indifferent; but so plainly evil, that the most brutish would blush to plead for; its against the reproach and leprosy of human nature, the causes of our past calamities, and what can alone endanger the nation for the future: These sins, themselves are the sorest plagues. Its vice you would extirpate, which makes its abettors cowardly: Its what reason, as well as revelation, testifies against; its what few sinners like in their own children. Who would
would not be encouraged to reduce and remove such?

3. Whom you have to oppose and fight against you in this enterprise of reformation. Its the devil, and such as he doth actuate, who will resist you; he is the grand leader, and they his instruments——and even himself is cast into chains by the great God, 2 Pet. ii. 4. your leader hath trampled on him in the upper regions, Col. ii. 15. He hath, in a great measure, prevailed against him in the earth already, and will shortly chain him up from his wonted influences here below, Rev. xx. 3. Yea, at last he will entirely baffle, break him, and put him beyond any further attempts, Rev. xx. 10. Take courage, its against one who is an usurper, and whom his most obsequious followers are ashamed to own, and afraid to see. In a word, greater, stronger, wiser, and better is he that leads you in this work, than he whom the world follows in opposing reformation.

And as for the men who engage against the attempt of suppressing vice, they can be none but the inconsiderate part even of brutal persons; and as they are at this day restrained by laws from doing you much open injury, so their own consciences will soon approve your attempts to better them; they'll judge them very kind if they shall reform, and as highly just when they have finned away the season of amendment.

4. You have very encouraging advantages at this juncture.
Sermon to the Societies for the Parliament's address, and the king's proclamation thereupon, with a prospect of more laws pursuant thereto, are great things, and good signs; the most hopeful indications England for many years affordeth. You engage against evils which the supreme authority, in all its constituent parts, have testified against; magistracy is engaged and enjoined to assist you; nay, it is no other than the execution of many excellent laws which you subserv. The number of your societies are multiplying in the country, yea, your example is imitated in Ireland with greater success than here; the main of your difficulty is over, and signal successes have attended you; many prayers are on your side, and invisible powers concerned with you. By many such things heaven smileth on this work; and can you faint without the greatest reproach?

Exhort. Let me therefore excite and injoin you to proceed vigorously in this glorious attempt.

I have proved it. Your duty past all dispute; that ought to remove your backwardness and sloth. I have shewn you somewhat of your encouragements; let that allay all fear. Need I tell you, you are hereby endeavouring but due returns from England for its eminent deliverance from extreamest miseries, and those unavoidable to humane view. You are preventing those calamities which will return with aggra-
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aggravations, if these evils be not reform-
ed, Exxra ix. 13, 14. You are providing
the surest way to revive our trade, pro-
long our peace, and recover England's
 glory. If you succeed, bodies and minds
will be freed from the sad effects of the
debaucheries, which are as fatal as appa-
rent. You lay the best foundation for
peace among the divided parties in this
nation, who will, when vertuous, easily
coalesce, and be free to take away all un-
necessary causes of division.

Your very meeting together, and joint
concurrence in this laudable employment,
will conciliate your minds, and melt them
down into moderation, which is a temper
so necessary, and upon which our happi-
ness so much depends, that I dare deliver
this prognostick: England can never be
fixedly happy in its religious, or civil con-
cernments, but by an UNION between
the moderate churchmen, and the moderate
dissenters.

You befriend your own children and
posterity, by preventing the infection that
may ruin them. Many other arguments
might be urged—Oh that these and all
others made use of by the several reverend
ministers in both places of your meetings,
may by the blessing of God invigorate your
minds in this attempt, and dispose trans-
gressors to submit thereto.

And surely whatever is a motive to the
physician to endeavour the cure, is much

E  e more
more forcible with the diseased to admit it: VI. Is endeavouring the reformation of you, oh sinners! so plainly the duty of this society, and worth their utmost pains and charge; and can it be a light thing, whether you will be reformed, or no? Oh the testimony against you that shall arise from hence, if you be still uncleaned!

I shall give a few cautions.

1. With respect to the preliminaries to, and the first words of my text.

State not Christ's designs which you propose to serve by your hasty fancy, but his own plain adjustment of them; you are not for Christ by espousing an error; you act not with, or for him in opposing what he forbids not, or violently contending for what is indifferent, trivial, or doubtful; his kingdom's concernment lies in what is commanded, plain, and momentous.

And therefore let your endeavours be laid out in proportion to the evidence his word gives concerning things; and tho' it be too unusual, yet be you as earnest for what is important, and plainly commanded, and against what is flagitious, and plainly prohibited, as others are apt to be for trifles of their own inventing, or against sins of their own making.

And withal, be afraid, without higheft Scripture evidence well applied, to judge any men, or party of protestants, to be for or against Christ, in contradistinction from others: It would make a tender heart to bleed
bleed to hear two extremes apply that one text against men of a duer temper, How long halt ye between two opinions? If God be God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him. When more charity would better evidence either side to be the followers of Christ.

2. To you the members of the societies, with respect to your undertaking.

Think not lightly as to yourselves of such sins as fall not under the edge of the magistrate's sword: For tho' they are not so hurtful to human societies, and therefore not so provided against by the law of man; yet they are as contrary to Christianity, and inconsistent with it, as others be. Brutal sins are chiefly those you have the law on your side to punish: But be you alike watchful against devilish sins, such as malice, envy, pride, rancour, lying, &c. Guard also against infidelity, hypocrisy, carnal selfishness, and all impurity of heart; which, with the like sins, God reserves for punishment in endless flames.

Watch strictly that no scandalous practices of your own blemish or obstruct your undertaking; for you will be more observed than others, and your faults will induce a charge of hypocrisy upon all active instruments, tho’ never so sincere.

Let not your endeavours be blasted by any appearance of pragmaticalness, ostentation, folly, rage, vanity, making a sport of sin, revenge, or partiality;--but contrive things so, that the punished may be forced to confess,
Sermon to the Societies for Serm. confefs, its zeal for God, and love to them, which entirely govern you in this attempt.

VI. Take care that your ends, and the principle you act from, be approved by the heart-searching God; that so you may not lose your reward, nor forfeit his defence. And know, its possible for carnal selfishness to be the spring of actions advanced to the height of these, though so very excellent.

Go not out of your own station, neither use any unjustifiable means, lest you prove snares to others, or yourselves, instead of reformers.

Be tender of your neighbour's reputation, and therefore publish no man's faults, unless it be before the magistrate in order to civil punishments; or before persons authorised to inflict church-censures. Reproachful railing was never ordained by God or man, to be a reforming means; and he who chargeth you to speak not evil of one another, yea, of no man, will require at your hands all that obstructed service, and all afflictive damage-occasion'd by your reproachful language.

Attempt to convict no man of punishable crimes, where your proof is not full and evident; for thereby you'll discover your own folly and uncharitableness, baffle your great design, expose your neighbour to suspicion, and yourselves to danger.

Begin not with severest methods, where you hope milder will prevail; for its
Reformation of Manners.

its not cruelty but reformation is your honest aim; and the last is best attained, when the least of the first is needful.

Admit nothing to excuse your vigorous care to restrain sin, which will not bear your dying thought, in a view of God's tribunal.

Let nothing below or besides reformation be your design; and yet be not satisfied with the mere honesty of your intention, but use the best and justest ways which a well-informed mind directs, as likeliest to reach that end.

Trust not in your own heart, nor reckon success to be at your own beck; but depend on, and pray much to God for his conduct, defence, and blessing.

Limit not your resolution to persist in this blessed attempt by the continued assistance of others; for many, now vigorous, may cool in time, but your obligation will not cease by their backslidings.

Repent not of beginning this attempt, if you should meet with less success, and more trouble than you at first expected: For it was not well considered, if you did not count your costs; and your undertaking may be well managed on your part, tho' great success be wanting. But however unexpected trouble will not lessen duty, nor disappointment as to expected success, hinder your reward; nor will other men's faultiness be charged on you.

Allow not your spirits to grow lukewarm.
Sermon to the Societies for

Serm. warm and remiss in this work, when you have for some time applied yourselves to it, and attained some degree of reformation thereby. There is need of this caution, on these several accounts. Your endeavours will be faint, proportionably to the remissness of your spirit; time is apt to allay that fervour, which in the beginning of an enterprize is more common and natural; the need of reforming methods will continue, though you should find some reformation as to open impieties, for many defilements will abide uncleaned; corrupt nature will soon discover itself, when restraint diminishes, and the more violently, because a while kept in.

Set no bounds to the reformation you propose, short of what the laws of the land do countenance. Whatever evils they remark, do not you connive at, tho' they appear not so gross as those you at first encounter. Its wisdom in a very degenerate nation, to begin with the greatest crimes:

—But it will be unfaithfulness, when these are somewhat amended, to overlook the lesser; for they are evils, and will, if indulged, dispose men to return to such as are more atrocious.

Wisely prevent all divisions, quarrels, and sinister dealings in your own societies. Should you be uneasy to each other, your strength is broken, and the least injustice will fully your reputation, which is so absolutely necessary to your usefulness. The reason
reason why I caution you against divisions, is this: It too often happens, that forwardness in such attempts proceeds from a natural fervour, as well as a pure heavenly zeal; and as far as this natural fire is active, provoking insolence, and indiscretion, are hardly with the greatest care prevented, and what tendency the discovery of these have to quarrels and disgusts, is too obvious to insist on.

Happily would this work be carried on, if a divine zeal in sedate tempers directs it, and every one shall bear as much with each other's weakness, as he would in a profitable concern of his own. As to that part of the caution which relates to sinister dealings, I have no ground to suggest it, but that the holiest society here, may have a Judas; and whilst our nature is not wholly healed, we should be warned against Satan's devices.

Lastly, take heed that your societies degenerate not, nor be made to serve lower, or other purposes, than this of the reformation of manners. Earthly minds may debase their use, and designing men endeavour to pervert them. They now are duly managed to ends for which they deserve this glorious name: Oh let that name ever govern all your discourses, designs, and methods. He too little knows mankind, and the history of former times, that thinks this very caution needless.
Sermon to the Societies, &c.

Serm. The Lord impress these warnings, which faithfulness to Christ, and a great esteem of your undertaking, compelled me to deliver.

I shall conclude the whole by calling you to lament, with me, that the city and nation so hate to be reformed, that they who seriously attempt it, must bear the scoffs of most; and to be an informer against the obstinately vicious, is with them a reproachful title, tho' God records it for a commendation to men of highest rank, ver. 9, 12.

Let's bewail, that after all God's long use of reforming methods, we should still have so much need to be reformed. That text, Ezek. xxii. 24. is applicable to us: Say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed. And when we consider that the pestilence, the burning this city, the sword, loss of trade, growing poverty, and above all, the gospel means of grace, have been all so notoriously uneffectual to reclaim us, have we not great cause to pray that God pass not that sentence against us, which you find uttered by this same prophet, chap. xxiv. 13. In thy filthiness is lewdness, because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged; thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.

The END of the FIRST VOLUME.