Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/practiceoftruede00nelsiala

THE

PRACTICE

OF

True Devotion,

In RELATION to the

END, as well as the MEANS

OF

RELIGION;

With an OFFICE for the

HOLY COMMUNION.

Great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them. PSAL. cxix. 165.

Dum beatam quærunt vitam, beatam agunt; & dum adhuc ambiunt, jam consequuntur. S. EUCHER.

By *ROBERT NELSON*, Esq^r;

The Fifteenth Edition.

To which is added

The CHARACTER of the AUTHOR.

LONDON:

Printed for B. DOD, Bookseller to THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE; at the *Bible* and *Key* in *Ave-Mary Lane*. M.DCC.LXIV.

BV
4831
N33p

852442

THE

PREFACE.

THE *present* divided *State of* Christianity, *is so* Melancholy *a Consideration to all* Pious *and* Good *Men, who thoroughly apprehend the dreadful Consequences of it; that they do not more frequently* lament, *than they do most frequently* beg *of* God, *a* Sovereign Remedy *for those unhappy Divisions that prevail in the* World; *and* labour *as* earnestly *in their several Stations to suggest such* Methods *as may prove most effectual to preserve the* Unity *of the*

Faith; *and may have the greateſt Tendency to* reconcile *the* Minds *of Men to one another.*

It is but too manifeſt, that among the many viſible ill Effects *of* Parties, *we may reaſonably reckon, as a very conſiderable one, the great* Decay *of the* Spirit *and* Life *of* Devotion; *for while Men are ſo deeply concerned for their ſeveral* Schemes, *and* purſue *them with the* Vigour *of their* Minds, *and the* Bent *of their* Affections; *the* ſolid *and* ſubſtantial *Part of* Religion *is apt to* evaporate; *and* Charity, *the very Bond of Peace and of all Virtues, without which whoſoever liveth is counted dead before* GOD, *is but too frequently made a Sacrifice to thoſe Differences that divide us. Not that any one ſhould forbear* contending for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, *Jude* ver. 3. *according to the* Exhortation of the holy Apoſtle; *but that they ſhould* remember, *as the ſame* inſpired Writer *adviſes, when* they build up themſelves on their moſt holy Faith, *that they pray* in the Holy Ghoſt, and keep themſelves

themſelves in the Love of GOD; looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal Life, *ver.* 20, 21.

In order therefore to give ſome Stop to this growing Evil, *the following* Method of Devotion *is recommended to the conſtant* Practice *of all ſuch* Chriſtians, *who are not willing to content themſelves with only a* Form of Godlineſs; *and who are not deſirous to be found among the Number of thoſe that go ſuch a* ſanting Pace *towards* Heaven, *as if they were* indifferent *whether they arrived or no at thoſe* Manſions *of* Bliſs: *The Deſign whereof is to fix in their* Minds *the* great Duties *of* Religion, *and to give them Hints how to exerciſe the ſame in their Thoughts, Words, and Actions; and moreover to preſs them to a* frequent *and* ſerious *Uſe of the* Means *of* Grace, *with that Aim and Purpoſe, that they may be* transformed *by the* renewing *of their* Minds.

To make theſe more effectual, in the latter Part are added Prayers *for the*

Closet, *and for the* Family, *and at the* Holy Communion, *and upon other* Occasions *that require our Address to* GOD; *and the Whole contrived in so short a Compass, that it might be easily purchased by the* poorer Sort, *for whose Use this Undertaking was chiefly engaged in; and to whose Salvation I beg of* GOD *it may prove effectual.*

ROB. NELSON.

August 25, 1708.

THE

THE

CONTENTS.

THE Nature and Wiſdom of True Devotion, Page 1

CHAP. I.

A general Method for the Exerciſe of True Devotion, 27

CHAP. II.

That Chriſtian Perfection *conſiſts in the right* Performance *of ſuch Actions as ordinarily occur every Day,* 55

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Some Conſiderations in relation to the Practice *of Chriſtian* Virtues, *which is the great End of Religion,* Page 67

CHAP. IV.

For Sunday. *The Love of God,* 76

CHAP. V.

For Monday. *The Love of our Neighbour,* 85

CHAP. VI.

For Tueſday. *Humility,* 96

CHAP. VII.

For Wedneſday. *Patience and Reſignation,* 106

CHAP. VIII.

For Thurſday. *Of the Improvement of* Talents, *and* Co-operation *with God's Grace,* 117

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

For Friday. *Mortification*, Page 125

CHAP. X.

For Saturday. *Chaſtity*, 134

CHAP. XI.

Reflections relating to the Conquering *of any* Vice, 148

CHAP. XII.

To be fervent in Spirit, &c. *is an admirable Inſtrument of Chriſtian Perfection*, 154

CHAP. XIII.

General Reflections *upon that Devotion that relates to the* Means *of Religion*, 165

CHAP. XIV.

For Sunday. *Prayer*, 172

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

For Monday. *Reading the Holy Scriptures, and other Books of Piety,* Page 184

CHAP. XVI.

For Tueſday. *Meditation,* 197

CHAP. XVII.

For Wedneſday. *Examination,* 205

CHAP. XVIII.

For Thurſday. *Confirmation,* 217

CHAP. XIX.

For Friday. *Receiving the Holy Communion,* 226

CHAP. XX.

For Saturday. *Hearing of Sermons,* 244

A Morning Hymn, 256

An

An Evening Hymn, Page 259
A Midnight Hymn, 260
A Morning Prayer *for a Child*, 263
Evening Prayer *for a Child*, 264
A Morning Prayer *for a Perſon in private*, 266
A Prayer *for a Perſon that daily works*, 273
An Evening Prayer *for a Perſon in private*, 274
A Morning Prayer *for a Family*, 283
Evening Prayer *for a Family*, 289
A Prayer *for a ſick Perſon, to be added upon Occaſion, either to the Cloſet or Family Prayer*, 294
A Prayer *for a ſick Perſon, when there appeareth ſmall Hope of Recovery*, 295
A Prayer *for a Perſon under Trouble of Mind*, 297
A Prayer *before a Journey*, 298
A Thankſgiving *after a Journey*, 299
A Thankſgiving *for a Perſon recovered from Sickneſs*, 301
A Prayer *for a Woman drawing near the Time of her Travail*, 302
A Prayer *when any Perſon cometh into the* Church, 303

A Prayer

A Prayer *after the Service of the* Church *is ended,* Page 304
A Prayer *to be uſed by a Perſon preparing for* Confirmation, ibid.
A Prayer *after* Confirmation, 307
A ſhort Office *for the* Holy Communion, 309

Lately Publiſhed,

(A Book highly Neceſſary for all Chriſtian Families, being a moſt uſeful Companion for the Reading and rightly Underſtanding the Holy Scriptures)

THE Arguments of the Books and Chapters of the Old and New Teſtaments, with Practical Obſervations. Written Originally in *French,* by the Rev. Mr OSTERVALD, Profeſſor of Divinity, and one of the Miniſters of the Church at *Neufchatel* in *Switzerland:* And by him preſented to THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE. Tranſlated by JOHN CHAMBERLAYNE, Eſq;

In THREE VOLUMES, 8vo.

The FOURTH EDITION,

Reviſed, Corrected, and very much Enlarged from the Folio Edition printed at Neufchatel, 1744.

Price Bound *only* 12*s.*

Printed for B. DOD, at the *Bible* and *Key* in *Ave Mary Lane,* near *St Paul's.*

ON

Mr *NELSON.*

SUCH were the Lines;—ſuch Majeſty and Grace
Choſe to erect their Throne in NELSON's Face:
Where'er that pleaſing Form did once appear,
The World confeſs'd,—the Chriſtian Hero's here.
Shall then ſo bright a Name forgotten lie!
Tomb'd with his *Duſt* ſhall his *Remembrance* die?
His Kindred Saints, with juſt and pious Care,
To After-Ages he recorded fair;
Let NELSON now himſelf adorn the *Calendar.*

ONCE in an Age Heav'n ſuch a Pattern lends,
Its Foes to ſilence, and ſupport its Friends.
What Virtue did his ſhining Worth compleat?
Gen'rous, not Proud; without Ambition Great:

To others mild, as to himſelf ſevere;
Poliſh'd, tho' Learn'd; Obliging, yet Sincere;
Juſtly with Admiration ſeen and read;
For all muſt own the Chriſtian was well-bred.
His Goodneſs ſuch, as if no native Taint
Had reach'd his Soul; as he were born a Saint:
Diffuſing round an unaffected Smile,
Calm as his Speech, and even as his Stile:
His Stile, as Logic cloſe, and ſweet as Song;
Tho' ſhort, yet full; tho' plain and eaſy, ſtrong.
The Writer moſt, but all the Man eſteem:
For few could write, and fewer live like him.
Unſtain'd his Youth by criminal Deſire,
Nor glow'd his Breaſt with ought but Heav'nly Fire.
What Manly Strength, with flowing Sweetneſs join'd,
Adorn'd at once his Works, and Face, and Mind?
How wide did his Beneficence extend?
Above the Meanneſs of a private End:
The faireſt Judge, and the beſt-natur'd Friend.
What Candor, NELSON, did thy Life adorn?
How large thy Soul!—Thou for the World wert born:
Old *Albion*'s Cliffs, with rugged *Cambria*'s Wild,
And fierce *Ierne*, heard thy Name and ſmil'd:
Thy Name the tawny *Malabar* has known,
Beyond the wide *Atlantic* Gulf 'tis flown.
Nor ought ſo mean as Gold thy Cares employ'd,
Nor ſordid Self, deſtructive while enjoy'd;

But

But that for which thy LORD a Ranſom gave,
Which coſt the precious Blood of GOD to ſave.
Exalted Worth, like thine, Applauſe commands
From warring Factions and contending Lands:
The *Romiſh* Schiſm and ours in this agree,
And wonder at each other's Charity.
No narrow Party NELSON's Love confin'd,
But, like the Sun, it ſhone on all Mankind;
The Cottage and the Palace bleſs'd his Rays,
Ador'd the Maker, and the Work did praiſe.

IN Words that match'd his Senſe, ſublime and neat,
He taught the Noble to be truly Great:
To emulate alone in Virtue's Striſe,
And ſcorn the Trappings and the Gauds of Life;
To know 'tis more, far more of true Renown,
Ourſelves to conquer than to ſtorm a Town.
The Men of Letters might from NELSON learn,
What always not the greateſt Clerks diſcern;
Truth and fair Manners too (at once) retain,
Nor ſtrive unlawfully, nor ſtrive in vain.
His *well-weigh'd Judgment* could avoid Extreams
Of formal Seemings, and Enthuſiaſt Dreams.
Who made the compound Man, demands him whole,
Not thoughtleſs Matter, or unbody'd Soul:
His Inſtitutions are for both deſign'd,
To rule the Body, and to raiſe the Mind;

For both did NELSON's Pen and Life contend,
Nor careleſs of the Way, nor mindleſs of the End.
His Stations fix'd, as the returning Year;
Yet nought to ſee of haughty or ſevere:
No *Pharaſaic* Gloom did e'er diſgrace
GOD's Image, well expreſs'd in NELSON's Face.
The four *Judean* Youths did thus appear,
Who homely Pulſe preferr'd to Regal Fare.
Thus *Moſes*, when for forty Days he trod
The Heights of *Sinai*, and convers'd with GOD,
What Glories then, too pow'rful to be born,
What doubl'd Splendor did his Heav'nly Face adorn?
——But milder Luſtre we in NELSON ſee,
Rebated by his Veil of Modeſty;
Yet ſtill renew'd:——As ſoon the Sun to ſet,
As he his Lauds and Veſpers could forget.
He * oft, when Night with *holy Hymns* was worn,
Prevented Prime, and wak'd the riſing Morn:
Nor needed the *Carthuſian*'s Mattin Bell,
Which drags the drowſy *Hermit* from his Cell.
Unforc'd by Vows, his pure Devotions riſe,
And voluntary flow, like Streams in Paradiſe.
With *Praiſe* he made the *Sabbath* yet more bleſs'd,
The Means and Emblem of Eternal Reſt.
Taught how to take the myſtic *Bread* and *Wine*,
T' adore the Subſtance, nor neglect the Sign;

Nor

* This I perſonally know to be true, He ſung Biſhop KEN's Hymns.

Nor thoſe deſpiſe, to whom Commiſſion's giv'n,
Thro' all the World, to deal the *Dole* of Heav'n.
Tho' ſome their Paſtors Lives with Rigour ſcan,
And prize the Office as they like the Man;
What ſhining Virtues in the *Prieſt* appear,
Their gracious Condeſcenſion may revere:
But if a *Judas* Heav'nly Tidings tells,
Their Hate of Sin preſerves them Infidels.
NELSON more wiſe, their empty Scoffs diſdain'd,
Since Weakneſs makes not the *Commiſſion* feign'd.
A juſt Reſpect could for the Office find,
(Yet deep his *Learning*, yet enlarg'd his Mind)
Nor paid *implicit* Faith, nor ſhew'd Obedience blind.

He ſhew'd that *Warmth* and *Strength* might well agree,
In ſober, ſtrong, affecting Piety.
Nor e'er ſhould Reaſon and Devotion part,
The cooleſt Head ſuits beſt the warmeſt Heart.
Yet, Champion for the Faith, he wiſely knew
How ſmall a Proſpect terminates our View:
That Infinite no Finite comprehends,
That here our Faith begins, and Reaſon ends.
He ſtrove for Truth, nor ſought, yet gain'd Applauſe;
His Candor Praiſe, if not Conviction, draws,
Far as a Mortal can, deſerving of his Cauſe.
For Zeal and Moderation well agree,
And conſtant Firmneſs hurts not Charity.

He

He oft the Way has to thoſe Wand'rers ſhown,
Who Reaſon idolize;——but 'tis their own:
Who meaſure Faith by Mathematic Line;
By Human Wiſdom would correct Divine:
At all their empty Vauntings undiſmay'd,
Their Schemes he in the *Sacred Balance* weigh'd:
The *Scale* flew up, their *Proofs* than *Air* more light,
Triumph'd the *Faith*, and *Error* fled to *endleſs* Night.
With *pious* Zeal the *frozen* World he warm'd;
And thus againſt each ſly Seducer arm'd:
" Shall Truth for long Poſſeſſion leſs be priz'd?
" Becauſe 'tis Venerable, be deſpis'd?
" What is Eternal, never can decay,
" 'Tis ſtill in Bloom, while Ages roll away:
" *Falſhood*, like *Vice*, is wither'd while 'tis new,
" Not all its Paint can hide its odious Hue.
" Beware the *Hag*, beware that *Syren* Face!
" Death's in her *Smiles*, and Hell in her *Embrace.*"

Nor was his Soul of ſo confin'd a View,
As what was *Good* to ſlight, becauſe 'twas new.
Nothing was e'er of Public Uſe propos'd,
But with the Project Nelson warmly clos'd;
Turn'd, and improv'd, and brought at laſt to bear,
Supported by his Bounty and his Care.
He ne'er unaided could his Saviour ſee
By Sickneſs preſs'd, or Chains, or Penury.

All

All Shapes of Woe his gen'rous Pity mov'd,
His Maker's Face he ſaw, and ſeeing lov'd.
Yet farther Love his Piety has ſhown,
Not to the Body's Wants, confin'd alone;
Inſtructing all to place their Hopes on High,
Reſign'd to Live, and innocent to Die.
'Tis kind to heal the Wounds th' Afflicted feels,
'Tis kinder ſtill preventing future Ills.
On Infants Heads behold his Bounty flows,
Preſerv'd from Guilt, and ſure attending Woes;
Their Manners form'd aright with early Care,
Ere blaſted yet their Bloom with tainted Air.
'Tis *This* muſt ſtop th' Infection of our Crimes,
And firm Foundations lay for brighter Times:
For *This*, to GOD are ſolemn Praiſes giv'n,
And *Crowds* of *Orphans* ſend their *Songs* to Heav'n.
O glorious Alms! O Goodneſs beſt deſign'd!
To feed the Body, and to ſave the Mind.
Our SAVIOUR, Gracious, gave his Hearers Bread,
His Sermons teaching whom his Wonders fed.

How far diffus'd is Charity diſcreet!
How vaſt th' Advantage to be Good and Great!
How *Godlike* may the Rich their *Bleſſings* ſhow'r,
Whene'er their Will is equal to their Pow'r!
How wide their Pow'r to benefit Mankind!
Who Mercy ſhew, only ſhall Mercy find.

What various *Good* the *Theme* of NELSON's Thought,
Who living practis'd what he dying taught?
What Heat divine his lateſt Counſel breathes!
He leaves his Art, as he his Soul bequeaths.
Let this, ye *Mighty*, your Ambition be,
T' improve his friendly, noble Legacy.
The Benefactor-Saint is now no more:
Be griev'd, ye Virtuous, and lament, ye Poor;
Since not till we another NELSON find,
His Loſs will be repair'd to all Mankind.

LET Friendſhip's ſacred Name at leaſt excuſe,
This laſt Effort of a retiring Muſe:
For NELSON oft ſhe ſtrung her humble Lyre,
And on his Tomb may decently expire.

S. W.

THE

NATURE and WISDOM

OF

True Devotion.

The INTRODUCTION.

Treating of Devotion in General.

THERE are too many, God knows, in all Communions, who place all their Devotion in the *Means* of Religion; provided they pray cuſtomarily, hear many Sermons, and ſometimes receive the holy Communion, they conclude the Man

of God made perfect; they think nothing more neceſſary to entitle them to the Favour of the Almighty; or if they are ſenſible they fall ſhort of their Duty in other Particulars, yet they flatter themſelves, that their Exactneſs in the external Parts of Religion will make Amends for all ſuch Defects. Whereas, in Truth, the Deſign of all thoſe Means of Grace God has eſtabliſhed in Chriſtianity, was to conduct us to ſolid and ſubſtantial Piety, to plant in our Minds the Love and Fear of God's holy Name, and an utter Abhorrence of every Thing that is Evil; to make us juſt and upright in all our Dealings with our Neighbour, temperate in all our Enjoyments, charitable towards the Needy and Afflicted, and zealous for the Salvation of our Brethren: And farther, ſo to ſpiritualize our Affections, that they might be raiſed above the trifling Concerns of this periſhing Life, and fixed upon a Good that is everlaſting and immutable. So that if we do not uſe them to this End and Purpoſe, they will no ways be acceptable in God's Sight, but rather provoke his Wrath and Indignation againſt us, and increaſe our Condemnation, in that we pervert the very Means of our Recovery.

To

To Pray frequently, to Read and Hear the holy Word of God, to Receive the bleſſed Sacrament, to Faſt, to Examine ourſelves, to Meditate upon divine Subjects, are all holy and Chriſtian Actions, what God requires from us; and therefore, without Doubt, the Performance of them, as they are fit to promote our Salvation, ſo they tend to his Honour and Glory: But yet, if this were the only Path that leadeth to eternal Life, there would not be ſo few that find it. God expects that we ſhould become New Creatures; that the prevailing Temper and Bent of our Souls ſhould be, to bring forth all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs; that we ſhould ſacrifice to him our darling Paſſions and Inclinations, and whatſoever oppoſeth his divine Will. The Victim we ſhould offer, ſhould be the Idol of our Heart, that which corrupt Nature moſt inclines us to, that which bad Cuſtom confirms and nouriſhes in us. The Covetous are eaſily prevailed upon to renounce that Luxury of Life, that is maintained by the Extravagance of Expences. And Vanity may perſuade others to relieve the Neceſſities of the Poor, from that public Applauſe that is paid to Charity; but ſtill theſe Sacrifices are very imperfect, becauſe the darling Paſſion is

ſtill retained. In theſe Caſes, the vain Man muſt become Modeſt and Humble, and glory only in the Lord; and the covetous Man muſt abound in Alms-deeds, and fix his Mind upon durable Riches: The Choleric and Revengeful, may preſerve themſelves from the ill Effects of the tender Paſſions; and the Soft and Effeminate may find no great Difficulty to ſuppreſs their Reſentments: But if the Revengeful could be perſuaded to turn his Anger againſt himſelf, and the Man of Pleaſure to place his Delight in God, both might be numbered amongſt the truly devout. Therefore, we muſt uſe the Means of Grace, in order to overcome the irregular Motions of our own Hearts; in order to give up that to God, which Nature would reſerve for herſelf: This is the ſhorteſt and ſureſt Way.

And as we muſt uſe the Means of Religion, in order to the aforementioned End and Purpoſe, ſo we muſt not be partial in the Uſe of thoſe Means, pick out ſome, and leave out others. For we muſt look upon ourſelves in the Hands of God, as ſick Men in the Hands of an able Phyſician, who requires an exact Compliance with all his Preſcriptions; that ſome Medicines ſhould be taken at one Time, ſome at another, and that none be

be omitted; the Patient's Recovery depending not ſo much upon one Medicine, as upon the punctual Uſe of all he has directed: For want of this Obſervation, I am afraid, many fall ſhort in working out their Salvation; for God, who knows our Frame, and remembers that we are but Duſt, has ſuited the Means of our Recovery to the complicated Maladies of our Souls; ſo that if we neglect any of them, we may juſtly fear being diſappointed in attaining ſolid and ſubſtantial Piety, which is the true Health of our Minds.

THUS ſome lay the great Streſs upon Hearing of Sermons, as if the Knowledge of their Duty were the one Thing neceſſary. Others are ſo entirely devoted to the Prayers of the Church, that they have but a mean Opinion of thoſe Inſtructions that are delivered by the Prieſts of the Lord, *whoſe Lips are to preſerve Knowledge*; as if deſiring God to make us Good, were ſufficient, without the Knowledge of the Way and Manner of being ſo. Some depend upon their private Devotions, for mortifying the Deeds of the Fleſh, even to the Contempt of Faſting, as a Piece of Will-worſhip, though it is a Chriſtian Duty, enjoined for the bringing under our Bodies. Others are punctual

in their bodily Exerciſes, but neglect thoſe Prayers which are neceſſary to make them effectual. And thoſe who are engaged in the Uſe of ſome, or all of theſe Means, yet live in a moſt ſhameful Neglect of receiving the Holy Sacrament, as if that were no ways neceſſary to enable them to grow in Grace; whereas it was inſtituted to that very End and Purpoſe, that the Benefits of Chriſt's Death might thereby be conveyed to them. Therefore, if ever we ſincerely deſire to ſucceed in our holy Purpoſes, we muſt conſtantly and diligently make uſe of all thoſe Means which God has ordained towards the obtaining eternal Life; ſince it is by the joint Uſe of them all, that we are *made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

THERE is another Extreme, which I hope is the Caſe of but few; but ſince it is incident to thoſe who make the greateſt Pretences to Spirituality; it ought to be taken Notice of; which is, from a Purpoſe of greater Perfection, to lay aſide the ordinary Means of Grace, which God has eſtabliſhed: They frequent not the Inſtructions of God's Ambaſſadors, becauſe they find themſelves more enlightned from their own Meditations: They approach not frequently the holy Communion,

munion, to feed themſelves with the Bread of Life there diſtributed, becauſe they feel not thoſe Raptures, which they are ſupplied with from their own Contemplations: They ſeem to have a mean Opinion of all the holy Functions of the Prieſthood, becauſe the Men that exerciſe them are not animated with their Spirit.

Now that this is a great Deluſion, is apparent, becauſe it contradicts that Order and Method that God has revealed for the attaining everlaſting Happineſs. He has ſet apart an Order of Men under the Goſpel, on purpoſe to aſſiſt us in the great Buſineſs of our Salvation; He has given them Power to declare to us the Terms upon which it is to be obtained; they are the deputed Miniſters of Reconciliation, and therefore we ought to attend their Inſtructions: He has farther authorized them to adminiſter Sacraments, that we might be made Members of Chriſt's Body, and nouriſhed with all Goodneſs. Theſe holy Actions receive their Efficacy from the divine Inſtitution, which we muſt keep cloſe to, if we pretend to receive the Influences and Aſſiſtances of God's Holy Spirit. To enlighten our Underſtandings in the Knowledge of our Duty, to influence our Wills in the Practice of it, he has revealed to us the

holy Scripture, which, as it lays down the beſt Method for the attaining that Perfection we are capable of in this Life; ſo it furniſhes us with the beſt Arguments for the Proſecution of it: And though I am ſatisfied, that the Spirit of God does farther direct and excite thoſe that ſeriouſly and reverently apply themſelves to the Uſe of this Rule of Belief and Practice; yet they that lay it aſide, under Pretence of Inſpirations of equal Authority, have reaſon to doubt their own Inſpirations. For if they proceeded from the Spirit of God, they would put the greateſt Streſs and higheſt Value upon what has been ſtamped with his Mark, by being confirmed by the Teſtimony of Miracles, the Demonſtration of the Spirit, and what has been received by the Catholic Church, as the undoubted Word of God: Beſides, ſince it is agreed that we are unable of ourſelves to do any Thing that is Good; and that the Grace of God is neceſſary to ſtrengthen our Weakneſs, and to aſſiſt us in the Performance of our Duty; how can we expect the Influences of his Holy Spirit, if we neglect the Uſe of thoſe Means which are preſcribed by divine Inſtitution, to convey to us the Benefits and Advantages of it.

IT is certain, therefore, that as we ſhould not ſo rely upon any outward Performance, as to neglect the Improvement of our Minds, leſt our Faſting become an unprofitable Trouble, and our Prayers a vain Lip-Labour; ſo neither ſhould we pretend to inward Perfection, by ſlighting the outward Obſervances of Religion, leſt our Thoughts grow proud and fantaſtic, and all our Arguments prove but a Cover for Deluſion. A Man may be a bad Man, and uſe them all; and yet there is no being good without them.

FROM hence it appears, That *true Devotion* is not ſo properly a particular Virtue, as it is the Way and Manner of performing all the Inſtances of our Duty; and that it conſiſts *in a conſtant and ready Chearfulneſs of Mind in doing the Will of God, however manifeſted to us:* for this ſhews we are entirely devoted to his Service. It is an Earneſtneſs of Soul to be conformed in every Thing to the divine Pleaſure; ſo that the Covetous do not more eagerly long for Wealth, the Ambitious for Honour, and the Epicure for Pleaſure, than the devout Soul does to live in all the Commandments of the Lord blameleſs: That is to ſay, that he is ready to ſacrifice the Satisfactions of

Life, and to expoſe even Life itſelf, to gratify this Deſire, which inflames his Heart; all the Ways that lead to Heaven, are the Objects of his Delight; and he would willingly chooſe the moſt rugged and ſtraiteſt Way, provided it does but prove the ſhorteſt and the ſureſt.

THIS truly religious Temper of Mind, which we call *Devotion*, will put us upon enquiring into all the Particulars of our Duty, which we owe both to God and Man; we ſhall be at a Stand no longer than till we know the Way wherein we ſhould walk. The natural Language of ſuch a Soul is, *Lord, what wouldeſt Thou have me to do?* Let me but be acquainted with thy Will, and I am ready to obey it; nothing can abate his Courage, or cool his Zeal, in ſtedfaſtly purſuing what he is convinced God's Laws require from him.

HE bears with admirable Compoſedneſs all the various Humours of thoſe with whom he converſes, which too often diſorder and affect weak Minds. The Senſe of his own great Imperfections, neither diſquiet or diſcourage him, but make him more diligent to reform and amend them. His conſtant Employment is, to ſubdue his Paſſions, to quell thoſe Storms that are apt to ariſe in his Mind;

Mind; and he contemns all the vain Cenſures of worldly Men, which ſeek to ruffle and diſcompoſe him. He aims at Perfection, by an exact Performance of the Duties of that Station wherein the Providence of God has placed him. He lives not according to the Fleſh, but according to the Spirit; and is dead to the World, and to all the Cares and Enjoyments of it. He lays a greater Streſs upon doing his Duty, than upon thoſe outward or inward Conſolations that attend it. He is no ways terrified by thoſe Difficulties that are ſometimes ſtrewed in the Path of Life; they rather raiſe his Courage, increaſe his Reſolution, and make him more intent upon Victory. Proſperity and Adverſity appear to him no farther agreeable or grievous, than as they advance or hinder his great Deſign. He frequents not the Aſſemblies of the Men of Pleaſure; but ſets a greater Value upon his Time, than to conſume it in trifling and unneceſſary Diverſions. His greateſt Delight is, to mortify his Senſes, to live by Faith; well knowing, that the Things which are ſeen are Temporal, but that the Things which are not ſeen are Eternal. His chiefeſt Pleaſure is, to converſe with God; and therefore you find him ſo often in the Church and at

the

the Altar, as the ſureſt Places to enjoy Him here below. Whenever he appears in the Preſence of infinite Love, he adores with the loweſt Humiliation of Soul and Body. He frequents the public Prayers, and receives the Holy Communion with heavenly Affections, and with holy Impatience for the Bleſſings of God's Love. In the midſt of Buſineſs his Mind is upon Heaven; and even in Converſation with others, he ſilently breathes forth pious Ejaculations to the bleſſed Object of his Love and Deſire. He lives under a conſtant Senſe of God's Omnipreſence; and therefore he is not more upon his guard not to offend Him, than he is intent upon doing thoſe Things that are acceptable in his Sight.

And this his Devotion does not more influence his own Conduct, than appear amiable and pleaſing to all about him. For the *Sick* and *Needy* will love your Devotion, if they find Comfort and Relief from it. Your *Family* will love your Devotion, if it makes you Meek, Quiet, and Peaceable. Your *Superiors* will love your Devotion, if it makes you more Submiſſive and Obedient. And all *Men* will love your Devotion, if it makes you Faithful and Sincere, Courteous and Affable, ready to do all good Offices,

Offices, and to comply with their Inclinations, when it no way contradicts your Duty; and above all, if in the Practice of your own Exercises of Piety, you do not censure and condemn them when their Conduct is different from your own, and you do not think them obliged to govern themselves exactly by your Rules and Measures.

I AM very well aware, that the Description I have made of *Devotion*, somewhat differs from the common Apprehensions of Men concerning it. In Discourse, we generally understand by a *devout Man*, one who prays often, with all the Appearances of a Serious and Religious Mind; and the frequent Exercise of the Means of Grace, especially Prayer, seems to have engrossed the Character of Devotion. Now though this is so far true, that we in vain pretend to this spiritual Frame of Mind, except we employ the Vigour of our Souls in the sincere and attentive Use of all the Means of Grace, especially in frequent and fervent Prayer to God; yet we shall fall short of this Character, and the Reward that is prepared for it, if we stop here. These are happy Instruments of enabling us to work out our Salvation; but except we bring forth the Fruit of the Spirit,

rit, *Love*, *Joy*, *Peace*, *Long-ſuffering*, *Gentleneſs*, *Goodneſs*, *Faith*, *Meekneſs*, *Temperance*; except we *crucify the Fleſh*, *with the Affections and Luſts thereof*; except we *live in the Spirit*, *and walk in the Spirit*, we ſhall not *inherit the Kingdom of Heaven*, that infinite Happineſs that is promiſed to all devout Souls.

I AM very ſenſible this Practice of Devotion paſſes very often, in the Judgment of worldly and ſenſual Men, for Folly and Indiſcretion: It is blamed as carrying Things to an Extreme, as laying unneceſſary Burdens upon ourſelves; and they charge thoſe that purſue it, as not knowing how to accommodate themſelves to Times and Seaſons; as neglecting the true Meaſures and Rules of Things; they account his Life Madneſs; that he feeds himſelf with idle Fancies, and purſues them by an over-heated Imagination.

To deſtroy an Opinion ſo falſe in itſelf, and ſo injurious to Devotion, it is neceſſary to obſerve, that the Perfection of Wiſdom ought to have theſe two Qualifications; to propoſe the beſt End, and to chooſe ſuch Means as are fitteſt to attain it. Where the Firſt is wanting, our Labour may paſs for Folly, and the moſt ſerious Application may be

eſteemed

eſteemed a trifling Amuſement; and when we miſcarry in the latter, we reap nothing by our Pains but Diſappointment.

NOW if we meaſure the Conduct of the Devout by this Rule, pray, wherein is it defective? The only End they propoſe in all their Actions, is to ſerve Almighty God, the Fountain of their Being; and to prepare themſelves for the Enjoyment of Him, the Perfection of Happineſs.

WE commend a Man, who having it in his Choice, engages in the Service of a Prince who is wiſe and generous; who glories in being true to his Word, and never abandons thoſe that depend upon him: And by this Teſt, nothing can be more judicious than the Conduct of the Devout; for they give up themſelves to a *God*, who *only has Immortality*; who is incapable of not performing what he has promiſed, either through Treachery or Weakneſs; to a *Maſter*, who openly declares himſelf in Favour of all thoſe that belong to him, and makes every Thing *work for Good to them that love him*; to a *Maſter*, in ſhort, to whom every Thing ſubmits.

THE World, we know, has but a mean Opinion of thoſe, who have a Regard

gard only to the preſent; who do not apply themſelves to ſecure a comfortable and happy Old Age, and to eſtabliſh ſuch Fortunes as may make their Poſterity conſiderable: Although at the ſame Time, no Body can be ſure of lengthening their Days, or of leaving Children to enjoy their Acquiſitions. Can there be therefore any greater Wiſdom, than to carry our Views into Eternity itſelf, which will infallibly ſucceed to the few Years we live? And this is the Wiſdom of the Devout.

EVEN in *Politics*, where Prudence is thought to have its nobleſt and principal Employment, the moſt Diſcerning lay it down as an eſtabliſhed Maxim, always to have our chiefeſt Intereſt in View, to diſpenſe with Matters of ſmall Conſequence, and to ſacrifice inconſiderable Pretenſions, in order to ſecure thoſe that are eſſential. But what are all the Projects of the greateſt Princes, and of their ableſt Miniſters, in compariſon of that general End, at which all Men ought to aim? in compariſon of that Affair, where the Gaining or Loſing eternal Happineſs is concerned, and of loſing it without the Poſſibility of any Recovery? From whence it follows, that it is moſt reaſonable to neglect all Things,

Things, even Life itſelf, rather than not ſecure our Salvation, becauſe they are of much leſs Importance; and that the Devout, who, for this Reaſon little value what the World moſt eſteems, read a Leſſon of Prudence even to the Politicians themſelves, which has more intrinſic Worth in it, than all their boaſted Maxims.

BESIDES, they who are the great Maſters in Politics, do not only give great Affairs the Preference to thoſe of leſs Moment, but there is nothing they do ſo inconſiderable, that does not tend to advance their End: So that it may be really ſaid, they have but *one* Buſineſs. Their moſt indifferent Diſcourſe, their moſt common Actions, even their Diverſions and their Leiſure, are concerted and done with Deſign; for which Reaſon, all their Steps are narrowly obſerved, and as induſtriouſly ſtudied by others. Now this ſurely abundantly juſtifies the Prudence and the Zeal of ſuch, who are not ſatisfied only to labour for the chief End, and to have a ſort of Contempt for all other Things; but who think it neceſſary always to keep this End in view; to govern all their Thoughts and Actions ſo, that they may have ſome Tendency that Way; that every Thing may have

have a Reference to God and Eternity, and may in ſome manner prove ſerviceable to promote their eternal Salvation.

And the Devout are not more diſtinguiſhed by their Wiſdom, in propoſing the beſt End, than they are by thoſe Means they make uſe of in order to attain it. Now in this Choice, Prudence always prefers ſuch as lead to it with the greateſt Security and Expedition; and looks upon that Way to be the beſt, that is the ſhorteſt and the ſureſt. Therefore if they contemn the World, and its falſe Maxims; if they crucify the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts thereof, they follow the Dictates of infinite Wiſdom, who, when incarnate, not only recommended *Self-denial* and *Mortification* by his divine Precepts, but ſet us the Pattern of it by his own perfect Example: And who can guide us in the Paths of Bliſs ſo ſurely, as He who is *the Wiſdom of the Father?*

Yet if, after all, the World reproaches you for giving up yourſelf to a Life of Devotion; if it ridicules you for interrupting your Commerce with the Vain and Fooliſh, that is, the ſinful Part of Mankind; conſider from whence theſe Reflections come. Is it not from ſuch as think themſelves mighty prudent

prudent in doing that for the World, which you do for Heaven; who are ſo involved in Buſineſs or Pleaſure, that they have no Leiſure for the Concerns of their Souls; who, from the Maxims of falſe Wiſdom, ſubject Religion to their worldly intereſt, and even perſuade themſelves that Religion itſelf is but a Piece of Policy, which ought to be adjuſted to Times, and to the Neceſſities of temporal Affairs? Good God! ſhall it be Folly, Indiſcretion, and Madneſs, to do that *for* Thee, that the World does *againſt* Thee! and ſhall Zeal be never reaſonable, but when it ſupports Impiety?

BUT nothing does ſo ſenſibly juſtify the Wiſdom of Devotion, as that Peace, and Comfort, and Joy, that attends it upon a Death-Bed. There are then *two* Proſpects, which entirely employ the Mind of a Man, *viz.* what he has been, and what he is about to be: For ſtanding as it were upon the Brink of Time and Eternity, his Thoughts are divided between that Time which is about to conclude, and that Eternity which is about to begin; and according to what preſents itſelf upon theſe Views, the Man is either oppreſſed with Horror and Amazement, or comforted with Joy and Satisfaction.

Now,

Now, to a devout Man, who has made it the Buſineſs of his Life to ſerve God with all the Strength and Vigour of his Soul, the Reflection upon what is paſt, does in no wiſe make Death terrible to him; becauſe in going out of Life, he leaves nothing but what he has always contemned and deſpiſed, and carries with him what he judged worthy of his Love and Eſteem. His Body he parts with, without Regret, becauſe he has maintained a perpetual War againſt it, and now ſees it conclude by the entire Defeat of his Enemy; beſides, he lays it down in the Duſt, with a full Aſſurance that he ſhall receive it again *glorious*, *ſpiritual*, *and incorruptible*. His great Study has been to ſit looſe to the World; and he never valued his Riches, but as Inſtruments of doing Good. So that now they are about to vaniſh, he rather rejoices in the true Judgement he made concerning them, and triumphs, that by the Grace of God he was enabled to make ſo right a Choice in a Matter of ſuch Conſequence.

THE Remembrance of his penitential and retired Life, then fills his Soul with unſpeakable Comfort; and his Time, which has always been well employed, and rendered precious by ſo many fervent

fervent Exercises of Piety, by so many good Works, by so many excellent Virtues, presents itself to his Memory as a great Treasure, as a Heap of immense Riches, which will infallibly accompany him into the other World. Blessed be God! he descends not into the Chambers of Death naked and stript, neither does he leave behind him the Fruit of his Labour and his Pains; for these are Goods that he can carry with him, and are not to be shared among those that survive him.

THE precious promises of God, made to his faithful Servants, then raise him, under the Sense of his own Weakness; because he has been enabled, by the Power of his Grace, to attain, in some measure, those Virtues, which, for Christ's Sake, God has promised to reward; that Humility, which shall be exalted; that Mourning, which shall be comforted; those Tears, which shall be changed into eternal Consolation; that Contempt of the World, to which belongs the Kingdom of God; that Purity, which disposes for the beatific Vision; that Self-denial, to which is promised a Hundred-fold; and all those Works of Mercy, for which Heaven was prepared before the Beginning of the World.

AND

AND as what is paſt gives him rather Joy than Sorrow; ſo what is to come, renders his Joy full and compleat. For what is there in that terrible Judgement that follows Death, that ſhould frighten or amaze a truly devout Soul? What is there in that Judgement, that does not adminiſter to him Comfort and Support? It is true, an Inquiry will then be made into all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions; into thoſe Talents we have been entruſted with, and into the Uſe we have made of all thoſe temporal good Things which have been committed to our Stewardſhip; and this is juſt Matter of Horror and Amazement to thoſe, who have contemned and deſpiſed the Counſel of God, who have caſt his Laws behind their Backs, who have ſhewn no Regard for the Ways of Piety and Devotion. But to a regular Chriſtian, who has been fervent and zealous in his Maſter's Service, what more deſirable than an Account of this Nature?

A GENERAL, who in ſix Months Time has gained Battles, taken Towns, reduced Provinces; who has ſpared neither Labour nor Blood to make the Arms of his Prince victorious, what does he long for more, than to come to Court, to produce the Spoils taken from the Enemy;

my; to ſhew his Wounds, and to relate to his Prince the Detail of ſo glorious a Campaign? It is a terrible Thing to be obliged to give an Account of ſo great and ſo important an Adminiſtration, as that which we are intruſted with, when it has been the leaſt Part of our Care faithfully to diſcharge it; when the Intereſt of our Maſter has been totally neglected. But can any Thing be more grateful than giving an Account when Gains and Profits, and Increaſe can be pleaded? When we can ſay with the faithful Servant in the Goſpel, *Lord, thou gaveſt me five Talents; behold, I have gained five Talents more.* 'I acknowledge, O Lord, I ought to have 'made a greater Improvement of thy 'Gifts; however, I have not wrapt 'up my Talents in a Napkin, but, 'by 'thy Grace, I have been enabled to 'increaſe them. Thou haſt given me 'Riches, but I have not uſed them to 'ſupport Luxury and Vanity; the Poor 'have had their Share, as well as my 'Family; I have clothed thy Members, and adorned the Place where thy 'Honour dwelleth. Thou haſt given 'me the Command of Time; I never 'thought ſo great a Treaſure was granted me only to be trifled away: I have

'conſecrated

‘ conſecrated my Leiſure to the Medi-
‘ tation of thy divine Laws, to the Con-
‘ templation of the Chriſtian Myſteries,
‘ to the Inſtruction and Sanctification of
‘ others; my Viſits have been made to
‘ the Sick and Weak; my Buſineſs has
‘ been to comfort the Diſtreſſed, to pa-
‘ cify and reconcile thoſe Differences
‘ which have unhappily riſen among
‘ my Neighbours. Thou haſt given
‘ me Eyes, I have uſed them in read-
‘ ing pious and devout Books. Thou
‘ haſt given me Ears, which have been
‘ always open to thy Word, and to ſuch
‘ Diſcourſe as was edifying. Thou haſt
‘ given me a Tongue, whoſe greateſt
‘ Pleaſure has been, to ſpeak either to
‘ Thee, or of Thee. I have endea-
‘ voured to make a good Uſe of all
‘ thy holy Inſpirations. Thou haſt diſ-
‘ poſed me to Retirement, and I have
‘ avoided the Converſation of the great
‘ World. Thou haſt inclined me to
‘ mortify my Senſes, and I have de-
‘ prived myſelf of the moſt tempting
‘ Pleaſures. Thou haſt given me a
‘ Deſire to pray, and I have perſiſted
‘ in it, in deſpite of all Diſcourage-
‘ ments. Thou haſt required me to love
‘ my Brother; and Thou knoweſt, O
‘ Lord, I have never omitted praying

‘ for

'for my Enemies. Thou haſt ſent me 'Sickneſs, and I have born it with Pa- 'tience, without Murmuring; great Loſ- 'ſes, and I have bleſſed thy holy Name; 'Calamities and Afflictions, and I have 'received them with Thankſgiving.'

WHEN Accounts are in this State and Condition, there is Joy and Comfort in the *Examination* of them. And the well-grounded Hope of God's Favour, and of receiving that joyful Sentence, *Come, ye Bleſſed*; is ſo great a Source of Conſolation in that gloomy Seaſon, upon the Approach of Death, when the Men of this World are ſeized with Trembling and Aſtoniſhment, that it is impoſſible to expreſs the Satisfaction and Tranſport of a devout Soul, upon the Point of concluding a toilſome and laborious Life, expoſed to ſo many and ſo great Dangers; and ready to take Poſſeſſion of thoſe durable Riches, thoſe laſting Honours, and thoſe never-failing Pleaſures, which are at God's right Hand for evermore.

So that if the Love of the moſt perfect and moſt amiable Object is Wiſdom; and if the continual and delightful Enjoyment of what one loves, and the certain Expectation of enjoying it eternally, may

be accounted Pleaſure: I hope the devout Man's Choice may be ſufficiently juſtified. *Grant only, O Lord, who haſt prepared for them that love Thee ſuch good Things as paſs Man's Underſtanding, that my Heart may be inflamed with ſuch Love towards Thee, that I loving Thee above all Things, may obtain thy Promiſes, which exceed all that I can deſire, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

THE

PRACTICE

OF

True Devotion,

In Relation both to the

END and MEANS

OF

RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

A general Method for the Exercise of True Devotion.

BEFORE I come to treat of particular Virtues, which are the *End* of *Religion*, and of those Methods which are established for the attaining of them, which are the *Means* of *Religion*,

I design to lay down some Rules for the general Conduct of a Christian Life; and to acquaint Men at the same Time, with those Occasions and Opportunities when they may put them in practice. None ought to be surprised if they find some Difficulty at the Beginning in making use of them: The first Attempts in any Thing that is excellent, are always attended with Labour and Pains; but if Men will be persuaded to persevere in them for a Season, with some degree of Resolution, Custom and the Grace of God will quickly make them easy and pleasant.

I. Rising. As soon as thou awakest from Sleep, dedicate thy first Thoughts to God, whose Providence has preserved you from the Dangers of the past Night; adore his Goodness, and express your Thankfulness in some short Ejaculations; exercise your Love and Affection towards Him, or any other Virtue your Thoughts shall suggest to you: And in order that the devout Soul may be provided with fit Materials for this Purpose, I cannot but advise the getting the Three *Hymns* without Book, for *Morning*, *Evening*, and *Midnight*, which are added at the End of this Treatise, among the Devotions. The Trouble

Trouble of charging your Memory will be quickly paſt, the daily Repeating of them will make you perfect in them, but the good Fruit of them will abide with you all your Days. Uſe yourſelf to a conſtant Hour of Riſing, and continue in your Bed no longer than you have offered up your firſt Thoughts to God: This will prevent Lazineſs, and hinder vain, looſe and extravagant Thoughts, which will be ready to riſe in our Minds, when we amuſe ourſelves in Bed long awake. In Dreſſing yourſelf, you may reflect upon the true End of Clothing; which was, to preſerve Modeſty and Health, to diſtinguiſh Quality and Sex; which will be uſeful to guard you from Vanity and Pride: And in all thoſe Actions that relate to Dreſſing, let no Lightneſs or Immodeſty ever appear: Remember to reverence yourſelf.

II. Morning Prayer. You muſt be ſure never to omit your Morning Devotions, however preſſing and urgent your Buſineſs may be. I will ſuggeſt to you the Method of it, in that Part of this Treatiſe which relates to the *Means of Religion*. We cannot reaſonably expect the Bleſſing of God upon our temporal Affairs, if we do not beg it of him with

entire Submiſſion to his Will and Pleaſure; neither can our ſpiritual Affairs ſucceed, without the Aſſiſtance and Direction of his Grace, which we muſt always implore by fervent and diligent Prayer. When we are retired for our Devotions, we ſhould entertain ourſelves with reading ſome Portion of the holy Scriptures; and beſides, if we feed our Minds with peruſing ſome good Books, though for a quarter of an Hour, we ſhall receive great Profit and Advantage from it; the Subject will be apt to occur to our Thoughts in thoſe Minutes of the Day when we are moſt at Leiſure, eſpecially if we have digeſted what we read by ſerious Meditation. It will be alſo very proper to conſider with thyſelf, what Opportunities may preſent of ſerving God that Day, and what Temptations may offer to offend him; that you may be prepared, by a fixed Reſolution, to embrace the one, and to avoid and ſhun the other. They who govern a Family, muſt charge themſelves with it as their Duty, to call them together every Morning to worſhip God. They are anſwerable for the Souls of thoſe that are under their Care, either Children or Servants; and this Practice is the beſt Method to make them dutiful and obedient, and ſerviceable in their different Stations.

III. Public

III. PUBLIC PRAYER. Thoſe whom the Providence of God has intruſted with a great Command of their Time, cannot better employ it, than by attending daily the Service of the Church, ſo admirably contrived to nouriſh the Devotion of all her Children; and indeed the Nature of their Circumſtances ſeems to require it from them. And there are very few that are very much involved in worldly Affairs, but ſpend more Time than that requires, in Diverſion or vain Amuſements; ſo that if the Men of Buſineſs were as intent upon working out their Salvation, as they are upon heaping up Riches, and growing Great, they would certainly ſo contrive their Affairs, as frequently to dedicate half an Hour in four and twenty, to the public Service of God. A Mind thoroughly warmed with the Love of God, need not be preſſed to this Duty; it is the Delight of ſuch to *dwell in his Courts, to be thankful unto him, and to ſpeak good of his Name.*

IV. BUSINESS, *or our Calling.* Take Care to diſcharge all the particular Duties of that Eſtate and Condition wherein the Providence of God has placed you, with Juſtice and Induſtry, and wiſely to ma-

nage your Time, of which you muſt one Day give a ſtrict Account.

If you are under a Neceſſity of working for your Living, bleſs God that he has by this Means ſecured you from Idleneſs, the Root of all Evil: And of what Nature ſoever your Employment is, exerciſe it with Juſtice and Fidelity. If a plentiful Fortune has ſet you above any Calling, remember it is your Buſineſs to manage your Eſtate to the beſt Advantage; to govern your Family with Prudence and Piety; to adminiſter Juſtice in your Country diligently and impartially; and to attend to the publick Affairs of the Nation, with a firm Reſolution, in all your Proceedings, to aim at the Good and Welfare of the Church and State. You muſt not conſume your Time in impertinent Viſits, and in trifling Converſations, and in continual Diverſions, or in unaccountable Sloth; for Mirth and doing nothing was never deſigned for the Buſineſs of Life. Unhappy is that Man, whoſe whole Employment is Gaming and Debauchery, and ſtudies only for ſome new Diverſion.

In whatever Condition you are, ſome Employment may be found out, uſeful either to yourſelf or your Neighbour. And in the Labour either of Body or Mind,

Mind, prescribe to yourself a Distribution of your Time, for every Thing you have to do every Day; and observe exactly the Regulation you have pitched upon: By this means Time will never lie upon your Hands, and you will be delivered from many Temptations of offending God.

BEFORE you begin your Work, or any other of your Actions, offer them to God, if you design they should be acceptable to him. *O my God! it is to comply with the Order of thy Providence, and to obey thy holy Will, that I engage in my worldly Affairs; make them serviceable to my Subsistance and thy Glory, and to the Salvation of my own Soul.* During your Work, frequently raise up your Mind to God, to renew the Intention you have of pleasing him; and take care that Vanity and Curiosity, that Self-love, and a Regard to Men only, or some other evil Intention, does not slide in to corrupt your Actions. Do not think, that by this I lay too great a Burden upon you; for a short Ejaculation is quickly made, and a little Reflection upon the Virtue I shall afterwards recommend to your daily Meditation. What Pity is it to see how some Men consume themselves by the Labour of their Bodies and Minds, who endure

a great deal, and yet, when all is done, it no ways contributes to the Advancement of their great Intereſt, their eternal Salvation? Now whence does all this proceed, but either from the Defect of their Intention, having no Thought of pleaſing God; or elſe from a bad Intention, aiming at Vanity or Self-love in all their Actions; both which may be remedied, by offering up all our Actions to God before we begin them, and in each of them to aim at his Honour and Glory.

In all your Actions equally avoid two dangerous Extremes, *Negligence* and *Overearneſtneſs*. Every Thing we do, ſhould be done to the utmoſt of our Ability and Capacity; God and Men expect this from us.

Never ſuffer yourſelf to be oppreſt by the Multitude of Affairs; and though Diligence is neceſſary and commendable, yet too great Concern and Eagerneſs muſt be avoided. When you graſp at too much at a Time, the Mind is diſtracted, and entirely diſſipated, or is fixed ſo ſtrongly upon what you are about, that you have no Leiſure, even for a Moment, to raiſe up your Mind to God: Beſides, if one undertakes too much, one cannot perform it as one ought, and with the Succeſs that is required; which creates Trouble and Uneaſineſs.

In

In all bodily Labour, avoid all provoking, angry, or impatient Words, which Wearineſs and Painfulneſs, that proceed from Working, are apt to incline Men to. As to this Reſpect, be upon your Guard; for what can be greater Folly, than to vent ourſelves upon animate or inanimate Things, when our Work does not ſucceed as we deſire?

If your Employment confines you to the more agreeable Labour of the Mind, ſhun Negligence and Curioſity; propoſe not Vanity as the End of your Studies, and never read Books that may endanger the Purity of your Mind, or ſhake the Firmneſs of your pious Reſolutions. It is much better to know leſs, than to deface the Beauty of your Morals by ſuch Studies as may be apt to corrupt them.

If the Management of a Family is made your Province, be ſure not to neglect it. How many Men and Women paſs their Time in Gaming, Viſits, and Diverſions, without concerning themſelves in the leaſt with their Children or Servants. If theſe periſh everlaſtingly thro' your Neglect, and for want of that Chriſtian Education and Care which you owe them; how great will be your Condemnation at the Day of Judgment?

V. MEALS. Let the Times of your neceſſary Eating be conſtantly regulated; and never ſo far ſacrifice to your Appetite, as to be guilty of any Exceſs. By this means God's good Creatures will not be abuſed, and your own Health will be preſerved firm and vigorous, which ſuffers very much when Nature is frequently overloaded.

NEVER ſit down to the Table till you have begged God's Bleſſing upon thoſe good Creatures provided for your Uſe; ſince it is by the *Word of God and Prayer* that they are ſanctified to us. And as ſoon as you riſe from the Table, thankfully acknowledge the Refreſhment you have received. The Principles of natural Religion teach us Gratitude; and this particular Inſtance of it, has ſufficient Ground from the Example of Chriſt and his holy Apoſtles; all the Evangeliſts declaring, that our Saviour *Bleſſed and gave Thanks before Meat.* And St *Paul* ſpeaks of it as the known Practice of the Chriſtians in his Days, *Rom.* xiv. And if you happen to be at a Table where this Chriſtian Practice is neglected, reprove by your Example, and ſilently perform what the Maſter of the Family ought to have diſcharged after a publick manner.

GOOD

GOOD Chear naturally inclines us to Mirth and Freedom, which we muſt take care to make innocent. Any Diſcourſe that borders upon Immodeſty, any Raillery that wounds our Neighbour, is exceeding the Bounds of our Chriſtian Liberty.

LET no Complaiſance prevail upon you to tranſgreſs the Rules of Temperance; they muſt never be eſteemed your Friends, that preſs you to go beyond the Bounds of Chriſtian Meaſures; and the Example of no Man, be his Quality never ſo great, ſhould prevail upon you to make yourſelf a Beaſt. Never propoſe thoſe for your Pattern, whoſe Minds are ſet upon delicate Diſhes, and generous Liquors; whoſe chief Study is to provide for their Appetites; who are always complaining, and finding Fault with every Thing they eat or drink; and who place their chief Happineſs in ſenſual Enjoyments.

VI. CONVERSATION *and* DIVERSION. Great Care ſhould be taken in the Choice of the Company we frequent; becauſe if their Example be bad, it may by degrees corrupt our Virtue, at leaſt it may be apt to abate that Horror for

for Vice we ought to have, when we ſee it frequently committed by thoſe we love. It is much better being alone, than venturing ourſelves in the Society of Sinners: Our Security from the Infection of their Follies, conſiſts in keeping at a Diſtance from their Converſation. No general Rule to judge of Men by, holds with greater Certainty than the Company they keep, which, for the moſt Part, is like themſelves, or in Time will make them ſuch.

If by Accident you fall into the Converſation of Libertines and Evil-ſpeakers, never be ſo complaiſant and faint-hearted as to comply with the Liberties they take, or to ſupport a Diſcourſe which contradicts the Maxims of the Goſpel, if you can poſſibly interrupt them, or with Addreſs turn the Converſation to ſome other Subject: But if theſe Attempts prove to no Purpoſe, let the Concern of your Countenance, your Silence, or the Coldneſs of your Anſwers, teſtify your Diſlike of ſuch Entertainment. Never conform yourſelf to ſuch ſupple Gentlemen, who, like Apes, do every Thing they ſee others do; who do not make their Duty the Rule of their Actions, but the Example of others. No Pretence of

Friend-

Friendſhip, good Company, or Diverſion, ſhould make us forget the Rule we ought to walk by.

NEVER pretend to divert the Company at the Expence of *Modeſty* or *Charity:* Such Sallies of Wit muſt be reſtrained, which reflect upon the Infirmities and Faults of our Neighbours, and betray the Corruption of our own Minds. Keep a particular Watch upon yourſelf in reſpect of *Detraction*, *Slander*, and *Evil-ſpeaking*, the Bane of Converſation, and a Vice ſo common at preſent, that even many ſtrict Profeſſors of Religion in other Things, are not altogether free from Guilt in this Matter.

CAREFULLY avoid two Extremes, which are apt to make Converſation criminal, *Melancholy*, and *too great Mirth.* The Firſt, whether it proceeds from ill Humour, or from any Thing that troubles us, inclines us to Paſſion and provoking Words: In this Temper we can bear nothing, nor be pleaſed with any Thing others do or ſay. The Other, which proceeds from a gay, facetious Temper, puts us upon too free, light, and immodeſt Words and Actions; makes us rally too much, talk too much, and expoſes us to many other Imperfections.

NEVER

NEVER give way to *Tranſports of Paſſion*, under any Pretence whatſoever: Offer your Reaſons with Strength and Mildneſs; and if they are not reliſhed, never trouble yourſelf upon that Account, becauſe by any indecent Warmth you get no Ground; ſo though you could this way puſh your Reaſons farther, yet you ought not to do it at the Expence of Peace and Charity, which is much preferable to any Thing elſe. If you are provoked by ſly Reflections, or any biting Raillery, let Modeſty and Silence ſerve inſtead of an Anſwer: Do not fear that your Silence ſhould be interpreted to your Diſadvantage; for ſince it appeared you did not want Words to advance your Reaſons, it will never be imagined you could not return the injurious Raillery you receive: And whereas the Diſpute is now no farther Reaſoning, but Quarrelling, it much more raiſes your Character to turn a deaf Ear to any provoking Reflections, than by returning them in their kind, of which there is no End, and which ſerve only to ſcandalize your Neighbour, and diſturb the Company.

IT is not ſufficient to be innocent in Converſation, by avoiding ſuch Faults to which it is moſt expoſed; but we muſt endeavour to make it *uſeful* and *advantageous*

tageous to one another. When any Accidents of Life are related, we ſhould draw ſuch Inferences from them, as may inſtruct as well as divert: We ſhould contrive it ſo, that Religion may have a Share in our Entertainments, but without Affectation, or bringing it in unſeaſonably. It is ſurpriſing that Chriſtians, whoſe main Buſineſs is the Care of their Souls, ſhould be ſo ready and eloquent to ſpeak upon any Subject that relates to this World, and yet ſo cold and indifferent when the Matters of God and Eternity are ſtarted. Religious Diſcourſe in its Seaſon is very profitable, and proves an admirable Incitement to Piety in thoſe that ſpeak, and thoſe that hear.

AMONG the ſeveral Objects that preſent themſelves to you in Converſation, be ſure to have a Guard upon your Senſes; reſtrain your Eyes from any immodeſt Glances, that they may not be fixed upon dangerous Objects. Several complain that their Minds are diſſipated and diſtracted, and that they are attacked by many Temptations; but this is not to be wondered at, becauſe they draw theſe Temptations upon themſelves, by looſe Converſation with Perſons of a different Sex; by unguarded Looks, by libertine Diſcourſes, and by dangerous Diverſions, which

which prove the very Temptations they complain of.

In *Diverſions*, we muſt conſider the *End* and *Deſign* of them, which is, to refreſh our wearied Spirits, to unbend ourſelves from the conſtant Application to Buſineſs, and thereby to fit and prepare us the better to diſcharge our Duties in our ſeveral Stations. Whatever contradicts this End, muſt be avoided; for we were not ſent into Life only to ſport, and pleaſe ourſelves; and Diverſion ceaſes to be ſo, when it is made our Buſineſs. We muſt alſo have a Regard to the Nature of them, that they be ſuch as tend to promote our Health, and at the ſame Time no ways impair the Vigour of our Minds; that they do not expoſe us to any dangerous Temptations, and become the Occaſion of offending God: Thoſe Pleaſures that are unlawful, are not ſo much as to be named among Chriſtians; and thoſe that are lawful, muſt be uſed with Moderation, and at ſeaſonable Hours, and ſuch choſe as moſt comport with the Gravity of our Chriſtian Profeſſion.

Gaming has been the Source of many and great Miſchiefs, and has ruined many Perſons in their Bodies and Souls; and in this Age, it deſtroys its Thouſands and ten Thouſands; eſpecially when Men

Men apply themſelves to it as a Trade, and propoſe Gain rather than Diverſion from it. Extravagance uſually attends it, as does Paſſion, Swearing, Cheating and Lying; and very often, Conſcience, Time, and an Eſtate, are ſacrificed to it altogether. Sober Perſons, that divert themſelves this way, muſt take Care that it does not conſume too much of their precious Time, and that it never intrenches upon the neceſſary Duties of the Family and Cloſet; that they never hazard more than they can conveniently ſpare; and that they never venture to win of others, what ſhould ſupport them and their Families; that their Minds are not agitated by various Paſſions, which endanger their Virtue; and that they avoid all Diſputes or Quarrels, which exaſperate Peoples Minds one againſt another; and above all, that they do not make a Buſineſs of what they ſhould uſe only as a Diverſion.

VII. READING. Food is not more neceſſary to our Bodies, than Reading the holy Scriptures and ſpiritual Books is for the Nouriſhment of our Souls. It is unaccountable to ſee how many Men amuſe themſelves with Trifles for Hours together,

together, and how few find Leiſure to peruſe practical Treatiſes of Religion. As bad Books are very pernicious, ſo good ones are very uſeful and profitable; they enlighten our Underſtandings, and teach us the Practice of Piety and Holineſs; they ſtir up our Wills, and inflame our Affections, and make us readily chooſe and purſue the Service of God; they are Preachers ready at hand, that we may conſult with when we have a Mind to it.

It is better to read a little with Attention, than to read a great deal, and be never the better for it. Let not Curioſity, and a Thirſt of Knowledge only, be the Motive of your Reading; but let your chief Aim be, to become thereby more holy and ſanctified. Sometimes in Reading, raiſe up your Mind to God, and beg his Grace to make it profitable to you; dwell a little upon any Paſſage that ſenſibly affects you, and conſider of the beſt Means whereby you may put in Practice what you have read.

Never ſuffer bad Books to be your Entertainment; ſuch as undermine the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, or corrupt the Purity of Morality, by putting fair Colours upon the worſt of Crimes,

Crimes, by ſtirring up our Paſſions to forbidden Objects, and by filling our Heads with romantick Notions of Love and Honour. Never pretend, that in ſuch Diſcourſes you will pick out the Good, and leave the Bad; the Reading of one Side will inſenſibly draw you on to another, and thoſe Trifles will ſo fix themſelves in your Imagination, that when you would get rid of them, you will not be able: Beſides, they who give themſelves up to the Reading of Romances and enormous Poetry, which generally inſinuate the groſſeſt Concupiſcence under the Notion of Love, are frequently ſo bewitched by them, that it takes up a great deal of their Time, and no Arguments can prevail upon them to quit ſuch an unjuſtifiable Practice.

VIII. EXAMINATION. Never go to Bed before you have called yourſelf to an Account for all the Actions of the paſt Day; nothing will contribute to your ſpiritual Advancement more, than this Method ſeriouſly and impartially performed. The Seeds of Vice will hereby be hindered from taking any deep root in your Heart, and evil Habits will never be able to prevail upon you, or to ſtrengthen

ſtrengthen and fortify themſelves. Recollect as much as you can the Thoughts, Words, and Actions, that have entertained you the Day paſt, whether you have not had vain, unclean, or revengeful *Thoughts?* Whether you have neglected to reſiſt them? Whether you have voluntarily indulged them? Or whether you have conſented to them?

As to your *Words:* Whether you have been guilty of Evil-ſpeaking, of paſſionate and angry Expreſſions, of any Falſhood in impoſing upon others, of any immodeſt or provoking Speeches? Profane Curſing and Swearing, are never practiſed by Chriſtians that take any Care of their Lives.

As to your *Actions:* Whether you offered your firſt Thoughts to God when you awaked? Whether you performed the Duties of the Cloſet, and Family, and with what Attention and Fervour of Mind? Whether you attended the Church Prayers, if you had the Command of Time? Whether you have been diligent and juſt in your Calling? Whether you have offered your ordinary Actions to God, with a Deſign to pleaſe Him? Whether, during your Buſineſs, you have had ſhort Aſpirations

tions towards Heaven? Whether you have ſaid Grace before and after your Meals? And whether Modeſty and Temperance has always accompanied them? Whether, in Converſing, you have avoided Vanity, Detraction and Pride? And whether you have taken Care to govern your Paſſions, and endeavour to make your Diſcourſe uſeful and profitable? Whether your Diverſions have been moderate? Whether they have not been the Occaſion of your offending God? If you have received any particular Mercies, Whether you have been thankful? If you have had Leiſure, how you have employed your Time? Whether in doing Good to others, or improving yourſelf, by reading practical Books of Religion? Now thus by recollecting the whole Time, and the Manner of ſpending it, from our riſing till our going to Bed, to which Purpoſe, a very few Minutes before our Evening Devotions will ſuffice, we ſhall very eaſily be enabled to anſwer the preceeding Queſtions; ſo that we may heartily beg God's Pardon for thoſe Sins we have been guilty of, take firm Reſolutions of avoiding them for the Time to come, and ſhew ourſelves thankful

thankful for thoſe Bleſſings he has beſtowed upon us.

IX. Evening Prayer. After you have called yourſelf to an Account, and have examined yourſelf, it will be proper to offer up your Evening Sacrifice of Prayer and Praiſe. Be ſure never to go into your Bed till you have reconciled yourſelf to God by hearty Repentance, and expreſſed your Sorrow if you have offended Him; till you have implored the Continuance of his Grace, and have recommended yourſelf to his divine Protection. This is your beſt Security againſt the Perils and Dangers of the Night; and who can tell, whether you ſhall awake again in this World! The ſame Reaſons that prevail upon you to call your Family together to worſhip God in the Morning, are equally as ſtrong for the Performing it in the Evening; nay, the Conveniency of doing it ſeems to be greater; for then the Family is not ſo much diſperſed, and they cannot pretend at that Time any Buſineſs for their not attending. Some Helps to Family and Cloſet Devotion ſhall be annexed under the Head of the *Means of Religion*.

X. Going

X. GOING TO SLEEP. As God was firſt, ſo let Him be the laſt in your Thoughts, when you compoſe yourſelf to Reſt. To this End, the *Evening Hymn* I recommended to the Charge of your Memory, will be of admirable Uſe; for when our Spirits are drowſy, they are not ſo fit for Invention, but we ſhall eaſily run over what lies ready in our Memories. If you awake in the Night, the Darkneſs and Solitude of it ſhould diſpoſe you to Seriouſneſs, and then it will be proper to repeat the *Midnight Hymn*, which will have this good Effect, at leaſt, that it will prevent trifling, looſe and impertinent Thoughts from crowding in upon you, and deliver many from thoſe terrifying Imaginations which are apt to ſeize them, when they ſuffer their Minds to rove upon all poſſible Dangers.

XI. SUNDAYS, and other FESTIVAL DAYS. The Lord's Day is obſerved among Chriſtians in Memory of our Saviour's Reſurrection; and we ſhould diſtinguiſh it by our Devotions, as much as it is by the Bleſſing we commemorate: You muſt be ſure to keep it holy, by abſtaining from the Works of your ordinary Calling; which become criminal, when God challenges the ſeventh Part of your Time for

his immediate Service; by not allowing yourſelf in any worldly Affair or Recreation, which may hinder your Attendance upon the Worſhip of God, or defeat thoſe Ends for which the Day was ſet apart from common Uſes.

You muſt not think it enough, not to profane it by common Uſes; but your Time muſt be employed in all ſuch religious Exerciſes as tend to the Glory of God, and the Salvation of your own Soul. You muſt never omit frequenting the public Places of God's Worſhip upon this Day; nothing but Sickneſs or abſolute Neceſſity ſhould excuſe you; for this was one End of its Appointment, that we might openly profeſs ourſelves Chriſtians; and all agree, that *Sunday* is profaned by the Neglect of it.

When you are preſent in the Church, you muſt take Care to behave yourſelf with all outward Decency, and to conform yourſelf to the Rules of the Church, by ſtanding, ſitting, and kneeling, as is enjoined; and you muſt uſe all theſe different Poſtures with ſuch Gravity and Seriouſneſs, as may demonſtrate how intent you are when engaged in God's peculiar Service, and yet without ſuch Affectations and Particularities as are apt to diſturb thoſe that are near you, and may give

Occaſion

Occaſion to others to ſuſpect you as acting a formal, hypocritical Part. You muſt endeavour to be at Church before the Service begins; and after your private Devotions, keep yourſelf in ſilent Meditation, that your Mind may be the better diſpoſed for the enſuing Duties; and never ſuffer yourſelf to talk with others till the Miniſter begins, either upon News or Buſineſs, which may diſtract you; avoid obſerving the Rules of Ceremony, in bowing to others, when Prayers are begun. In God's Preſence, your Attention ſhould be ſo fixt, that you ſhould not have Leiſure to mind any Thing elſe.

You muſt have a particular Regard to the Poſture of your Mind, that you join fervently in the Prayers of the Church; that you hear God's Word, and thoſe Inſtructions from the Pulpit with Reverence and Attention, and with a Reſolution to practiſe what you ſhall be convinced to be your Duty; that you offer your Charity, if there be any Collection, in Compliance with the Precepts that enjoin it, and with an Acknowledgment of God's Right to all you enjoy: and above all, that you receive the bleſſed Sacrament with great Humility and Devotion.

Take care you do not turn your Back upon the holy Table, when the heavenly

Banquet is prepared. I cannot understand how you can keep the Lord's Day as you ought, if you refuse any Opportunity that is then offered you of Communion with him, in the most solemn Act of his public Worship. If thou endeavourest to live like a good Christian, thou art certainly well prepared, and wilt find a gracious Reception from thy compassionate Saviour: But if thou refusest to come, when thou art called with so much earnest Kindness, thou neglectest thy own true Interest, and omitest an easy Testimony of thy Gratitude and Thankfulness.

In private upon this Day you should enlarge your ordinary Devotions, and should make the Subject of them chiefly to consist in Thanksgivings for the Works of Creation and Redemption; withal recollecting the particular Mercies you have received from the Bounty of God, thro' the whole Course of your Life. You should improve your Knowledge, by Reading and Meditating upon divine Subjects; you should instruct your Children and Servants in the great Duties of Christianity; you should visit the Sick and Needy, and administer to them Comfort and Relief: And if you converse with your Friends or Neighbours, season your Discourse with prudent and profitable Hints

Hints for the Advancement of Piety. Let your ſerious Frame of Mind be free from all Sourneſs and Moroſeneſs.

If you commemorate any of the Myſteries of our Redemption, as the *Incarnation*, *Crucifixion*, *Reſurrection*, or *Aſcenſion* of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, confirm your Belief of them, by conſidering all thoſe Reaſons upon which they are built, that you may be able to give a good Account of the Hope that is in you, and reſolve to practiſe all thoſe Duties that reſult from the Belief of them. Offer up your Praiſes and Thankſgivings to God, that he vouchſafed to conſider your miſerable and forlorn Condition; and that he was pleaſed to work your Recovery in ſuch a wonderful Manner.

When the Church ſets the Example of any Saint before you, conſider the Virtues he was moſt eminent for, and celebrate his Memory by the Imitation of his Piety.

XII. Faſting Days. Moſt of the Miſchiefs that happen to us in Life, are occaſioned by our ungovernable Appetites; and the indulging of them by our firſt Parents brought Death into the World; ſo that we ſhould uſe Faſting and Abſtinence, as a Means to keep them under Subjection and Government, and

as a Remedy againſt thoſe Evils which the ſatisfying of them to the full often expoſe us to. Our Saviour joins this Duty with Almſgiving and Prayer; and the Directions he has given in his admirable Sermon upon the Mount, concerning the Performance of it, ſuppoſes the Neceſſity of the Duty. It was all along obſerved by devout Men, and acceptable to God under the Old and New Teſtament, both as it was helpful to their Devotion, and as it became a Part of it.

Sometimes, when your Health will permit, abſtain from Eating and Drinking till the Evening, and then refreſh yourſelf ſparingly as to the Quantity, and plainly as to the Quality of your Food. At other times, upon thoſe Days when you do not avoid your ordinary Meals, abſtain from Variety, and from what is moſt nouriſhing and delicate, and what gratifies your Palate moſt, that you may by degrees get the Maſtery of your ſenſual Appetites; this Diſcipline is conſiſtent with the Works of your Calling, and you may thereby have more Leiſure for ſpiritual Exerciſes.

Upon your *Faſting-days*, be ſure to enlarge your Devotions *; reflect particularly upon the State of your Soul; bewail

* *See a Book entitled*, Motives and Directions to a conſtant Courſe of Chriſtian Devotion.

wail your Sins, and earneſtly beg God's Pardon: Contrive, if poſſible, to do ſome little Charity at thoſe times, which is the beſt Method to make your Humiliation acceptable to God.

In private Faſts, keep the Knowledge of them from others as much as you can, that you may not *appear unto Men to faſt.* Be careful not to cenſure others that do not tie themſelves up to ſuch Rules; do not value yourſelf upon ſuch bodily Exerciſes, nor think they will make Amends for the Neglect of more ſubſtantial Duties; theſe Things ought you to do, but not to leave greater undone: Above all, at ſuch times guard yourſelf againſt Moroſeneſs, Peeviſhneſs, or Fretfulneſs, which Faſting inclines ſome People to.

CHAP. II.

That Chriſtian Perfection conſiſts in the right Performance of ſuch Actions as ordinarily occur every Day.

HAVING in the former Chapter given Rules in relation to ſuch Actions as daily occur in the Courſe of our Lives, in order to perſuade Chriſtians

to a careful Performance of them, according to the Meaſures there laid down; I will now endeavour to convince them, that true *Chriſtian Perfection* conſiſts in an exact Diſcharge of ſuch Duties, and conſequently, that their eternal Happineſs, or eternal Miſery, will be determined by them.

If *Chriſtian Perfection* was only to be attained by Retirement and Contemplation, by abſtracting ourſelves from the World, and by giving up ourſelves entirely to Meditation and ſpiritual Exerciſes, conſidering the Neceſſities of Life, in order to the Support of it, and the Capacities of the generality of Men, how few, alas! how very few were qualified ever to arrive at ſo noble and worthy an End? Men might excuſe themſelves from this Duty by the Neceſſity they are under of getting their Living by the Sweat of their Brows, and by their Inability to employ themſelves in ſuch ſpiritual Exerciſes: The Providence of God would ſeem thus to exclude thoſe from being perfect, whom his Precepts had enjoined to enter in at the ſtrait Gate. Therefore we may be ſure, that the infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, would never make that Method the only Means of performing our Duty, which

was

was out of the Reach of our Capacities. His Precept is addreſſed to Men of all States and Conditions, to be *perfect*, as *their heavenly Father is perfect*. And his *Commandment is not hidden from thee, or afar off: It is not in Heaven, that thou ſhouldſt ſay, Who ſhall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the Sea, that thou ſhouldſt ſay, Who ſhall go over the Sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, that thou mayſt do it.*

RELIGION was never deſigned only to ſerve us upon extraordinary Occaſions, to adorn the great Solemnities of God's public Worſhip; but was given us as the beſt Rule for the Conduct and Government of our whole Lives; and Chriſtians are not obliged ſo much to diſtinguiſh themſelves by their Wiſdom and Sagacity, as by Uprightneſs and Holineſs in all their Converſation. It ſuppoſes us Men engaged in Society, obliged to carry on the Affairs of this Life; but in ſuch a Manner, that they may promote and advance the important Buſineſs of our eternal Salvation; ſo that as the Practice of it is conſiſtent with Trade and Converſation, with Buſineſs and Diverſion, ſo

it ought to mix with all theſe ordinary Actions of Life; nay, its proper Sphere ſeems to be, to govern them after ſuch a Manner, that while we paſs thro' Things temporal, we may not loſe thoſe which are eternal; for *what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do Juſtice, to love Mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?*

When we call ourſelves to an Account of our Actions, our Deſign is to examine whether, in thoſe that every Day occur, we have followed the Deſigns of God's Providence in our ſeveral Stations, and whether we have performed them in ſuch a Manner as his Laws direct; and the Guilt we contract in either engaging in ſuch as are forbidden, or in performing thoſe that are lawful and neceſſary in an undue manner.

The Difference between the Goodneſs of one Man and another, does not ſo much depend upon the Nature of that Employment which is made his Profeſſion, as upon that Temper of Mind with which he governs it. The Prieſt at the Altar may be rejected by God, thro' his Ambition and Covetouſneſs; when the Tradeſman in his Shop may ſanctify his Buſineſs by Juſtice and Charity.

Indeed, it is the peculiar Honour and Happineſs of an Order of Men, to approach

proach nearer to God, by the constant Study and Application of their Minds, as well as by the Dedication of their Persons to his immediate Service; but this can be the Lot and Province of few; we cannot all be Teachers; and we ought thankfully to acknowledge the great Goodness of God, that he has set apart some on purpose, whose only Business it is, to guide and direct Men in the Way to everlasting Salvation; while others are obliged to drudge on in the common and necessary Employments of Life. But still this ought to be remembred, that the Layman, in his Profession, is equally capable of working out his Salvation, with the Clergyman that is ordained in things pertaining to God. For as one may miscarry in his holy Function, by engaging in it from wrong Motives and worldly Designs; by neglecting that great Trust that is committed to his Care; or by performing it without Diligence and Zeal; by making it only a Means of enriching himself and Family, and providing for his more pleasurable and luxurious Living; so the other, by making himself an Instrument of Providence, in carrying on the Affairs of the World; by exercising Justice and Equity in all his Dealings; by relieving the Poor and Necessitous;

and

and both from a Principle of Conscience; by governing his Family after a Christian manner; by diverting himself moderately, for Refreshment only; by eating and drinking with Temperance and Sobriety; by doing all the Good that lies in his Reach; and by Praying and Praising God at certain stated Hours; and by conversing with him by devout Ejaculations frequently in the midst of Business; I say, by this means, the Man of Business may make his Calling and Election sure. Nay, the very State of Slavery and Servitude, the most compassionate and miserable Circumstance of Life, is no Bar or Obstacle to the attaining the incorruptible Inheritance; provided that, according to St *Paul*'s Direction, they are *obedient to their Masters according to the Flesh, with Fear and Trembling, in singleness of Heart, as unto Christ; not with Eye-service, as Menpleasers, but as the Servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the Heart.*

Now the Goodness and Perfection of our ordinary Actions depend upon two Things: The *First* is, That in the general we *aim at the Glory of God*, according to the Apostle's Rule, *That whatsoever we do, we may do all to the Glory of God.* The *Second* is, That we do our utmost Endeavour

vour to perform it well. *Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might; for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave, whither thou goest.*

John the Baptist seems to countenance this Notion of *Christian Perfection*, in his Answer to those in the Gospel, who, coming to be Baptized, desired to know of him, what they might do to avoid the Wrath to come? To the *People* in general, he prescribes an extensive Charity to those that wanted what they could spare, Luke iii. 11. *He that hath two Coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath Meat, let him do likewise.*

To the *Publicans*, he gives in Charge not to exact more than that which is appointed; their Office being to collect the Tribute Money, the Temptation they lay under, was to exact more than they ought.

To the *Soldiers*, he gives in Charge, that they do Violence to no Man, neither accuse any falsly; which Word in the Original, signifies not only to accuse falsly, but to circumvent and oppress; and to be content with their Wages. Now all these Exhortations of the Baptist press Men to excel in the Duties of their Profession, and seem to make their Perfection to consist in the Performance

of

of thoſe Duties that ordinarily occurred to them. He gives them ſuch Directions only, as related to a faithful Diſcharge of their Duty in their ſeveral Stations and Callings.

THESE Rules ſhould make us conſider the Nature of our Employments, whether we can with Aſſurance, and a good Conſcience, offer them up to God; and whether we have that regard to the Manner of performing them, as that they may be able to bear the Teſt of a future Judgement; for when once we are laid in the Grave, no Faults are to be rectified: As the Tree falls, ſo it lies; as Death receives us, ſo Judgement will find us. Let us therefore chooſe ſuch Callings as we ſhall approve of in a dying Hour, and proſecute them with ſuch Diligence and Induſtry, with ſuch Juſtice and Equity, that they may ſtand fair in the Accounts of Eternity. Let us pray, and perform all the Offices of Devotion with Fervour and Conſtancy. Let us converſe with others courteouſly and charitably, and by our Diſcourſe edify to the utmoſt of our Capacity. Let the Refreſhments of Life be always attended with Temperance, and our Diverſions with Innocency and Moderation: And let us remember in our vacant Minutes, to ſend up devout Aſpirations towards our heavenly Country; which ought always to

be

be kept in View, ſince our ſafe Arrival there is the great Concernment of Life.

I SHALL conclude this Chapter, by offering two Rules, whereby you may be enabled to perform the ordinary Actions of your Life which occur every Day, after the beſt and moſt perfect Manner.

THE *firſt* I ſhall give you in this matter is, to *keep a lively Senſe of God's Omnipreſence upon your Minds*; always to remember, that He ſees all your Ways, and is privy to all your Thoughts, and that nothing is hid from his all-ſeeing Eye. The Philoſopher could propoſe to us, as a Means of Virtue, to imagine ſome Perſon of great Merit, and for whom we have a profound Reſpect, always before us; and to accuſtom ourſelves to ſpeak and act in ſuch a Manner, as that we might procure his Approbation. If ſuch an Imaginary Scheme was capable of producing any good Effect, what Influence muſt the Preſence of an infinite, wiſe, and holy God have upon us? which is a real Truth, clear from the Notion we have of the divine Nature, and the plain Declarations of Scripture.

NOW this Regard to the Omnipreſence of God, which I recommend to you, does not imply the actual Application of our Minds to God, as preſent before us; but

but only ſo to order all our Actions both as to the Nature and Manner of performing them, that they may be acceptable in his Sight, and that we take Care to do nothing that may diſpleaſe Him; being aſſured, that no Privacy ſecures any thing from his Knowledge, and that no Retirement excludes Him from us. Thus *praying always*, and *praying without ceaſing*, is by ſome underſtood, to conſiſt in governing all our Actions by the Rule of our Duty, keeping our Minds always in a fit Diſpoſition to pray. And when the *Sun and Moon, the Light and Stars, are called upon to praiſe the Lord*, it is by obſerving their regular Courſe, and conſtantly performing thoſe Offices that were laid upon them in the Beginning of the Creation. In like manner, whoever diſcharges well the Duties of his Station, and exactly performs the Obligations of his Profeſſion, may be ſaid to pray continually, and praiſe the Lord.

The *ſecond* Rule I ſhall give you is, *Frequently to call to mind the Certainty of Death, and the Uncertainty of that Time we have to continue in this World.* We often hear of ſome Body or other that is taken off by ſudden Death; and that which befals one Man to Day, may befal thee to Morrow. God has in great Mercy to

us,

us, made the Hour of our Death uncertain, that we might not be tempted to abuſe our Time, but might be always upon our Guard, and ready prepared whenever he ſhould ſummon us out of Life. It is one of the great Artifices of the Devil, to conceal from us this Truth, and to divert our Thoughts from it, and to inſinuate, that there is time enough before us to grow better, and amend our Lives; a great Point being gained, when he prevails upon us to defer our Repentance; for though God has promiſed to pardon thoſe that ſincerely turn to him, yet he has not laid himſelf under any Obligations of lengthening out our Days till to Morrow.

THERE is no Method more certain to know whether we walk upright before God, than to conſider whether we are in ſuch a Condition as to be ready to die whenever God thinks fit: And the beſt way to clear this Matter, is to reflect whether in our preſent Circumſtances, and in the conſtant Courſe of our daily Actions, Death would not ſurpriſe us. Now if we find any Thing that would trouble us upon its approach, let us quit it immediately, and do that now, which upon ſuch an Occaſion we ſhould wiſh to have done. How exactly juſt would the Tradeſman be

be in Buying and Selling, if he thought it would be the laſt Bargain he ſhould make? How innocently and profitably would the Gentleman converſe, if he thought that preſent Company the laſt he ſhould keep? How would the Divine pray, and preach, and adminiſter the holy Sacrament, if he were then to take his Leave for ever of the Deſk, the Pulpit, and the Altar? And how would every one of them embrace an Opportunity of doing Good, if they were ſure it would never be offered to them again? If once we governed all our Actions by this Rule, Death could never ſurpriſe us; but we might die with as great Security to our eternal State, in our Shops and at our Diverſions, as in the Church or at the Altar.

THE

PRACTICE

OF

True Devotion,

In RELATION to the END of

RELIGION.

CHAP. III.

Some Conſiderations in Relation to the Practice of Chriſtian Virtues, which is the End of Religion.

BE not ſurpriſed that I recommend to you but one particular Virtue for every Day in the Week. It is certain we ought daily to practiſe all Virtues, according to thoſe Opportunities and Circumſtances

cumſtances which the Providence of God preſents to us for the Exerciſe of them: But my Deſign in this Method is, to make you acquainted, by degrees, throughly with each conſiderable Chriſtian Virtue, and with the Way and Manner of practiſing it; and to put you upon a peculiar Care of exerciſing each Day the particular Virtue that is recommended.

But in order that you may receive greater Profit and Advantage from what I ſhall ſuggeſt to you, I deſire that you would with me make ſome Reflections upon the Chriſtian Virtues in general.

Firſt, Let us conſider the *Neceſſity of them.* All the Means of Religion are uſeful in their Kind, and acceptable to God, when performed with a right Intention, and after a due Manner. Our Prayers and our Sacraments, our hearing Sermons, and all other Exerciſes of Piety, more or leſs advance our Chriſtian Perfection, as they tend to recover the Image of God in our Souls, and to work in us all Chriſtian Virtues; this being the Rule and Meaſure of our Chriſtian Perfection: So that it is not he that ſays the moſt Prayers, and comes the moſt frequently to the Altar, that is the moſt holy and ſanctified Perſon; but he that is moſt like to God, and abounds moſt with the Fruits of

of the Spirit. An evident Proof of this, is our own Experience: How few Perſons do we meet with that are ſolidly and ſubſtantially good? And yet how many frequent the public Solemnities of divine Worſhip, and tie themſelves up to a Rote and Form of Devotion in their own Cloſets? The Temper of our Minds muſt be changed, our Hearts renewed, our inward Affections purified and ſanctified, in order to make our outward Actions pleaſing in God's ſight. Our Prayers and Devotions, and all outward Exerciſes of Piety, muſt be offered with ardent Love, and profound Humility, and with all thoſe other noble Virtues which give a Value to our moſt inconſiderable Actions, and are the likelieſt Means we can uſe to conduct us to Chriſtian Perfection. Let us therefore immediately ſet about this neceſſary Work of improving in ſolid Virtue, and endeavour every Day to make ſome Progreſs in it.

Is it not a Shame that you have made ſuch ſmall Advances in this important Buſineſs, after ſo many Prayers and Examinations, after ſo many Confeſſions and Sacraments, after having heard ſo many Sermons, and after having read ſo many ſpiritual Books, after ſo many Examples and Means that have been uſed to make

you

you perfect? Alas! may not I say, after thirty or forty Years employed in all these Exercises, you have not yet thoroughly learned that one Point of Humility. You are so sensible of Honour and Reputation, that the least injurious Reflection, a little inconsiderable Contempt, a small Disappointment, is capable of putting you into a Flame, of making you break out into violent Passion and injurious Words, of provoking Murmur and Discontent, sufficient to convince you, that all this while you have made little Proficiency in the School of Christ. The same Observation might be made in reference to the other Virtues of Christianity; but I pass over a long Induction of Particulars, to come to farther Considerations of Christian Virtues in general.

Secondly, LET us consider their *Dependance upon one another*. All Christian Virtues have so great a Connection one with another, that it is impossible to be Master of one in Perfection, without possessing at the same Time several others. I have proposed to you only the Practice of seven Virtues; but as they are the most important, so it is not to be doubted, but that if you attain them in any considerable degree, you can be no Stranger to the other Parts of your Duty. I satisfy

ſatisfy myſelf in propoſing this ſmall Number to you, that I may not diſtract you by a great Multitude, and that I may make you diſtinguiſh thoſe which are the principal Ones; to the End, that you may never be deceived, as ſome are, who, inſtead of applying themſelves to the Study of ſome ſolid and important Virtue, ſtop always at ſuch as are leſs conſiderable, and by conſequence never arrive at the Perfection of thoſe that are moſt ſubſtantial.

Thirdly, LET us conſider *thoſe Methods which are propereſt for attaining any Virtue*, that ſo we may not be at a Loſs in employing our Endeavours to the beſt Purpoſe, and in ſucceeding in our Attempts.

1. DO *nothing that is contrary to the Virtue you propoſe to attain.* This is the firſt Step that muſt be made to root out the Vice that is contrary to it. For Example: If you propoſe any Progreſs in Humility, never entertain yourſelf with vain Thoughts, never ſpeak in your own Praiſe and Commendation, never contemn or deſpiſe any Body, *&c.* This muſt be your Rule in reſpect of other Virtues, carefully to avoid ſuch Acts as are contrary to the ſaid Virtues

2. PRACTISE *the Acts of that Virtue you intend to acquire.* This Step is ſo neceſſary,

neceſſary, that without it all the others will ſignify nothing. It is by Writing, that one learns to write; it is by Painting and Drawing, that one learns to draw and paint; and it is by practiſing Virtue, that one learns it and grows perfect in it. Aſk a Virtue of God never ſo long, reflect upon it never ſo ſeriouſly, read all the Books that treat of it, and hear the moſt excellent Preachers that recommend it, ſet the beſt Examples of it before your Eyes, and make the firmeſt Reſolutions to attain it; yet if you really never practiſe it, nor exerciſe yourſelf in it, you ſhall never be Maſter of it. Set therefore immediately about this Method; for it is in humbling yourſelf, that you become humble. It is in making frequent Acts of the Love of God, that you become enamoured with him; it is by patient ſuffering without repining, that you learn Patience; and it is by denying yourſelf, that you become mortified to the Things of this World. And let me advertiſe you of one Thing, that the longer you defer to practiſe any Virtue, the more Difficulty and Pain you will find whenever you ſet about it: When as, on the contrary, the ſooner and the oftener you exerciſe yourſelf in it, you will, by Experience, find it more eaſy and delightful.

3. MEDITATE

3. MEDITATE *upon it, and pray to God for it.* When one has ſeriouſly for a long Time meditated upon a Thing, and conſidered its Neceſſity, Beauty, and Uſefulneſs, it is eaſily loved and ſtuck to. This is common to Virtue, with all other Things that are amiable; if you often dwell upon the Excellency of any Virtue, if you conſider its Neceſſity and Advantage, the Example of Jeſus Chriſt, and the Saints that have practiſed it, you will find it much more eaſy to exerciſe, whenever an Opportunity preſents itſelf to that Purpoſe. Let therefore the ſolid Virtues I have recommended, be the Subject of your frequent Meditations: For by the vigorous and conſtant Application of your Minds to them, you will find yourſelf animated to acquire them. To this we muſt join our hearty Prayers to God; and in order to be heard, you muſt aſk with ſuch a Faith as conſiſts in firmly believing you ſhall receive the Thing you deſire, when you have performed thoſe Conditions, upon which God has promiſed to beſtow it. You know, Courage is neceſſary to do Violence to ourſelves, and to overcome the Difficulty there is in the Practice of Religion: And it is from God only we can expect this Strength and Aſſiſtance, who muſt often be appli-

ed to for the Influences of his holy Spirit, that we may be able to mortify our Paſſions, and abound in every Virtue.

4. EXAMINE *yourſelf concerning it.* The frequent Reflection that we make in the Examination of our Conſciences, is a good Means to advance our Progreſs in any Virtue. Upon thoſe Occaſions you muſt not only call yourſelf to an Account for your Sins, but alſo for your Virtues, to ſee how you advance in your ſpiritual State; what Occaſions have preſented of practiſing any Virtue, and how you have behaved yourſelf in relation to them; and this not only in general, but particularly in reſpect to the Virtue you deſign to acquire, and is the Subject of the Day's Meditation: In order to this, at your Morning Devotions, make a firm Reſolution of practiſing that particular Virtue that Day. If in the Day-time you omit any Occaſion that preſents for the putting it in Execution, immediately aſk God's Pardon, and call upon Jeſus for freſh Strength. In the Evening, when you recount the Actions of the whole Day, particularly reflect upon the Progreſs you have made in the ſame Virtue; compare the Advance you have that Day made, with the Profit you reaped the Day before: form new Reſolutions to neglect

neglect nothing that may poſſibly tend to make you perfect in this Virtue.

5. OVERCOME *all thoſe Obſtacles and Hindrances which oppoſe the Practice of this Virtue.* Theſe Obſtacles are either particular or general: The particular ones relate to your natural Temper and Conſtitution, and take their Riſe from your Humour, and your Inclinations. It is poſſible you may be naturally Choleric, now this is an Hindrance to Meekneſs and Charity: You may be Sanguine, and naturally of a ſoft and gay Temper, given to Pleaſure; now this is an Obſtacle to Self-denial and Mortification: You are, it may be, of a melancholy Diſpoſition, touchy and poſitive; now this is an Obſtacle to Patience: You are inclined to Complaiſance, and to aim at the good Opinion of Men, and to diſtinguiſh yourſelf from others; now this is an Obſtacle to Humility. Theſe Hindrances muſt be pulled up by the Roots, and Nature muſt be reſiſted, if we deſign to cultivate her to Purpoſe; you muſt overcome your Humour, do Violence to your Inclinations, if ever you mean to ſee the Seed of Virtue thrive in your Soul.

Now the general Obſtacles which muſt be conquered, are Cowardice and Inconſtancy, Self-love, and amuſing ourſelves

continually with Trifles, and ſeveral other Vices which are Enemies to all Virtues. It is by great Courage and conſtant Perſeverance, that you will overcome all the Difficulties of the World; therefore never be diſheartned by the Pains and Labour you may meet with in the Way of Chriſtian Perfection: The Devil may be apt to inſinuate to you, that you aim too high, and that it is impoſſible for you to practiſe any one Virtue as you ought; but give no Ear to his Suggeſtions; provided you do but bring your beſt Endeavours, the Grace of God will always be ready to crown them with Succeſs.

CHAP. IV.

For SUNDAY.

The Love of GOD.

THE firſt Exerciſe I ſhall recommend to you is, the *Love of God*; a Virtue of the greateſt Importance: Of all our Paſſions, Love is the moſt agreeable; and of all Beings, God is the only one that is infinitely perfect, and therefore the only fit and proper Object of it. If we

we place our Affections upon Creatures, we ſhall always be liable to Diſappointment; they are empty, and cannot ſatisfy us; and when we think ourſelves moſt ſecure in the Enjoyment of them, they make themſelves Wings and fly away. God only is a ſolid and durable Good, and He only can fill all the Powers and Capacities of our Souls; therefore we ought to entertain our Minds with ſuch Motives as are proper to kindle his Love in our Hearts. Let us therefore conſider,

1. The *Perfections of GOD.* If ſome faint Strokes of Beauty and Wiſdom, in the Perſons of thoſe we converſe with, are apt to engage our Affections; what Love ought we to have for God, who is infinite in all Excellencies, who has Wiſdom without the leaſt Imperfection, and Goodneſs without any Alloy, and whoſe Perfections infinitely ſurpaſs the brighteſt Footſteps of them in all his Creatures? *Who in Heaven or Earth can be compared unto our God?*

2. The *Mercies of GOD.* Benefits are as ſo many Chains which faſten our Hearts, and oblige us to love thoſe that do us Good. What ſurpriſing Manifeſtations have we received of the Love and good Will of God towards us? The Creating us after his own Image and Likeneſs, and the Redeeming us by the inexpreſſible

Sufferings of his only begotten Son, the Graces and Aſſiſtances of his holy Spirit, the Publication of Pardon and Reconciliation, and the evident Promiſes of eternal Life, the Means of Grace, his Word and Sacraments; the good Example and Advice of others, our Health and Wealth; in a Word, all the Good we enjoy, or expect. Is it not therefore fit and reaſonable to ſhew your Gratitude for ſuch great Effects of his Goodneſs, by your beſt Services? If you could not refuſe Him your Heart, when you only conſidered the Perfections of his Being; is it poſſible you ſhould deny Him your utmoſt Affection, all your Soul, when you are made ſenſible of his infinite Bounty and Kindneſs towards you?

3. CONSIDER *the Excellency of this Virtue.* It is the great Deſign of all Religion to inculcate this capital Point; the *End of the Commandment is Charity.* All other Duties center and terminate in this, which is the very Soul, and Life, and Beauty of them. It is the Meaſure of our Perfections, and gives the true Worth and Value to all our other Actions, without which they cannot be acceptable to God. This raiſes us above the Creatures, and all their Enjoyments, and unites us to the moſt perfect Being; without this we are at Enmity with God, and by this Means

we

we are made capable of being his Favourites. Faith lays the Foundation of our Piety, Hope advances it, but Charity, or the Love of God, gives it the finiſhing Stroke and utmoſt Perfection.

The Practice of this great Virtue conſiſts in the following Particulars,

I. To *think of GOD.* It is an undoubted Teſtimony of our Love to any Perſon, if we think often of him. Let God therefore be often in your Thoughts, and lift up your Mind to Him: Engage yourſelf as little in the Hurry and Buſtle of Life as may be. O! what a Shame is it to think inceſſantly of a Creature that you love, of any Deſign you have projected, of an Affair you have undertaken, or of ſome Diverſion you propoſe, and to paſs Hours and whole Days without thinking of God? O love the moſt amiable Object! frequently on every Day exert Acts of Love towards Him: ſo that this Flame of divine Love may daily increaſe in your Hearts.

II. To *ſpeak of GOD.* We take a great deal of Pleaſure in making that the Subject of our Diſcourſe, which is the Object of our Affection; *Out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh.* Now upon what Topics does your Converſation uſually run? Are they not the

Trifles and Vanities of this World, inſtead of thoſe of your heavenly Country? What is the Meaning that thou art ſo eloquent and ready to talk, when News or Pleaſure is the Subject; ſo dry and barren, when Religion is ſtarted? If you were thoroughly poſſeſt with the Love of God, your Tongue would give ſome Proofs of it, and it would be the moſt agreeable Entertainment you could receive from others.

III. To *Act for GOD.* After you have dedicated to God your Thoughts and your Words, you cannot deny Him the Vigour of your Actions, which ought all to be animated with the Love of Him. This ſhould make you conſider, how you might pleaſe Him moſt in every Thing you did, and have a greater Regard to Him than to any Thing elſe. This ſhould make you in the beginning of every Action, to dedicate it to God by the Purity of your Intention, in ſuch Words as theſe: *O my God! I deſign to pleaſe Thee; my Aim is thy Honour and Glory.* This Method would raiſe our ordinary Actions, and make them more valuable.

IV. To *ſuffer for GOD.* The Profeſſions of Friendſhip are eaſily made to thoſe we love, but nothing tries the Sincerity of them more effectually, than the Obligation

Obligation of ſuffering ſomething in their Behalf. If God ſends you any Misfortune or Sickneſs, or any other Affliction, be not impatient, but reſign yourſelf to his holy Will and Pleaſure: Say to him, *O Lord, ſince it is thy Will I ſhould ſuffer, I am contented, thy holy Will be done: I could wiſh, O my God, to ſuffer yet more for the Love of Thee.* When any ill Accident happens to you, ſay (not in the Trouble and Bitterneſs of your Soul) *I muſt be willing, becauſe God will have it ſo.* If this is not ſaid with a reſigned Mind, and a quiet Soul, inſtead of being an Act of Conformity to the Will of God, it will prove an Act of Impatience: Remember always in your Afflictions, that there is a Providence that governs all Things, and that it is our own Fault if we do not bring Good out of the Evil that happens to us. Let this then be the Language of your Soul: *It is true, O God, that this Cup is bitter, and this Affliction touches me to the Quick; but becauſe it is thy Pleaſure to afflict me thus, I am entirely ſatisfied; and I am willing to ſuffer, becauſe it is thy Will.*

V. To *love what GOD loves.* Thoſe who are moſt eminent for Piety and Virtue, are his greateſt Favourites; therefore let no outward diſadvantageous Circumſtances hinder you from having the ſame

Inclinations. What God loves and desires is, that we should in all Things conform ourselves to his holy Will and Pleasure; and in this consists our Perfection: Let not therefore your own Passions or Interest be the Center of your Actions; consult God's Pleasure, and let that govern you; attend to what He requires from you, and perform it vigorously. It would be Cruelty to a Friend, to do the Thing in the World that most displeases him. Now the Object of God's Hatred and Aversion, is Sin; fly therefore from all Evil, even the Appearance of it; and if you at any Time unhappily fall, let your Grief and Sorrow testify the true Concern you have for having offended so good a God.

VI. To *love Him above all Things.* God is jealous of his own Glory, and requires the whole Man, and would not that any Creature should be his Rival: And in Truth, what is more fit and reasonable? The infinite Perfections of his Nature, and his abundant Loving-kindness towards you, ought they not to prevail upon you to give Him your Heart? Take off your Affections from the Things of this World, and place them upon God, who is so infinitely amiable. Nothing will better discover the inordinate Love of any Creature,

ture, than if in any kind it makes us neglect our Duty to God, by doing what he has forbidden, or by omitting what he has commanded.

VII. To *desire that He be loved by others.* The Zeal which you ought to have for the Glory of God, will serve you as an Evidence to distinguish whether you really love Him: Is your Discourse often of Him? Are you zealous that others should not offend Him? Do you contribute what you can, by your Words and by your Actions, to the Conversion of Sinners, and to the Perseverance of the Good? And is it your great Endeavour that God be worshipped, loved, and served, not only by yourself, but by others also?

VIII. To *converse frequently with GOD.* Nothing is more agreeable than the Company of those we esteem and value, and we need no Argument to press us to embrace all Opportunities to enjoy it. The only Means we have of Conversing with God here below, is by frequenting his Ordinances, by attending to what he teaches us in his Word, by approaching the Throne of Grace by Prayer, and by expressing the great Sense we have of his Love towards us in the Communion of the Body and Blood of his Son: If we

neglect

neglect ſuch bleſſed Opportunities when they offer themſelves, it is a Sign our Hearts are but cold and indifferent towards Him; for if his Love governed us, we ſhould count *a Day in his Courts better than a Thouſand*, and the Entertainments of his Table more delicious than when Oil and Wine increaſed; we ſhould value the Liberty of addreſſing Him, before any temporal Satisfaction, and the Inſtructions of his Word would be like Marrow to the Bone.

IX. To *ſerve Him with Fervour and Delight.* When the Service of a dear Friend is concerned, there is a certain Eagerneſs and free Air in performing it, which ſufficiently ſhews the Joy and Satisfaction this Opportunity of ſerving him gives us. Would you be convinced of your Love to God, ſerve Him with Pleaſure, and not with Reluctancy; ſerve Him with Fervour, and not with Indifferency? If you pray in Private or Public, if you are at your Work or Buſineſs, or engaged in any other Action, do it chearfully, fervently, and exactly. It is for God that you work, it is his Love makes you devout; let it appear therefore, by the Joy and Fervour you ſhew in ſerving Him, that God is the beloved Object of your Soul, and that you are ſo far from being

tired

tired in his Service, that you covet nothing more than Opportunities to give Him fresh Testimonies of your Affection.

CHAP. V.

For MONDAY.

The Love of our Neighbour.

AFTER having given Proofs of our Love to God, we are obliged to exercise it towards our Neighbour. This sort of Charity is a Virtue very necessary in our Converse in this World; it unites Men together; and the Want of it occasions many Disorders in civil Society. But alas! how rare is this Virtue in this Age? Men love one another sometimes from Interest, from Humour, from Inclination; but few from a Principle of Christian Charity: And yet, how many Obligations do we lie under to practise it?

1. IN *respect of GOD.* He has frequently recommended it to us in his holy Word, and by his express Command has made it our Duty. Our blessed Saviour has earnestly urged it upon his Followers. If you have any Love for God, you must make it appear by your Love of your Brethren,

thren; for *He that loveth not his Brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?* And what a prevailing Obligation ſhould it be to us, to conſider that God is pleaſed to reckon all the Good we do to others, as done to Himſelf; *Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe, ye have done it unto me.*

2. In *reſpect of our NEIGHBOUR.* He is our Brother, equally God's Creature, made after his Image, and the Object of his Love and Kindneſs with ourſelves; and therefore we ought to love him. The ſame precious Blood that was ſhed for you, redeemed him; the ſame Sacraments that feed you, nouriſh him; and the ſame Hope of eternal Life, which purifies you, animates him; and therefore you ought to love him: The Love of a Mother to her Children, ought to be the Pattern of our Charity; this would make you ready at all Times to do them Good, patiently to bear with their Imperfections, and to perſiſt in deſpite of all Diſcouragements.

3. In *reſpect of OURSELVES.* The Recompence of Reward which God has promiſed to thoſe that love their Neighbour, ſhould encourage and excite you to the Performance of this Virtue. When Jeſus Chriſt is repreſented in Scripture, as pronouncing

pronouncing the irrevocable Sentence of a happy or miſerable Eternity, we are told, he will particularly inquire, whether we have fed the Hungry, and clothed the Naked, *&c.* Beſides, it is our Intereſt in this World; by our Kindneſs to others we beſpeak theirs, whenever we ſtand in Need of it; the great Secret to procure the Love of others, is upon all Occaſions to teſtify our Love towards them.

Exerciſe this Virtue,

I. In *your Thoughts:* By entertaining no diſadvantageous Opinions of your Neighbour: By not giving way to groundleſs Suſpicions and raſh Judgments concerning him; by throwing them back when they offer themſelves with a Reflection upon yourſelf; *Lord, how quick-ſighted am I in regard to the Faults of others, but how blind in diſcovering my own!* A charitable Man makes the moſt candid Judgment of every Body; and when his Neighbour's Actions are capable of a double Interpretation, he puts the beſt upon them. The ordinary Rule of Judging others by, is ourſelves; and when our own Inclinations are bad, and our Wills bent upon that which is Evil, we eaſily perſuade ourſelves that our Neighbour governs himſelf by the ſame Meaſures.

II. In

II. In *your Words.* Here a particular Guard muſt be ſet, becauſe there are ſo many Ways of tranſgreſſing our Duty. Some upon the leaſt Provocation give bad Language, ſpeak with Anger and Contempt of others, which no Pretence whatſoever can juſtify. Others make it their Buſineſs to divert themſelves at the Expence of others by Raillery, and by every Thing that comes in their Minds to gratify their Paſſion.

The Talent of *Raillery* is very dangerous, and therefore it is beſt to keep at a Diſtance from it. For, *firſt*, It is apt to injure ourſelves, by making us light and trifling, and by impairing the Spirit of Devotion. A Mind thus corrupted, which makes a common Practice of turning the moſt ſerious and ſacred Things into ridicule, can have but a very indifferent Taſte for Religion: By degrees, it will quite extinguiſh it in thoſe that give themſelves this Liberty, and in thoſe that are diverted by it. And, *ſecondly*, It is offenſive to others, becauſe it wounds the Rules of Charity. At firſt theſe merry Gentlemen pretend only to divert themſelves and the Company; but afterwards their Railleries become tireſome, or their Jeſts have too much Piquancy, and very often they end in Diſputes and Quarrels.

Those

THOSE that next offend in their Tongue, are the *Evil-ſpeakers*; and alas! one ſees but too many who cannot converſe without making their Neighbours Faults the Subject of it; who being puſhed on by Envy, or by an unhappy Cuſtom, cenſure and detract as often as they ſpeak. They endeavour, indeed, ſometimes to excuſe themſelves, by pretending, it is only by way of Sport and Diverſion; but what a cruel Pleaſure is it, to play with Mens Honour and Reputation, which to ſome is dearer to them than their Lives? At other Times they pretend they ſay nothing but what every Body knows; when alas! their Neighbours Faults are far from being ſo public as they think; but granting that they were ſo, it is a Sign we have but little Charity for our Neighbour, when we endeavour, inſtead of concealing his Imperfections, to entertain all Companies with the Relation of them: By this means they certainly ſpread, and the Man is made more contemptible.

THE *proud Man* is not leſs at variance with Charity, than the *Evil-ſpeaker* and *Detracter*. He cannot bear to hear any one commended; ſo much Praiſe as is given to another, ſeems to leſſen his own Glory, which makes him as ingenious in diminiſhing the Reputation of others, as he

he is dextrous in aggrandizing his own. His Vanity makes him believe, that when the Imperfections and Frailties of others are diſcovered, he himſelf will only remain fit to receive Applauſe and Commendation. Now, is not this the very Top of Envy and Pride?

ALL theſe Ways of tranſgreſſing the Rules of Charity you muſt carefully avoid. Speak all the Good you know of your Neighbour, and let your Diſcourſe tend to raiſe his Character. Never ſay any Thing that may ſhock the leaſt Perſon in the World; and ſpeak of others with the ſame Reſervedneſs that you deſire they ſhould ſpeak of you.

III. *In your Actions.* Be ſo far from hurting your Neighbour, either in his Perſon or Eſtate, as to do him all the good Offices that lie in your Power. Exerciſe all Acts of Mercy and Charity in relation to him, for which you can never want an Opportunity. Are there not many ignorant Souls to be inſtructed, and many Sinners to be reproved, many Poor to be relieved, many Sick to be viſited, and many Priſoners to be ſet free?

NEVER pretend that your Charity may be abuſed, and that you meet with returns of Ingratitude; this Thought may be apt to lead you into the Wrong. But granting

ing that you meet with ſuch Diſcouragement, and that Men return Evil for the Good you do them, ſtill perſevere from the Motive of Love to God, he will never forget your Labour of Love: The more diſintereſted your Charity is, the more it tends to Perfection.

IV. Bear *with the Infirmities of others.* Why are you ſo apt to be angry with your Neighbour? God is patient towards you, notwithſtanding your daily Provocations, and you continually ſtand in need of the Forbearance of others: This makes it reaſonable, that you ſhould be kind and compaſſionate towards them. You indulge too much your own ill Humour, and are apt to entertain Averſions and Antipathies againſt ſome People; which is the Occaſion that the leaſt of their Faults become inſupportable to you. Remember the Maxim which St *Paul* recommended to the firſt Chriſtians; *Bear ye one another's Burdens, and ſo fulfil the Law of Chriſt.*

You may object, that your Neighbour is in the Wrong; ſuppoſing he is ſo, he is the greater Object of your Compaſſion; but do not contract Guilt to yourſelf, by any unchriſtian Behaviour. The Injury, it is poſſible, was provoking; and the Contempt with which he uſed you touched you very near; ſacrifice your Reſentment

Reſentment to the crucified Jeſus; the more the Perſon was to blame, and the greater your Mortification is, the more it raiſes your Charity in Pardoning, in deſpite of any Temptation to the contrary.

REMEMBER always, that you converſe not with Angels, but with Men, who are frail and inconſtant, and ſeldom in the ſame Humour, ſo that an unguarded Expreſſion may eaſily fall from them. Lay not any Streſs upon a raſh Word, change the Diſcourſe, or jeſt it off, but be ſure not to ſuffer yourſelf to be provoked. If you neglect it, no more Notice will be taken of it; but if you give way to Anger and Reſentment, the very Remembrance of the Word or Action that diſturbed you, will give you freſh Uneaſineſs; whereas if you neither think nor ſpeak of it more, the Senſe of it will immediately wear off.

BESIDES, there is a great Inconvenience in being ſo quick to reſent every little Thing that is ſaid or done againſt us. They that provoke you, being not governed by ſtrict Principles of Virtue, will make this Advantage of it, that they will ſay and do Things on purpoſe to vex you, and to increaſe your ill Humour.

V. CONDESCEND *to others.* Our Tempers and Inclinations are ſo different, and often

often ſo oppoſite the one to the other, that it is hard if the Rules of Charity are not frequently tranſgreſſed. You muſt therefore be upon your Guard, that the moſt provoking Occaſions do not force from you your Charity. Let others be never ſo much in the Wrong, do not perſevere in maintaining the Debate; ſubmit to others, at leaſt by your Silence; and if People are of another Mind, never perſiſt in the Matter: Why ſhould you torment yourſelf about what is impoſſible? which is, to change their Apprehenſion of Things; and if you could ſucceed in it, yet you ought not at the Hazard of your Charity, which in the Sight of God is of great Price.

VI. Be *zealous for the Good of your Neighbour.* It is but a ſmall Inſtance of your Charity, if you only relieve thoſe Wants of your Neighbour that relate to his Body, and at the ſame Time neglect to help him in the more important Concerns of his Soul. Be ready therefore upon all Occaſions, to aſſiſt him with good Counſel and Advice; to reprove him in the ſofteſt and gentleſt Language, and with ſuch a Temper of Mind, that he may plainly perceive you aim at promoting his true Welfare; to comfort him under his Affliction: Endeavour to recover him from the Ways of

Sin

Sin and Error, by your Example, as well as by your Diſcourſe. Let your Converſation excite him to Piety and Devotion; and by your Prayers, and other Chriſtian Methods, let it appear, that the Salvation of his Soul is dear to you.

VII. REJOICE *when any Good happens to him.* If you loved your Neighbour as you ought, his Proſperity would give you a great deal of Pleaſure, and you would be touched with a true Concern for his Misfortunes. But moſt Men are governed by a contrary Principle, which makes them repine when their Neighbours flouriſh, and ſecretly rejoice when they fall into any conſiderable Diſaſters. This ſhould put you continually upon your Guard againſt the firſt Motions of Envy, that you may not give way to them; this ſhould excite you to teſtify your Satisfaction when your Neighbour is pleaſed, becauſe it is a Mark of Affection which you owe to him; ſympathize with him under any Calamity; if it is in your Power, comfort him, and ſoften his Miſery, but at leaſt, let him never want your Compaſſion.

VIII. OVERCOME *any Averſion you have entertained.* As ſome certain Perſons pleaſe us by a ſort of Sympathy, we know not why; ſo others diſpleaſe us by a ſort

a ſort of Antipathy, which we can give no account of. It is ſomewhat difficult entirely to conquer theſe Averſions, becauſe ſometimes they proceed from Nature and Conſtitution: But we may prevent the outward Appearance of it, by ſuppreſſing all contemptuous and reproachful Language.

ANTIPATHY thus governed, may be compared to a wild Beaſt chained; as long as you keep it confined, it is not able to do any hurt; but if you once let it looſe, it is incredible what Miſchief it will do to yourſelf and every Body elſe. As long as you give no outward Teſtimonies of your Averſion, it will be attended with no ill Conſequence, provided you do not pleaſe yourſelf with ſuch Thoughts, but rather endeavour to ſuppreſs the irregular Motions they may occaſion; but if once you give way to your Antipathy, by doing every Thing which that dictates, in a little Time you will contract a great deal of Guilt. Therefore bear with Patience whatever is ſhocking to you in other People, and neither by Word or Geſture diſcover the Averſion and Uneaſineſs that they give you, though it may be ſometimes a Complaint might be juſtifiable. But this is a great Inſtance of a ſtrong Virtue.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

For TUESDAY.

HUMILITY.

THE great Condeſcenſion of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, in taking upon him human Nature, and in ſubmitting to all the Frailties and Infirmities of it, Sin only excepted, purely for our Benefit and Advantage, ought to animate and excite us all to the Practice of *Chriſtian Humility*, the Foundation of all other Virtues, very peculiar to the Inſtitution of the Religion eſtabliſhed by our Saviour, and unknown to the wiſe Men and Philoſophers of the Gentile World; by the Poſſeſſion of which, we become acceptable,

I. To *GOD.* For he hath declared, that his Delight is among the Humble and the Lowly; it is upon them that he beſtows his choiceſt Favours; and it is their Prayers that find acceſs and acceptance with Him. Nothing is more contradictory to his holy Nature than Pride; upon which account God takes a particular Pleaſure in confounding a Vice, which endeavoured to oppoſe his Glory

Glory in Heaven, and does its utmoſt to rob Him of it upon Earth. Nothing is ſo effectual to procure the Grace of God, and to preſerve the Continuance of it, and even to recover it when it is unhappily loſt, as Humility. But this Virtue does not only make us acceptable to God; but,

II. To *Men*. What can be more amiable than he who deſpiſes no Body, who never praiſes himſelf, and who makes it his Glory to give way to others? And, on the contrary, what is more hateful than a proud Man? He is odious to every one, no Body can bear him, and every one endeavours to mortify him, in order to bring down his Vanity: If he meets with any conſiderable Humiliation, no Body grieves to ſee his Pride puniſhed. Suppoſing a Perſon endowed with all the advantageous Qualities of Body and Mind, adorned with all the Gifts of Nature and Grace, if he grows vain, and prides himſelf in them, he immediately expoſes himſelf to Contempt. Nothing is more hateful to God and Man than Pride; but Humility farther makes us acceptable and eaſy,

III. To *Ourſelves*. Humility preſerves the Peace of the Mind, makes us quiet and eaſy; whereas Ambition is the conſtant Source of Trouble and Vexation.

The proud Man is never at reſt; and as he is extremely ſenſible of the Point of Honour, the leaſt Word touches him to the Quick; a little Contempt and Neglect ſinks him, and the Praiſes and Incenſe that is given to others, ſeem to reflect upon his Honour and Reputation.

His main Deſign is to raiſe himſelf above others; and in order to that Purpoſe, he ſpares neither Calumny, nor Detraction, nor Falſhood: If he does not ſucceed in his Aim, as it is very often abortive, Vanity and Ambition having no Bounds, he is expoſed to an unaccountable Uneaſineſs, great Trouble and Anguiſh attend his Diſappointment: Whereas, the humble Man never increaſes the Mortifications that happen to him, by fretting and vexing; becauſe he eſteems himſelf unworthy of Honour, and as deſerving that Contempt he meets with. The ſhorteſt Way to Happineſs is, to fly Ambition; and if we aim at a quiet and contented Life, we muſt not exalt ourſelves, nor do any thing through Strife and Vainglory; for if we indulge this deſtructive Paſſion, *Haman*'s Fate will be ours; and in the midſt of Honour, Plenty, and Abundance, we ſhall, with him, be apt to complain, and ſay, *All this availeth nothing.* So capable is a little Neglect

Neglect to four all the Enjoyments of a proud Man.

THIS Virtue muſt be practiſed,

I. *In our Thoughts.* Maintain always a low Opinion of yourſelf, and preſerve a great Eſteem and Reſpect for others. Acknowledge that once ye were nothing; and that ſince you have received your Being from the Bounty of God, you have abuſed it, by offending Him. Own your preſent Condition to be Weakneſs and Miſery, and that you can do nothing without the Aſſiſtance of divine Grace. And as to what is to come, it is certain your Body muſt be the Food of Worms, though it is uncertain in what State and Condition your Soul will be; which ſhould make us *work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling.*

TAKE Care not to indulge Thoughts of Vanity, not to govern your Actions with a Regard to Men, ſeeking only to pleaſe them. If you are ſo fooliſh as to labour for Vainglory, you will receive no other Recompence than the empty Returns of popular Applauſe.

II. *In our Words.* Nothing is more contemptible than one who abounds in his own Praiſes; he is not aware, that inſtead of increaſing his Reputation, he really diminiſhes it; and by his vainglorious Con-

verſation, acquires the Character of a proud Man. Be not always making Apologies for thyſelf, and throwing the Fault upon others, even when you have a fair Occaſion. This Sort of Humiliation, which you patiently endure, will encreaſe your Virtue in this World, and your Reward in the next.

III. *In our Actions and outward Deportment.* Humility, when once really fixed in our Minds, will neceſſarily ſhew itſelf in our outward Actions. Exerciſe yourſelf frequently in ſuch exterior Things as may teſtify your inward Humility; the beſt Means to attain this Chriſtian Virtue, is often to practiſe it. Let your Way of Living be conformable to that State and Condition which the Providence of God has placed you in; let no extravagant Expence appear in your Clothes: What ſignifies ſo much Luxury? Vanity is a Vice which coſts us dear, and makes us but empty Returns. Let not your Gait and Deportment, and your Method of Acting and Speaking with others, ſavour of Vanity, and betray the Marks of a proud, conceited Mind; on the contrary, let all your Actions be governed with Modeſty and Condeſcenſion, in Honour preferring others to yourſelf.

IV. *In*

IV. *In giving Way to others.* There are some People, who almost continually employ themselves in comparing themselves with others; in considering whether others pay them the Respect that is due to them; and whether the Merits of such a Size ought to be preferred to theirs. All such Sort of Thoughts should be laid aside, and we should never say, *I am more considerable than such an one; it is his Business to give Place to me, and to salute me first*, &c. Honour, as has been observed, belongs more to him that gives it, than to him that receives it. Let it be granted, that you are more considerable than the Person to whom you give Place, by that Means your Glory will shine the brighter; for it will plainly appear, that Virtue and Civility, and not any Obligation, inclined you to make the Condescension.

V. *In avoiding Commendation.* Some who can forbear praising themselves, are too much pleased when others commend them; they seek not their own Glory, but are very glad when it presents itself. Others are very dextrous to give Men a Handle to commend them, and can contrive Occasions to have themselves praised and esteemed.

ENCOURAGE no Discourse that offers Incense to yourself; very often it

proceeds from Flattery and Compliment, and at the beſt, is the Effect of other Peoples Charity, rather than your own Merit: Turn the Converſation, as ſoon as you can, to ſome other Subject; the leſs Glory you receive from Men, the greater will be conferred upon you by the Hands of God. However, you muſt take Care never to omit any Act of Virtue, though it may tend to your Praiſe and Commendation; our Duty muſt be reſolutely practiſed, whatever the Conſequence is. As Praiſe muſt not be the Motive, ſo neither muſt it be the Hindrance.

VI. *In ſuffering Contempt.* It is no ſmall Virtue that conſiſts in bearing Contempt; either your natural Infirmities, or your wilful Faults, or accidental Blunders, will be apt to cover you with Confuſion before others. You will meet with indiſcreet and paſſionate People, who, with or without Cauſe, may be inclined to deſpiſe you, and may endeavour to ſhock you, and make you uneaſy: In the Name of God, be not ſo nice and delicate upon the Point of Honour; bear this Humiliation with Patience, and remember it is more glorious before God and Man to pardon an Injury than to revenge it; and that the Victory you gain over your-

ſelf

ſelf upon ſuch an Occaſion, is more acceptable to God than an hundred Acts of a leſs difficult Virtue.

WHEN we are provoked, Reſentment ordinarily follows; we grow ſad and uneaſy, and preſently endeavour to return the Injury we have received, by recriminating or complaining, or by returning the Affront in kind. We call Reaſon to juſtify our Paſſion, and are apt to inſinuate, *that our Reputation is concerned, as well as the Edification of our Neighbour, who may be ſcandalized, if he thought you guilty; that upon ſuch an Occaſion, not to teſtify your Reſentment would be Stupidity; that if this Affront ſhould be put up, you ſhould draw a hundred others upon you:* So ingenious is Vanity to cover itſelf with the Pretext of Reaſon. But be not impoſed upon by theſe falſe Imaginations and empty Reaſons: Let Humility be your Refuge, and receive your Confuſion with a generous and invincible Patience.

VII. *In rejoicing in Contempt upon the Account of our Duty.* The Perfection of this Virtue extends, not only to the Suffering of Contempt, but to the being pleaſed with it for Righteouſneſs ſake. Let not the ſcornful Reproaches of bad Men, either abate or diminiſh thy Zeal in ſerving God, and in doing Good. Let

not their profane Jeſts weaken thy Faith, or diſcourage thee in thy Chriſtian Courſe; but embrace joyfully their unjuſt Reflections, and their tearing thy Reputation in pieces, that, in this humbled Condition, thou mayſt be more conformable to the bleſſed Jeſus, who made Humility his particular Character; and though thy Endowments, and Talents, and Actions, may deſerve Eſteem and Conſideration, yet deſire rather to have thy Virtues concealed, whereby they become more bright in the Sight of God, *who ſeeth in ſecret, and will reward thee openly.* The Applauſe of Men might corrupt thy Mind with vain Conceits; might fill thy Fancy with falſe Pleaſure; might tempt thee to aſcribe too much Honour to thyſelf, and too little to God. But their Hatred and Contempt may teach thee to place thy Glory only in the Hopes of his Favour; and to purſue more earneſtly the pure Delights of a good Conſcience; and does not ſuch an Inſtance of divine Providence deſerve to be rejoiced in?

VIII. In *practiſing Humility, without deſiring Praiſe upon that Account.* There are ſome, who appear Humble, and who give way to others, but at the ſame Time are very glad that others ſhould take notice of it; if they put up an Affront, or bear

bear patiently any Reflection, they are desirous of being applauded. "I know, "say they, what you have said against "me, but I will think no more of it, "since it is a Man's Duty to bear Con-"tempt for the Love of God." Another will come and relate the Pains he has taken upon an Occasion of practising his Duty, the Humiliation and Mortification he has suffered. Alas! how these People deceive themselves in thinking that Humility is consistent with Bragging of it, and of their best Actions. The best Part of this Virtue is lost when we desire to make it known to others, when we acquaint them with what we know others say and do against us. Upon these Occasions we should be silent, and not let others perceive that we take any Notice of the Contempt that is poured upon us. True Humility consists in suffering of Humiliation and Mortification, without desiring that any one should know we suffer it.

CHAP. VII.

For WEDNESDAY.

Patience and Reſignation.

CONſidering the many uneaſy Circumſtances of Life, this Virtue of *Patience* is abſolutely neceſſary. Whence proceeds Swearing and Scolding, and Diſcontent in a Family, which is oftentimes rather a little Hell, than a well regulated Society, but from the Want of this Virtue? It is but patiently bearing a ſmall Miſcarriage, a trifling Diſappointment, a peeviſh or croſs Word, and theſe Diſorders could never get any Ground. Afflicti ns are like the Teſt to Gold, they prove and diſcover the Truth and Excellency of our Virtues. If any croſs Accident befals us, we look upon ourſelves as very unfortunate, inſtead of eſteeming ourſelves happy in meeting with an Opportunity of expreſſing to God our Reſignation and Patience. Conſider therefore in all Afflictions theſe three inconteſtable Truths:

1. THAT *God permits them for your Good.* If Afflictions proceeded only from the good Pleaſure of God, does it become his Creatures

Creatures to oppose his Will? But when God permits them for our Profit and Advantage; can any thing in the World be a greater Argument of Comfort and Support under them? It is possible that it may be objected, that we cannot apprehend any Benefit from them; but is it reasonable that God should give us an Account of what he does, and the Motives and Reasons of his Dealing with us? Does not He know all we suffer? And cannot He deliver us whenever He pleases? If he continues to afflict us, it is either to punish us for our Sins, which are of so perverse a Malignity, that tho' we suffered a thousand Times more, yet they would deserve greater Punishment; or to improve our Virtue; or to answer the Designs of his Providence, which you ought always to adore, though the Methods of it are wrapt up in Obscurity. O! how deceitful and false are the Judgments of Men? What you call Evil, is frequently a great Good to you. Remember that God bears the Character of a skilful Physician, who makes you suffer in order to your Recovery. He is a kind Father, who punishes you only in order to your greater Good.

2. That *Patience is acceptable to God, and procures his Favour.* Should not this Argument make us rejoice in Suffering, since

ſince it is a Means of raiſing us to the higheſt Dignity, the Favour of God? The Croſs is the Path that leads to Bliſs, in which the holy Jeſus and his bleſſed Saints marched before us; and why ſhould we think to arrive at the heavenly *Jeruſalem* in a different Way from thoſe who are gone before us? The Captain of our Salvation was made perfect thro' Sufferings, and our Conformity to him is our Glory and his Delight; upon theſe Occaſions we ſhould think ourſelves happy, conſidering that *theſe light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, work for us an eternal and exceeding Weight of Glory.* Let us never complain that Sickneſs and Pain, and other Troubles, hinder us from doing the Good we propoſe and deſign; becauſe in ſuch Caſes Patience is that proper Exerciſe of Virtue which God requires from us; and to bear with Patience and Reſignation the Afflictions his wiſe Providence lays upon us, is a greater Degree of Perfection at that Time, than exerciſing ourſelves in good Works.

3. THAT *Impatience provokes God, and weakens our ſpiritual Strength.* What an unaccountable Piece of Folly is it, of one Evil to make two; and inſtead of abating and leſſening our Sufferings, to augment and increaſe them? To what tend our Murmur-

Murmurings and Complaints, our Impatience and Diſcontent, but to offend God and to rob us of the Profit and Advantage of our Sufferings? If you ſubmit to them with Reſignation, your Virtue, and the Favour of God, encreaſes towards you: but if you murmur and are diſſatisfied, your preſent Sufferings will only ſerve to increaſe thoſe that are reſerved for you in the other World. Beſides, does you Impatience eaſe your Afflictions? Does it procure you a Remedy? No: The Evil is incurable by any ſuch Means: Bear it therefore with Patience, and do not make yourſelf doubly unhappy. It is a Sign and Mark of great Imperfection, not to grow better by the good Things God gives us to enjoy, and to become worſe by the evil Things He lays upon us to ſuffer. In order to exerciſe this Virtue;

1. NEVER *murmur againſt God.* Who would believe that any Man ſhould be hardy enough to complain againſt God, and ſhould dare to find Fault with that Providence he ought to adore? Some are apt to inſinuate, that He is very ſevere; that He ſeems ſometimes to abandon us; that they do not deſerve the Treatment they receive from Him; that Juſtice is on their Side; and that others are to blame. Nay, ſome carry their Diſcontent ſo high,

as

as to break out into paſſionate and deſperate Expreſſions, as if they were inclined to revenge themſelves upon the Deity by their inſolent Speeches. Alas! can ſuch People be thoroughly convinced that God is a kind and indulgent Father, that chaſtiſes his Children for their Good; that He is a charitable Phyſican, who preſcribes bitter and diſtaſteful Remedies for the Recovery of their Health? Reſign therefore yourſelf to his bleſſed Will, and addreſs yourſelf to Him after this manner: *Thy Will be done. I chearfully accept of this Loſs, this Humiliation, of this Croſs and Affliction, becauſe it is thy Will it ſhould be ſo.*

2. NEVER *be impatient with others.* It is very common, when any Misfortune befals us, to blame thoſe who come next in our way, to find Fault with thoſe that deſerve it, and thoſe that do not. Upon ſuch Occaſions, we utter indecent Words, we indulge injurious Reflections, and ſometimes we are provoked to Blows. Alas! if our Anger is not under Government, we ſhall contract great Guilt to ourſelves.

IT is true, we ought ſometimes to reprove others; but we muſt not make a Vice of a Virtue, by adminiſtring Correction with Paſſion, and by obſerving no Meaſures in the diſpenſing of it. It often happens,

happens, that by admoniſhing after an ill Manner, we commit a greater Fault than we deſign to reform.

3. NEVER *be impatient with yourſelf.* Aſſure yourſelf, that an impatient Man becomes his own Executioner, and that he torments himſelf by a thouſand needleſs Diſcontents and Inquietudes; he becomes inſupportable to himſelf, every Thing diſpleaſes him; and he entirely loſes the Peace and Quiet of his own Mind. Never let any ill Accident or bad Succeſs of an Undertaking, rob you of that inward Peace, which is the true Mark of a good Mind, as Unquietneſs is of an evil one. The Wicked are like the troubled Sea, that can never reſt. Even the Sins that you fall into ſhould not draw upon you Vexation of Spirit. Your only Buſineſs then is, to humble yourſelf before God under the Senſe of them, heartily to beg his Pardon and Forgiveneſs, and then to compoſe yourſelf to the ſame Tranquillity you formerly enjoyed.

4. NEVER *ſay any thing in a Paſſion.* It is not then a proper Seaſon to make a Reply, or to undertake any thing of Conſequence; becauſe in a Fit of Anger, Paſſion clouds the Underſtanding. Let the Smoke fly off, let the troubled Water ſettle, and then you will be able to diſcover,

ver, what Reaſon requires from you, when the Storm of Paſſion is quieted.

THE true Remedy when you find Anger boil in your Breaſt, is to retire, or to change the Diſcourſe, or elſe to impoſe upon yourſelf on ſuch Occaſions an obſtinate Silence, otherwiſe you will be apt to offend with your Tongue.

I BEG you above all Things to be mindful of this Direction; for, ſooner or later, you will certainly repent of whatever you ſhall ſay or do in your Anger.

LET me farther give you a little Hint upon this Subject. I find ſeveral are able to moderate themſelves when they are provoked to Anger, and can govern their Reſentment at the Time when they are offended; but ſome Time after they apply themſelves to their Friends and Intimates, to relate to them the bad Treatment they have received; and under the Pretence of aſking Advice, and of ſeeking Comfort, they will make a long Narration of the Injuries they have received. Now to what Purpoſe is all this Diſcourſe, and what does it ſerve for, but to renew their Reſentment, which was almoſt appeaſed; and to rekindle their Anger, which was almoſt extinguiſhed. By this Manner of proceeding, your Mind is more exaſperated, and you no ways edify him to whom you

you complain, who eaſily perceives by your Complaints, how ſenſibly you are touched with the Treatment you have met with.

5. Be *ready to pardon thoſe that offend you.* There are ſome, who take Things ſo much to Heart, and reſent ſo highly the leaſt Thing that has been done againſt them, that they make Forgiveneſs a hard and difficult Work. But this is a great and dangerous Error. We muſt not be ſo delicate upon the Point of Honour: Theſe little Things ought to be deſpiſed; for if we dwell upon them, if we examine and conſider them, our Imagination will quickly magnify them; and the more we think upon them, the more intolerable they will appear to us, and the Fire of Anger will burn more fiercely. If you had not laid ſo much Streſs upon a little Provocation, you would have been free from the Anguiſh and Trouble you now ſuffer.

Never go about to cover your Paſſion and your Vanity with the Pretext of Piety and Reaſon, but always remember what I am now about to ſay to you. If what is ſaid or done againſt you does you no real Hurt, you ought to deſpiſe it. If you ſuffer any Thing by it bear it for God's ſake, pardon it willingly, and make Advantage of ſo fair an Opportunity to improve in Virtue.

6. Apply

6. Apply *yourſelf to God with Truſt in Him.* When every Thing ſucceeds, God is too often forgot; but in the Day of Adverſity we ſeek to him for Relief. The Emptineſs of Creature Comforts, and the Vanity of all worldly Things, being thoroughly diſcovered, we addreſs ourſelves to Him that can only help us. God does not deny us human Support in our Afflictions, but expects we ſhould put our chief Truſt and Confidence in Him, and depend upon Him for the Succeſs of all other Means; by which Method, He very often is prevailed upon to appear in our Behalf; but if he does not, and ſtill thinks fit to deny what we deſire, it is becauſe He has ſomething better in Store for us. Always remember this laſt Hint, that God has ſomething better in Store for you.

7. Suffer *joyfully, and with a Willingneſs to endure more, if God thinks fit.* Is it poſſible to find any Seed of Joy ſown in the Path of Sufferings? Yes certainly, they ſpring up in the Minds of thoſe that are thoroughly convinced that their Sufferings come from God, and therefore delight in the Accompliſhment of his bleſſed Will and Pleaſure. Like Soldiers, they ſuffer with Joy, who chearfully obey the Orders of their Prince, when his Service expoſes

expoſes them to the greateſt Fatigues. Let not therefore Sorrow and Trouble ſink your Spirits, preſerve a compoſed Countenance, and let all your Anſwers be made with Mildneſs. And ſtill advance farther in the Temper and Diſpoſition of your Mind, to embrace greater Sufferings, if the Providence of God thinks fit to exerciſe you with greater Trials. *O Lord, if it be thy Will, lay more upon me; all I beg is, that at the ſame Time thou wouldſt be pleaſed to increaſe my Patience.*

8. CONFORM *yourſelf to the Will of God, in thoſe Afflictions which he ſends you.* It is agreed, that it is our Duty to ſubmit to what God in his Wiſdom ſhall lay upon us; and that we ſhould always pray, that his *Will may be done.* However, it is very neceſſary that I ſhould warn you againſt an ill Practice, too common among thoſe that are otherways very devout: They are apt to declare their Readineſs to ſuffer, when the Will of God makes it their Duty, to which they deſire to conform themſelves, but they would fain excuſe themſelves from the preſent Affliction that lies upon them, and think any other would be eaſy to them; but that which they endure, always appears to them unſeaſonable: They complain, it hinders their Endeavour after Chriſtian Perfection; and

that

that inſtead of improving their Virtue, it increaſes their Guilt. The Man who is touched in his Reputation, declares how willingly he would ſubmit to any other Affliction that could befal him; but he is not able to bear ſuch injurious Reflections, they ſtrike too near his Heart. The ſick Man, that is confined to his Bed, which is irkſome and very tireſome, complains that his Diſtemper makes him impatient and diſcontented, and prevents the Practice of ſeveral good Works he deſigned, if free from his Sickneſs. The Woman, who meets with a perverſe Huſband, and with obſtinate, diſobedient Children, would ſuffer willingly any other Affliction, except that which lies upon her, which ſhe imagines can only ſerve to increaſe her Miſery in this Life and the next. In ſhort, there is almoſt no Body but who would be willing to exchange their preſent Croſs for another, and think themſelves unhappy in the particular ſort of their Sufferings; whence it proceeds that their Minds are always unquiet, and that they never perfectly reſign themſelves to the Will of God.

Now all this Management is very unreaſonable; for is it not God that ſends or permits that particular Affliction? Does not the Manner of your Suffering come from

from his Hand? It is for you to determine what He ought to do? And ought you to prescribe to him the particular Cross he should lay upon you? Banish all such Thoughts from your Mind, and let the Cross which he sends you be received with Resignation and Satisfaction, though it may be it is not what you would have chose for yourself: It is sufficient to make you contented and quiet, that it comes from God; and that therefore it is by this Affliction that He designs to make your Calling and Election sure.

CHAP. VIII.

For THURSDAY.

Of the Improvement of our Talents, and Co-operation with God's Grace.

HOW do you think that the blessed Saints arrived at Christian Perfection in this Life, and at the Happiness of Heaven, which they now enjoy? Why, it was by a faithful Improvement of those Talents God intrusted to their Management; by not receiving his Grace in vain, but

but by corresponding to it, carefully endeavouring to make themselves perfect in that State and Condition which God had called them to.

1. Be *content with that condition God places you in.* Alas! how is it possible for you to arrive at the Happiness of the next Life, but by being faithful and religious in those Circumstances that Providence has determined for you? Be sure instantly to beg of God the Light of his holy Spirit, when you are about choosing your Calling, or engaging in any particular State and Condition of Life; and be not so much influenced by Passion, by Interest, or any worldly Consideration, as by Reason, as by its Tendency to promote your Salvation, and as by the Advice of your Parents, or a pious faithful Friend. And above all Things desire of God, that He would teach you to do his Will.

2. Acquit *yourself faithfully of the particular Obligations of your Condition.* There are Saints in all Callings, and in all Circumstances of Life: Never pretend therefore, that in your Condition the Difficulties are too great to work out your Salvation; for as the Providence of God has placed you in it, He will not fail to supply you with all such Means as are necessary for your Progress in Piety and Virtue.

Be

Be but careful to ſerve God, and faithfully perform the Duties of your Calling, and you may be ſure God will never leave you nor forſake you.

3. ENDEAVOUR *daily to improve in all ſorts of Virtue.* Men whoſe Minds are bent upon Heaven, are always advancing in thoſe Paths that lead to it. They are not content only to do their Duty but ſtrive continually to perform it after a more perfect Manner. They catch at every Opportunity of doing Good to the Bodies and Souls of Men; they are always upon their Guard, to keep their Paſſions under good Government, and are ready to obey all the Inſpirations of God's holy Spirit. Their Method muſt be thy Imitation; for thy Happineſs will depend upon thy growing in Grace, upon thy improving in all Chriſtian Virtues.

THE Method you ought to take muſt be this:

I. POSSESS *yourſelf with the Knowledge of what God requires of you.* This is the firſt Step you muſt make; like St *Paul* upon his Converſion, you muſt cry out, *Lord, what wouldſt thou have me to do?* The Foundation of a Chriſtian Life muſt be laid in Knowledge; our Minds muſt be rightly informed in the Particulars of our Duty, before it is poſſible we ſhould practiſe

tiſe them: And this muſt relate not only to our Condition in general, but to all the particular Circumſtances of our Life, and to thoſe different Offices the Variety of Relations require from us. Beg of God that He would enlighten your Mind with the Knowledge of his Will, that when any Difficulty ariſes, He would be pleaſed to make it plain and eaſy to your Apprehenſion.

II. SHEW *forth your Knowledge by your Works, and correſpond to divine Inſtruction.* After having informed our Minds with the Knowledge of our Duty, the next Step muſt be, to put it courageouſly in Execution. Alas! what Improvement have you made of that Light God has conveyed to your Underſtanding? Of thoſe holy Diſpoſitions, with which He has enlivened your Will? If he had beſtowed ſuch Favours upon others, they would have made a better Uſe of them, and by this Time have attained large Degrees of Piety; which Reflection ought to confound thy Sloth and Negligence.

GOD has done his Part when he enlightens our Minds, and influences our Affections; but it is our Buſineſs to walk as the Children of Light. He has ſufficiently declared his good Will towards us, by furniſhing us with ſo many Means of Grace, our Care muſt be to make a right

right Uſe of them; for by the Abuſe of them, we ſhall be anſwerable, not only for the Grace we have neglected, but for thoſe further Degrees God had prepared for us, if we had received as we ought his firſt Favours. Grieve not therefore the Holy Spirit, who is the Author of Peace and Joy, but render thyſelf obedient to his holy Inſpirations.

III. Neglect *not the leaſt Degree of Grace God beſtoweth upon you.* If thou underſtoodſt the Value of the leaſt of his Favours, and of thoſe good Thoughts which paſs unregarded by thee, thou wouldſt certainly eſteem them very highly, and not render them ineffectual by thy ſtupid Careleſſneſs. Every Spark of a good Thought ſhould be blown into a Flame, and produce a ſuitable Practice in thy Life and Converſation. God ſtands knocking at the Door of your Heart, do not refuſe to open it and let Him in; but remember always, that he beſtows his Grace in Proportion to our Uſe of it. A right Improvement of the firſt Degree, prepares us for a larger Communication; and the Contempt of his firſt Offers, makes us ſtill more unworthy of his merciful Compaſſion towards us: *To him that hath ſhall be given, and to him that hath not, ſhall be taken away even that which he hath. If any Man*

love me, ſays our Saviour, *John* xiv. 23. *He will keep my Words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him.*

IV. Be *careful to diſtinguiſh the Motions of God's Spirit from thoſe of the Evil One.* The Devil can transform himſelf into an Angel of Light, and gild over his Bait with ſpecious Pretences to deceive thee. The Thoughts that offer themſelves, and the Seaſon of them, muſt be nicely obſerved, that we may not be impoſed upon.

This Direction is very important. For Example, when an Opportunity offers of practiſing an Act of Mortification, of Humility, of Charity, or of Patience, *&c.* you may be prevailed upon, by a falſe Perſuaſion, to think that that Act of Virtue cannot, or ought not to be performed at that Time; that it is unſeaſonable, and though good in itſelf, may better be adjourned to another Opportunity; and ſo inſtead of complying with that holy Motion which ſolicits you to Good, by liſtening to the Deceit of the evil One, you are diverted from it. Thus in our Prayers, when our Minds ſhould be fixed upon God, to whom we addreſs, and upon thoſe Things we deſire to be ſupplied with, our Thoughts will ſometimes be taken up in projecting ſome Work of Charity,

Charity, and the Means of accomplishing it. Now this, tho' good in itself, must at that Time be rejected, as an Art the Devil makes use of, to divert us from a right Performance of our Devotions. Thus necessary is it that we should attend to our Thoughts, and the right Season of encouraging them when they are good.

V. Often *consult with your Spiritual Guide.* We are all apt to be too partial to ourselves, and are too presumptuous when we lean too much to our own Understandings. Besides, the Guidance of our Pastor is one of the Means God affords for our Improvement, and his Assistance is very necessary to preserve us from being imposed upon. Let him be acquainted with the State of thy Soul, with those Temptations and Difficulties that assault thee, with those Doubts that oppress thee, with the Sin that does most easily beset thee, and with those Frailties that most frequently overcome thee. Let him know the Posture of thy Mind in thy Devotions; how thou employest thy Time when at leisure; and when busy, how thou governest thy Family; how thou dischargest thy Calling; and how frequently thy Mind is refreshed with devout Thoughts.

VI. Faithfully *discharge your Duty.* Let it be no small Part of your Reflection

to examine with what Care you perform the Obligations you lie under,

1. TOWARDS *GOD.* The Service of God ought to have the Preference in all our Actions; ſee therefore whether Sloth, or too eager a Concern for the Things of the World, does not make you omit paying Him that Devotion and Attendance which He requires from you.

2. TOWARDS *yourſelf.* Would it not be an unpardonable Folly, ſo to mind others, as to neglect one's ſelf? Are you careful to make a daily Progreſs in Virtue? Do you perform all your Actions with Exactneſs and Regularity? Are the Duties of your Relation and Calling diſcharged with their due Perfection?

3. TOWARDS *others.* If you have a Family under your Government; what Care do you take in the Education of your Children, in the Inſtruction of your Servants, and in every Thing that relates to the temporal and ſpiritual Affairs of it? If you have the Cure of Souls; what Zeal do you ſhew in the Diſcharge of your ſacred Function? What Concern appears to ſave thoſe for whom Chriſt died? If you are a Judge or Civil Magiſtrate; what Impartiality in diſtributing Juſtice? What Diligence and Fidelity in executing the Truſt committed to you? *&c.*

REMEMBER

REMEMBER always, that as every State and Condition has its Advantages, ſo it is not without its Difficulties and Temptations. It is in Heaven only that we ſhall be placed beyond the Reach of Danger, and the Fear of any Relapſe. Conſider therefore the particular Temptations of your Circumſtances, and in what Manner they may be apt to hinder your Increaſe in Piety; reflect upon thoſe Faults that moſt frequently occur to People in your Condition, and endeavour carefully to avoid them, that you may, by the Mercy of God, *be numbered among his Saints in Glory everlaſting*.

CHAP. IX.

For FRIDAY.

MORTIFICATION.

IT is not to be doubted, but that when you ſeriouſly reflect upon the Crucifixion of your Saviour for the Sins of the World, tranſacted as upon this Day of the Week, you may be prevailed upon to undertake the Work of *Mortification*. This Proſpect of a crucified *Jeſus* has Motives ſufficient to humble the moſt

ſenſual Sinner, and to put him upon Acts of Self-denial; eſpecially when you have conſidered the abſolute Neceſſity of this Virtue: And this in reſpect,

1. To *what is Paſt.* Though we are made capable of Pardon and Reconciliation to God, by the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*; yet if we do not puniſh ourſelves for our Sins in this World, we ſhall be more liable to ſuffer for them in the next. Exerciſe the Part of a ſevere Judge upon yourſelf, and execute the Sentence; that you may prevent the Juſtice of God, in the Vengeance He takes upon the Effeminate and Voluptuous Sinners. Your Acts of Intemperance and Exceſs muſt be mortified, by abſtaining from thoſe lawful Pleaſures you have abuſed: Your extravagant and immoderate Mirth, by Tears of Sorrow and Compunction; your Acts of Fraud and Injuſtice, by Reſtitution and Charity; the Follies and Gaieties of trifling Converſation, by Solitude and Retirement; the Freedoms of your Tongue, and the Liberties you have taken in reflecting upon others, by Silence, and religious Meditation. If any one fell into any notorious Sin after Baptiſm, the Primitive Church thought it not ſufficient that he ſhould repeat his Crime no more; but he was obliged, by a long Courſe of *Mortification*,

fication, *by Fasting*, *Prayer*, *Tears*, and *Good Works*, to endeavour to wash out the Stain and Guilt.

2. To *what is Present*. The Inclinations of the Flesh carry us to forbidden Pleasures; and our Minds are bent upon gratifying the Senses. This makes it necessary to keep your Body under, to subject it to Reason, to apply your Mind to spiritual Objects, by subduing your irregular Passions and Appetites. There are Multitudes of People condemned to the Miseries of everlasting Darkness, for not abstaining from a particular Pleasure, for not conquering one unruly Passion. There is always Reason to keep a Watch upon our Senses, and to govern our Appetites; because the Love of Pleasure is so great, that it often imposes upon our Understandings, and makes us judge that to be necessary, which is the meer Effect of Sensuality.

3. To *what is to come*. If the Trouble and Difficulty of practising this rough Method should be apt to abate your Courage, let the great Advantages of it raise your Spirits, and fortify your Resolution. The Habit of Self-denial once acquired will make the remaining Part of your Life more easy and agreeable; besides, the more we deny ourselves sensual Gratifica-

tions, the greater will be our Reward, and the brighter will be our Crown. And indeed, we are never truly conformed to the Image of the Son of God, till our Old Man is crucified with Him, and the Body of Sin is deſtroyed. Let us therefore addreſs ourſelves to the Son of God, intreating Him, that He would derive into our Souls the mighty Efficacy of his divine and all-ſufficient Sacrifice, in order to accompliſh that Sacrifice of our Old Man, which can only qualify us to partake of his Glory.

THE Acts of this Virtue conſiſt,

I. IN *ſubduing the Paſſions.* Here the Foundation of Mortification muſt be laid. All the Paſſions, more or leſs, make their Attacks upon us; but there is always one which is the moſt governing, and plays the Maſter in us. This Man is ſubject to Anger, another to Melancholy. A Word is apt to put this Woman into a Flame, and when ſhe indulges her Humour, ſhe becomes inſupportable. Others, it may be, are inclined to Impurity, Gluttony, or Vanity, *&c.* Now all theſe Paſſions muſt be kept under Government; in order to which, the following Rules muſt be obſerved.

THE *firſt* is, to reſiſt the Paſſion that attacks you, and not to ſuffer yourſelf to be

be prevailed upon to do any Thing which that Paſſion ſolicits you to. To all its Suggeſtions return a poſitive Denial, and reſolutely perſiſt in this Method.

THE *ſecond* is, not only to forbear doing what that Paſſion ſolicits you to, but to do the contrary. If Anger and Melancholy ſet upon you, inſtead of Roughneſs and Violence, ſpeak with Softneſs and Affability. If carnal Thoughts and intemperate Deſires preſs upon you, inſtead of gratifying them, or pleaſing yourſelf with the Repreſentations they would make, turn your Mind upon other Objects, and exerciſe ſome Acts of Abſtinence and Mortification.

II. IN *denying the Senſes*. If we will gratify our Senſes in every Thing we lawfully may, we ſhall not be long free from Guilt; for by Indulgence, they will acquire a great Power and Empire over us, and then it will be a difficult Taſk to deny them any Thing: So that if we would ſecure our eternal Salvation, by conquering and ſubduing our Senſes in all Inſtances that are ſinful, we muſt take Care not to indulge them in any Inſtances whatſoever. This Object pleaſes you, look not too long upon it. This Book is full of Wit, which ſerves only to gild over the Poiſon and Danger of it; read

it not. It is not to be imagined the great Advantage we ſhall receive by neglecting to gratify our Senſes; Experience only can aſſure us how it tends to ſecure our Virtue.

III. In *Practiſing it upon the ſmalleſt Occaſions.* Never excuſe yourſelf from Mortification, by ſaying, that the Occaſion that offers for it is inconſiderable: If it is a little Thing, it will coſt you the leſs Pains; but the Conſequence is important: Becauſe in theſe little Things you always aſſert the Empire over your Paſſions; from whence it will follow, that in Matters of the greateſt Moment you will be Maſter of yourſelf, and no Paſſion will be able to prevail againſt you.

But the Thing is not ſo little as you are apt to think: How dear did a Look coſt *David?* from which if he had abſtained, he might have preſerved his Innocence. An ill-timed Glance of the Eye, obſcene Diſcourſe not diſcouraged, a Thought not quickly rejected, a choleric Emotion not preſently ſuppreſſed, have drawn after them a fatal Train of Guilt and Miſery.

IV. In *doing Acts of Penance.* The Diſcipline of the Church is at ſo low an Ebb among us, that we ought to take the more Care to exerciſe it upon ourſelves.

ſelves. It is certain, the primitive Saints went to Heaven by Watchings and Faſtings, &c. They retrenched from the ordinary Hours of Sleep, to dedicate them to Prayer and Devotion; they refrained frequently from their ordinary Meals, that their Bodies might be the better diſpoſed for ſpiritual Exerciſes. If they uſed theſe Means with ſo great Succeſs, why ſhouldſt not thou make the ſame Experiment? If you are not able to reach the Height of their Example, imitate it ſtill in ſome meaſure: If you cannot entirely forbear a Meal, let the Quantity be leſs, and the Quality not delicate: If Hours taken from thy ordinary Reſt may diſturb thee, ſurely one now and then can bring no great Prejudice to thee.

V. In *chearfully ſuffering any Inconveniency you are expoſed to.* It is an Effect of the Goodneſs of God that He gives us an Opportunity to exerciſe our Patience, whereby we may enhance our Reward. The Rigour of the Seaſons, Cold, Heat, Hunger, Thirſt, ill Weather, Sickneſs, Wounds, Victuals ill dreſſed, a Bed ill made, a diſagreeable Smell, the Stinging of a Bee, and a Thouſand other little Accidents that happen to us, give us a fair Opportunity to promote our Salvation, if we ſuffer them patiently, without complaining.

VI. Let

VI. LET *no Difficulty diſcourage you in this Work.* No Man having put his Hand to the Plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God: And we muſt never imitate thoſe lazy and ſlothful Chriſtians who ſink under this neceſſary Work, and are terrified with the Pain and Trouble it gives them. Conſider, 1. That nothing excellent is acquired without Pains; and that therefore no Virtue is to be obtained, except we ſtrive for Maſtery. 2. Often reflect, that the more Pains and Labour you beſtow, the greater Glory you reap; that the Difficulty raiſes the Merit of your Virtue, which is more or leſs acceptable, according to the Pains you take in procuring it. 3. What we perform but ſeldom, gives us moſt Uneaſineſs in the Diſcharge of it. Let Mortification be familiar to you, and Exerciſe will make it much more eaſy to you. 4. Never diſtruſt the Goodneſs of God; He who has diſpoſed your Mind to begin a good Work, will continue his divine Aſſiſtance, in order to enable you to perfect it. 5. Turn your Eyes upon the crucified *Jeſus*, who has ſuffered ſo much for you, while you refuſe to deny yourſelf for Him. Set before you the Example of ſo many faithful Servants of God, who have practiſed Mortification, and that in a very eminent Degree.

Degree. 6. Think often of the Joys of Heaven, which you hope for; and of the Pains of Hell, which you endeavour to avoid; and of the Greatneſs and Multitude of your Sins; and then you can want no Encouragement to excite you to Mortification and Self-denial.

VII. Do *not contrive Pretences to excuſe yourſelf from it:* Self-love is very ingenious to give falſe Colours to our Neglect; and we are ſo bent upon Pleaſure, and ſo averſe to the leaſt Suffering, that we readily catch at any Plea to excuſe ourſelves. If we are to Faſt, or exerciſe any other Act of Self-denial, we are apt to urge our own Weakneſs, and the Inconvenience we may ſuffer from it. If theſe Pleas were true, they would be reaſonable; but very often they are but imaginary, and become great from our Averſion to give ourſelves the leaſt Diſguſt. At another time, we plead our Circumſtances, or our Company, or the Impoſſibility of doing it, or ſome other Reaſons that make it fit to diſpenſe with ourſelves. Yet really our Circumſtances are no Hindrance, the Impoſſibility is only pretended, and the Reaſons are vain and trifling. The true Reaſon is, our own Niceneſs and Love of Pleaſure. In ſhort, the Meaſure of our Progreſs towards Chriſtian Perfection

Perfection muſt be taken from thoſe Reſtraints we are able to lay upon ourſelves, and from the Conqueſt we get over all ſenſual Deſires.

CHAP. X.

For SATURDAY.

CHASTITY.

THIS Virtue conſiſts in the due Government of thoſe Appetites which God has planted in us for the Propagating of Mankind, and which therefore muſt be confined within the Bounds of lawful Matrimony; ſince any other Method of gratifying them, is contrary to that Purity which the Goſpel enjoins; *For this is the Will of God, even your Sanctification, that you ſhould abſtain from Fornication, that every one ſhould know how to poſſeſs his Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour; not in the Luſt of Concupiſcence, as the Gentiles which know not God; for God has not called us unto Uncleanneſs, but unto Holineſs.* To the great Neglect of this Virtue, is owing much of that Scepticiſm and Infidelity which prevails in the World; for if early Breaches of Innocence had not been made

by

by indulging ſinful Paſſions, Mens Minds would not be ſo averſe from entertaining the Principles of Religion, founded in the true Reaſon and Intereſt of Mankind: beſides, the *Sinning againſt our own Bodies*, as the Apoſtle calls it, expoſes us, 1. *To Trouble and Anxiety*. If the unclean Sinner has not entirely diſcarded the Fear of God, all the good Principles and Maxims of a virtuous Education ſtare him in the Face; God's all-ſearching Eye, from which nothing can be hid; a dreadful Judgment, which nothing can avert; a devouring Fire, which muſt be his Portion to all Eternity; what Subjects of Horror and Conſternation are theſe? But if he has ſtifled the Checks of his Conſcience, the Eye of Man muſt ſtill be ſhunned and avoided; for as bad as the World is, Vice has not the current Stamp; Meaſures muſt be concerted, Opportunities muſt be ſought for, our beſt Friends muſt be impoſed upon, and every Minute we muſt tremble for fear of being ſurpriſed and diſcovered. The Fears of any young Perſon, ſeduced by this Paſſion, are not to be expreſſed, if there be but the leaſt Remains of Modeſty and Senſe of Honour; and the Anguiſh of ſome Peoples Minds upon theſe Occaſions, has riſen ſo high, that they have made away with themſelves, to get rid

rid of the Torment of it. What Pains and Diſeaſes it brings upon the Body, are too apparent to be mentioned, and may convince the Sinner how dearly he purchaſes his forbidden Pleaſure.

2. To *Shame and Diſhonour.* And this not only upon the Account that it is a Violation of God's Law, and a Contempt of Him, who is the Fountain of true Honour, in which all other Vices agree with this; but moreover, becauſe it is contrary to the prevailing Opinion of Mankind, which, in deſpite of the general Corruption, has loaded this Vice with Ignominy and Reproach; and becauſe it puts a Man upon many baſe and diſhonourable Actions to gratify it. The Senſe of all Nations has made the Honour of Women to conſiſt in their Modeſty; and the Word *Virtue*, when applied to them, particularly relates to their Chaſtity: And if Lying and Treachery, if Perjury and Infidelity, are contrary to the Rules of Honour; if betraying our beſt Friends, and wronging them in the moſt ſenſible Part, be infamous and contemptible; this Vice, which ſo frequently puts Men upon theſe baſe Actions, may be very well reckoned ſhameful and diſhonourable.

3. To *eternal Deſtruction.* Thoſe who are under the Power of theſe evil Habits, know

know but too well the Force of them; and notwithſtanding their ſerious Reſolutions at ſome Times, their Horror of their Condition, their Uneaſineſs from the Expence that attends their Extravagancies; yet ſtill they are not able to break their Chains, and it muſt be a Miracle of Grace that recovers them; for the Spirit being ſubdued by the Fleſh, the Obligations of Religion begin to loſe their Force, the Means of Religion are firſt neglected, and then the Principles of it begin to be queſtioned: and by degrees, Men are made ſuch Captives and Slaves to their Luſts, that their Recovery is deſperate, and they are never awakened to a Senſe of their Follies, till the Miſeries of a ſad Eternity make them repent when it is too late. *Let all my Pleaſures, O God, be governed by Reaſon and Religion, that I may not be deaf to good Counſel, nor blind to thoſe Things that concern my eternal Welfare.*

THIS Virtue muſt be exerciſed,

I. IN *your Thoughts and Deſires.* It is poſſible, the firſt Motions of your Paſſion may not be under your own Government, and conſequently, that you may not be anſwerable for them; but it is in your own Power to ſtifle and ſuppreſs them, to reject them with Horror and Contempt, and to apply your Minds vigorouſly upon other

other Subjects, which will certainly divert them; becauſe the Frame of our Nature is not capable of dwelling intenſely upon two Things at the ſame Time. So that we muſt take care not to indulge any filthy Fancies; we muſt caſt away any Scene of Luſt that repreſents itſelf to us, with Indignation; and here our Security lies in Flight, rather than in looking the Temptation in the Face: We certainly offend in our Thoughts, when we determine to enjoy any unlawful Pleaſure, and only expect an Occaſion to put it in Execution; beſides, we contract Guilt by delighting ourſelves with ſuch Thoughts; though we do not deſign to bring them into Act: And as we muſt govern our Thoughts in looking forward, ſo we muſt have the ſame Guard over them in relation to what is paſt; for any unclean Paſſages of our former Lives, muſt never be reflected upon with Pleaſure and Satisfaction; for this is deliberately to delight ourſelves with ſuch Follies, which, it may be, Raſhneſs and Surpriſe engaged us in at firſt.

II. In *your Words.* Nothing is a greater Sign of a corrupt Heart, than filthy and obſcene Diſcourſe: Therefore we muſt take care that our Speech does not betray the Diſorder of our Minds.

Nothing

Nothing can be a greater Abuſe of that noble Faculty of Speech, which diſtinguiſhes us from Beaſts, and was beſtowed upon us to glorify God, and to edify our Neighbour, than to pollute it by lewd and filthy Talk; for hereby we affront his holy Nature, offend the Chaſte and Virtuous, and farther corrupt thoſe whoſe Inclinations are vicious. Beſides, at the Day of Judgment, we ſhall give an Account of all ſuch *idle Words*; and if the vain and unprofitable Talker ſhall be condemned, where ſhall the obſcene Jeſter appear?

We muſt take Care, not only that our Words be free from flagrant Lewdneſs, but from any double Meaning whatſoever; and never to make uſe of Words capable of ſeveral Senſes, with a Deſign to create any obſcene Ideas in thoſe we converſe with. Nay, we muſt avoid conveying any unchaſte Thought to our Neighbour, though we can preſerve ourſelves from Blame, in the Way of expreſſing it; for this Manner of offending does moſt Hurt, becauſe the Poiſon is gilded and made palatable; whereas downright filthy Talk ſhocks at firſt hearing, and being directly oppoſite to natural Modeſty, has not ſo malign an Influence. Even in relating Reports and Paſſages concerning

concerning others, we must not so tie ourselves to repeat Particulars, as to offend Christian Modesty; for hereby we contract too great a Familiarity with dissolute Expressions, and corrupt the Minds of the Hearers, by entertaining them with such Things which they cannot learn too late, nor forget too soon.

THIS filthy Sort of Conversation is most nauseous in those who are advanced in Years; because it argues a Mind extremely depraved, and gives too great a Countenance to the Follies of Youth.

III. IN *your Actions.* There are many apt to conclude themselves innocent, provided they preserve themselves free from the finishing Scene of Lust, and consequently, indulge themselves in all other Manner of Liberties that fall short of the last Act of Uncleanness: But herein they deceive themselves; for he that suffers his Eyes to rove, and fixes them upon a forbidden Object, will be apt to commit Adultery in his Heart; he that indulges any of his Senses so far, as to excite any Desire of forbidden Pleasures, defiles and pollutes his Soul. To preserve our Innocence, our Eyes, our Ears, and our Hands, must be kept continent; that is, we must look upon nothing, read nothing, hear nothing, touch nothing, that may inflame

inflame our ſinful Paſſions, or diſpoſe us in any Manner to gratify them. All theſe preliminary Actions have a Degree of Guilt, more or leſs, as they obtain the free Conſent of our Minds; and generally they carry us on to contract greater Guilt; for when Luſt is conceived, it bringeth forth Sin: They ſet us upon a Precipice, where corrupt Nature puſhes us upon our Ruin. Exerciſe thy Chriſtian Prudence therefore in ſetting a Guard upon thy own Inclinations, and by avoiding Provocations, to keep thy Paſſion at due Diſtance by the Uſe of Reaſon, leſt thou ſhouldſt unawares be ſurpriſed by it. Thus *Ageſilaus* refuſed to receive a Kiſs from a beautiful Perſon addreſſing to him; and *Cyrus* would not ſuffer himſelf to behold the Beauty of *Panthea*.

IV. MORTIFY *your Body*. He that ſincerely deſires the End, will make Uſe of all proper Means to attain it. If we reſolve to keep our Bodies in Chaſtity, we muſt not pamper them, nor exceed in our Meaſures of Eating and Drinking. The *Ax* muſt be *laid to the Root of the Tree*, and the Remedy muſt be applied to the Cauſe of the Diſtemper. There is a Proviſion for the Fleſh, that diſpoſes us to fulfil the Luſt thereof; if we would extinguiſh the Flame, we ſhould not add ſuch

ſuch Fuel as ſerves only to increaſe it. *Faſting* has in all Ages been made uſe of to this Purpoſe; and among the many Reaſons that inforce the Practice of it, it is not the leaſt conſiderable, that it reſtrains the looſer Appetites of the Fleſh, and diſpoſes us to Sobriety and Seriouſneſs; and when we abate of the Rigour of Faſting, we ſhould not forget to abſtain from ſuch Food as is moſt nouriſhing to the Body; for Feeding to the full betrays us to looſe Mirth, and pampers the unhappy Diſeaſe of our Nature, which our chief Buſineſs is to cure and conquer.

V. APPLY *yourſelf to ſome innocent or commendable Study or Buſineſs.* The Mind of Man is too active a Principle to continue free from the Exerciſe of its Faculties, and yet ſo framed, as not to be able to proſecute various Objects with equal Intenſeneſs; the Appetites of our Bodies frequently follow the Bent of our Minds; that which we moſt think of, we are readieſt to put in Practice. The great Force of this Means conſiſts in diverting our Thoughts from dwelling upon forbidden Objects; for when we are proſecuting any Art or Science, when we are employed in innocent Buſineſs, or any lawful Calling, we are not at Leiſure to entertain Thoughts of Pleaſure; the Deſires and Appetites

Appetites of the Flesh find no Encouragement, and therefore are neglected. Let thy great Care therefore be, to keep thyself always employed; if thou art engaged in a Calling, prosecute it with Diligence and Application: If thy Condition and Quality sets thee above a Profession, the Care of thy own Estate, and the acquiring such Knowledge as may be serviceable to thyself and thy Neighbour, may very well challenge a great Share of thy Time; and by being thus profitably busied, thou wilt leave no room for the unclean Spirit to enter into thy Soul and tempt thee. We find the Men of Pleasure in the Number of those who are at a Loss how to spend their Time! Idleness is a proper Soil for all Vice to thrive in, and where it prevails, Chastity can seldom maintain its Ground, but is sacrificed to an Enemy always within us, ready to betray us. *Grant, O Lord, that I may always be piously or profitably employed: That I may have no Leisure to indulge the sinful Lusts of the Flesh; nor Time to entertain my Mind with such Thoughts as defile the Soul.*

VI. DISTRUST *thyself.* How many Men have been ruined, by presuming too much upon their own Strength; by running themselves into Temptations, which they had the Confidence to think they could easily

eaſily maſter? But ſad Experience has convinced them of their Error, and want of Caution has betrayed their Virtue, and made Work for Repentance. How juſtly might we blame a Candidate in the *Olympic Games*, who ſhould contend for Victory, without all thoſe preparatory Exerciſes which are neceſſary to qualify him to win the Prize? Who ſhould lay ſuch Streſs upon his natural Powers as to neglect the Diſcipline of Art and Diet, and all that preliminary Management which fits the Body to exert itſelf to the greateſt Advantage? *Solomon* pronounceth that Man *happy that feareth always*, and makes Confidence the Portion of Fools: *The Fool rageth, and is confident.* We ſhall find ourſelves deceived, if we think to go far in a ſlippery Path without a Fall, if we preſume to indulge ourſelves to ſuch a Point without Danger; for as a Man can have no Aſſurance of that, ſo if one could, who can anſwer for themſelves, that they ſhall keep within the Bounds they propoſe? The Corruption of Nature is great, and the Violence of our Appetites impetuous; ſo that if we give them all the Liberty we lawfully may, they will quickly maſter us, and ſnatch at ſuch Gratifications that are unlawful to enjoy. From a Senſe therefore of thy own Weakneſs,

neſs, and of the Power of Temptation, keep at a Diſtance from all ſuch Circumſtances that may poſſibly corrupt thy Innocence: Truſt not thyſelf in reading Books that are framed to raiſe thy Paſſions; to gaze upon Pictures that move thy Deſires; to converſe with Company that delight to ſhew their Wit in filthy Subjects. The more diffident you are of yourſelf, the leſs liable you will be to expoſe yourſelf to Danger.

VII. AVOID *Familiarity with the contrary Sex.* Love, of all Paſſions, is the moſt dangerous, becauſe the moſt violent, and hardeſt to be overcome. Now all Intimacies of this Kind, are Occaſions that may fire our Paſſions, and are therefore to be avoided. It is by this Method that our Affections are inſenſibly ingaged; and when they are firmly bent towards an Object, they ſeek to gratify themſelves by Enjoyment. Even that Friendſhip that is founded purely upon Virtue and Merit, and is the leaſt ſupported by Senſe, may in the Iſſue prove fatal and dangerous: For tho' at firſt we are only charmed with the Beauties of the Mind, entertained with a good Underſtanding, edified by a modeſt and virtuous Behaviour; yet, by degrees, our Admiration and Delight in thoſe Accompliſh-

ments extends itſelf to the whole Perſon, and the Talents of the Mind render the Body more pleaſing and agreeable; ſo that what begins in the Spirit, without great Care, and the Grace of God, may end in the Fleſh.

VIII. PRAY *frequently and fervently.* This is the Way to procure that Grace of God which is ſo neceſſary to preſerve us from falling, or to recover us if we are ſo unfortunate as to tranſgreſs. The *frequency* of it will fix our Minds upon ſpiritual Objects, and fill us with a Senſe of God's being preſent every where; an Impreſſion which is very proper to keep our Appetites under Government; for who will not be reſtrained from gratifying them, when he remembers the All-ſeeing Eye of God, who is infinite Purity? The *fervour* of it will deaden our Affections to ſenſual Enjoyments; for when we are importunate for Things more excellent, and of which we have greater need, we ſhall ſo paſs through Things Temporal, as not to forfeit our Title to thoſe which are Eternal. Beg therefore of God, that He would create in you a perfect Abhorrence of all Impurity; that He would cleanſe you from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit; that He would ſet a ſtrict Guard on thy Senſes, turn away thine Eyes,

Eyes, ſtop thine Ears, bridle thy Tongue, and reſtrain thy Hand from all Uncleanneſs: That He would give thee Grace to fly all Incitements or Opportunities of corrupting thy Neighbour or thyſelf.

AND when impure Thoughts are the Remains of a bad Life, and the Puniſhment of thoſe evil Habits we had formerly contracted, we muſt endeavour to quench this Fire with the Tears of Repentance for what is paſt: We muſt confeſs before God the Impurity of our former Lives, and abhor ourſelves for thoſe Follies, whereby we have offended Him: We muſt beg him to ſtrengthen our Reſolutions, and in his good Time to caſt out the Remains of the unclean Spirit: We muſt look upon them as a juſt Correction for our former Diſorders, and ſubmit with Patience and Humility; ſaying, with *Joſeph*'s Brethren, *We have deſerved theſe Things, becauſe we have ſinned.*

WE muſt the rather apply ourſelves to this Remedy of Prayer, becauſe thro' its Power and Strength, all other Means become ſucceſsful and effectual.

CHAP. XI.

Reflections relating to the Conquering of any Vice.

AFTER having prescribed to you the Means to obtain any considerable Virtue, it is necessary at present that I should give you some Directions in order to the Conquering of any Vice, and to enable you to surmount those Temptations, which appear as so many Obstacles and Hindrances to your Perfection. It is true, this Life is a perpetual Warfare, where a thousand Occasions offer themselves of contending with Enemies, that want neither Inclination nor Malice to destroy us; we must either oppose those Vanities of the World, which constantly allure us, or resist those Assaults the Devil makes upon us, or contemn those flattering Caresses of the Flesh, whereby it seeks to ruin us. But besides all these Temptations, from which no Body is exempt, there is always one more fierce than the rest, which wages a cruel War against us: It is the Master-Passion of our Minds, the Sin which does most easily beset us; it being certain, that every one has a weak Place, over which he ought particularly to watch.

The

The following Method may be ſerviceable towards the Conquering any darling Sin.

I. To *fear it.* The firſt Step to be made is to be apprehenſive of that Sin to which you are moſt ſubject. It appears to you, it may be, but as a Trifle, a Matter of ſmall Conſequence: Alas! there are many, who made the ſame Judgment as you do, and who, giving themſelves little or no Concern to get rid of a Paſſion to which they were moſt inclined, have thereby been betrayed into many deplorable and dangerous Faults; and their unhappy Fall has proved ſometimes irrecoverable. That little Paſſion to which you begin to be ſubject; that Liberty you indulge of gratifying your Senſes in Hearing, Seeing, and Touching every Thing that pleaſes you; that Vanity which already takes Poſſeſſion of your Heart, and which diſpoſes you upon all Occaſions to prefer yourſelf before others; alas! you ought to fear leſt theſe Paſſions in the Bud ſhould in a ſmall Time blow and flouriſh, leſt little Sins become great ones, and, in the Iſſue, prove the deplorable Source of your Ruin and eternal Deſtruction. To prevent ſo diſmal a State, you muſt be always upon your Guard, and muſt live under a conſtant Senſe of thoſe dreadful Evils, to which

the particular Corruption of your Nature expoſes you.

II. To *reſiſt it.* It is not enough to dread the bad Conſequences of a governing Paſſion, but we muſt take all Occaſions to reſiſt and oppoſe it; ſo that it may not get the better of us, by making us do whatever it ſuggeſts to us: For if we do not deny it the Gratification it pretends to, it will quickly get Ground upon us, and fortify itſelf to ſuch a Degree, that the Conqueſt will be much more difficult, if we are ever ſo happy as to overcome it. How comes it to paſs that Anger, Luxury, and Vanity, Pride or Covetouſneſs, prevail as much upon you now, as they did ten Years ago? Alas! you give no Check to theſe Paſſions; you are provoked againſt a Perſon that ſhocks you; and inſtead of reſiſting your Anger, and moderating your Paſſion, you give Way to it, and ſay all the injurious Things you can think of againſt the Perſon that offends you. Company and good Liquor tempt you to drink to Exceſs; inſtead of denying your Appetite, and reſiſting the Offer, you comply with both; ſo that you immediately perform what the Temptation ſuggeſts to you; and after the ſame Manner you practiſe in Relation to other Vices. What Wonder therefore if you are always

ſubject

ſubject to a Vice which you have never Reſolution enough to oppoſe!

But there is ſtill a greater Inconvenience; which is, that you are not only ſubject to the ſame Vice continually, which you do not reſiſt; but that you daily become more ſubject to it: The Habit of the Sin grows ſtronger, and by frequent repeated Acts it is ſo rooted in you, that it becomes almoſt impoſſible to conquer it. Thus you may ſee then how important a Matter it is to reſiſt it.

III. Fly *from it.* Your Enemies are ſo dangerous, that it is always ſafer to avoid meeting with them, than to expoſe yourſelf to the Hazard of being overcome. I ſhould do you no inconſiderable Piece of Service, if I could thoroughly convince you, that a Perſon that expoſes himſelf to the Occaſion of Sinning, is half conquered; and that among thoſe who truſt themſelves in dangerous Circumſtances, very few eſcape. We are ſo weak of ourſelves, and Temptations are ſo ſtrong, and we have ſo great a Bias to that which is Evil, that if we add to this an Occaſion of Sining, how difficult will be our Retreat?

IV. Pray *againſt it.* In vain we attempt the Conqueſt of any Vice, without Strength from Above; and ſince by your own Experience you find it a difficult Work, you

cannot be too earneſt for the Help and Aſſiſtance of God's Grace; particularly when you approach the Altar, and commemorate the Sacrifice of your dear Redeemer, pray that the Virtue of it may extend to the Sin that doth moſt eaſily beſet you, that it may ſtrengthen your Reſolutions againſt it, and fortify you in the Day of Trial. Let the dreadful Conſequences of it frequently be the Subject of your Meditations, that your Mind being thoroughly impreſſed with a great Horror of the Vice you are moſt ſubject to, you may be leſs liable to commit it for the Time to come.

V. EXAMINE *yourſelf often.* Serious Reflection upon ourſelves often repeated, is an admirable Inſtrument of Reformation. By this Means, no Vice can make any conſiderable Progreſs without being detected: This gives us an Occaſion to conſider the falſe Steps we have made, and thoſe Circumſtances that have been the Cauſe of them, and thoſe Remedies which are moſt proper to apply for the Cure of them.

VI. PERSEVERE. The Perſeverance I recommend to you, conſiſts in the conſtant Uſe of thoſe Means I have offered to you; and not to follow the Example of many, who after a ſhort Trial of the Remedies preſcribed, deſiſt from the Uſe of them, and

and in a Week's Time, no more think of the Directions that have been given than if they had never been mentioned. And farther, it conſiſts in not being diſcouraged by any Advantage the Enemy may get over us; and notwithſtanding the Faults we may ſometimes commit, never to let go our Hopes of Amending them. It is one of the great Artifices of the Devil, to perſuade the Sinner that it is loſt Labour to attempt to mend his Life; that his Recovery is impoſſible; and that his evil Habits are too deeply rooted to be conquered. Never give heed to this lying Spirit, but raiſe your Courage to do your Duty better for the Time to come.

I SHALL conclude theſe Reflections, by laying before you thoſe Methods the Devil makes uſe of, in order to your Deſtruction. He firſt attacks you by bad Thoughts, and then endeavours to make you pleaſed with them. After this firſt Attack, his next Point is to ſolicit your Conſent to thoſe bad Thoughts; and from thence he ſtirs you up to put them in Execution. From Actions frequently repeated, he forms our evil Habits, and our evil Habits bring upon us as it were a Neceſſity of Sinning, and this Neceſſity brings forth Death, the eternal Death of the Sinner. Your Buſineſs therefore muſt be to coun-

termine his Projects; 1. By resisting all evil Thoughts, and throwing them out of your Minds. 2. By not only denying your Consent, but by making an Act contrary to the Thought, protesting to God that you will rather die than offend Him. 3. By never proceeding to commit the sinful Action, but by courageously opposing the Temptation, that you may obtain the Crown of Victory reserved for all the faithful Servants of God.

CHAP. XII.

To be fervent in Spirit, and to be constantly resolved to serve God with the best of our Powers, is an admirable Instrument of Christian Perfection.

I Shall at present set before you two Sorts of Persons, of a different Character. The first are such as make it their chief Business to seek after God, who desire nothing more than to please Him, whose Discourse is chiefly of Him, and whose Minds are filled with the Ideas of his infinite Excellency and Perfections. If any Opportunity offers itself of practising any Virtue, they presently embrace it

it with Eagerneſs; and nothing adminiſters to them greater Joy and Satisfaction, than many ſuch Occaſions of ſerving God. If any Temptation attacks them, they reſiſt it with great Vigour, and make it a Foundation for the Exerciſe of many noble Acts of Virtue. They perform all their Actions with ſo much Exactneſs, and with ſuch a certain agreeable Fervour, as plainly demonſtrates that they are animated by the Holy Spirit of God. What do you think is the Reaſon that theſe Perſons govern themſelves with ſo much Perfection? The only Account that can be given of it is, that they are fervent in Spirit, and fully bent in their Minds to ſerve God to the utmoſt of their Power.

The Character of the other Sort of Perſons conſiſts in a certain Slothfulneſs, which appears in all their Actions: If they pray, it is with continual Diſtractions of Mind, and without being affected with what they are about. God is very rarely in their Thoughts, and heavenly Things are ſeldom the Subject of their Converſation. If they are tempted, they give Way to the Temptation. If any Opportunity of doing Good preſents itſelf, they either never reflect upon it, or if they take it into their Thoughts, they have not Courage to practiſe it. If they

are

are under any Obligation of exerciſing any Acts of Devotion, one plainly ſees by their negligent and careleſs Manner of performing them, that they are out of their Element, and that ſuch Employments are a ſort of Force upon their Natures. Now all this proceeds from the Want of that Fervour of Spirit which I have mentioned; their Minds are not fixed upon God. From whence you muſt needs judge of the Importance of this Temper of Soul, and cannot but deſire to know how it may be acquired, and how thoſe who are ſo happy as to enjoy it, may ſtill preſerve it.

In order to this Purpoſe, I ſhall offer to you ſome Conſiderations, which I beg you to make Trial of, as neceſſary Means to keep this holy Fire bright in your Minds.

1. The *Exerciſe of God's Preſence.* When a Soldier engages the Enemy in the Preſence of his Prince, he fights with greater Courage and Bravery. When a Chriſtian prays, converſes, or follows his Calling, with an actual Senſe that God ſees him, and is privy to all his Thoughts, it is impoſſible he ſhould be negligent or unconcerned. No; the Senſe of God's all-ſeeing Eye animates him with Care and Diligence, and with this Proſpect he endeavours

endeavours to do every Thing that may pleaſe Him beſt. If you would be ſecure of a general and effectual Means to pray with Devotion, to converſe with Reſerve, to follow your Profeſſion with Diligence, and to govern your Paſſions, and to reſiſt the Temptations that aſſault you; remember always, that God is preſent with you; endeavour to preſerve the Senſe of it upon your Mind, and accuſtom yourſelf to the Exerciſe of it. And if, when you have any Occaſion offered of practiſing any Virtue, or mortifying any Paſſion, you have not a Senſe of God's Preſence upon your Mind, immediately reflect upon it, and place God before you, and you will quickly experiment that Fervour of Spirit, and that Readineſs of Mind, to ſerve God upon all Occaſions, which is ſo important in our ſpiritual Life.

II. In *the ordinary Actions of your Life, and in the Occaſions of practiſing any Virtue, or avoiding any Sin*; 1. *Conſider what God requires from you.* 2. *Promiſe to perform it.* 3. *Put your Reſolution in Execution without Delay.* Now all this may be done almoſt in a Moment of Time, and you muſt immediately, without putting off, ſet about this Practice. Firſt then, I recommend to you to conſider in all your Actions, and in thoſe Occaſions I have mentioned,

mentioned, what is it God requires from you, and what is moſt pleaſing in his Sight. Alas! how much are you to blame when you act with Raſhneſs and Precipitation; when you paſs Hours and whole Days in different Actions, which ſucceed one another, without conſidering what it is God requires from you, without conſulting his Will and Pleaſure, in order that the Action, and the Manner of it, may be ſuch as He ſhall approve of? Let the Example of holy *David* prevail upon you, for the future, to ſet the Lord always before you. From Time to Time lift up your Heart to Him, whoſe Eyes run to and fro throughout all the Earth; and ſay to Him, *Lord, what wouldſt thou have me to do? Speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth.* In the *ſecond* Place, having thoroughly underſtood your Duty, and the Manner of performing it; that upon ſuch an Occaſion Patience ought to be exerciſed; that we ought not to fix our Eyes upon ſuch an Object; and that we ought always to pray with Reverence and Attention, *&c.* Upon ſuch Convictions we ought immediately to reſolve to practiſe what appears to us moſt acceptable to God: And then, in the *third* Place, we muſt, without Delay, put in Execution what we have reſolved. O! how important

tant is this Advice! Do not reſt in the bare Knowledge of your Duty; do not ſatisfy yourſelf with ſome faint Reſolutions of Practiſing it; but without loſing any farther Time, perform what you have promiſed, and practiſe what you have reſolved.

If it is an Opportunity of doing any Good, this Opportunity will quickly paſs through your Hands; and if you do not take Care you will let it ſlip, and be apt to ſay, as many other negligent Chriſtians do, *I will do this Good upon another Occaſion.* But alas! we ought not after this Manner to abuſe the Grace of God, and to ſquander away thoſe Opportunities He gives us for our Improvement. The Proverb ſays, *We muſt ſtrike the Iron while it is hot, and take Time by the Forelock.*

You are very well acquainted with your Duty in this Particular, and you are engaged to perform it; why then, alas! do you defer it: This Opportunity will never come again, and Time ſlides away; your good Inclinations may decreaſe, and your Zeal may abate; nay, the Grace of God may be withdrawn, if you do not make a preſent Uſe of it.

If the Occaſion relates to any Sin, it is ſtill more dangerous, after knowing it,

and

and reſolving to avoid it, to ſtand ſtill and do nothing. In ſuch Circumſtances let no Time be loſt; you have, it may be, entered upon a Diſcourſe that reflects upon your Neighbour; break it off immediately. You have reſolved not to look upon ſuch an Object, do not amuſe yourſelf in thinking of it, and diſpute no longer with yourſelf, whether you ſhall look upon it or no. And in the ſame Manner put in Execution the other Reſolves you have made. The longer you defer in ſuch Caſes, the greater Danger and Hazard you run: For the Reſolution being not at firſt put in Practice, by degrees the Strength of it declines; the Charms of the Object appear more tempting, the Pleaſure of it begins to creep into your Heart; ſo that the Temptation grows ſtronger, your Appetite rebels, and your Purpoſes ſtagger, and you are ſurpriſed to find yourſelf in ſo little a Time upon the Brink of Ruin. Now, whence does all this proceed? Why purely from deferring to practiſe your good Reſolutions, from delaying immediately to reſiſt the Temptation that attacks you.

III. Religious *Meditation.* It is found true in Experience, that they who apply themſelves to this Method are moſt zealous and fervent in the Diſcharge of their Duty,

Duty, moſt faithful to God in the Day of Trial and Temptation, and moſt ready to embrace all Opportunities of doing Good. Now whence does this proceed? The Truth is, their Minds being ſo frequently employed in meditating upon divine Subjects, in conſidering the Importance of everlaſting Salvation, the Advantages of Chriſtian Perfection, the Folly of Sin, and the Wiſdom of being Religious. Theſe Thoughts, which they have entertained themſelves with, eaſily return into their Minds; and they find their Heart more warmed with the ſame Fervours they experimented during their Exerciſes of Devotion. They then call to Mind thoſe great Truths which formerly have made ſo great an Impreſſion in their Souls, which ſerve them as a Bridle to reſtrain them from Evil, and as Motives to animate them to every Thing that is Good, and as a ſovereign Preſervative againſt all the Attacks of their ſpiritual Enemies; which ought to make you ſenſible of the great Advantage of religious Meditation, in order to make you zealous in the Service of God, and to keep your Minds firmly bent to pleaſe Him to the utmoſt of your Power.

FARTHER; If you would keep a lively Senſe of God upon your Minds, frequent

frequent the Prayers of the Church, and never neglect the Performance of them upon all Occasions in your Family; accustom yourself to divine Ejaculations, or Breathings towards Heaven. All these Instances of Devotion are so many Helps to keep the holy Flame bright in your Minds, which otherwise might decay, and by degrees go out: For you may assure yourself, that it is very difficult, amidst that Variety of Business and Diversion which happens during the Day, to preserve that Fervour and Zeal which our Morning Meditations kindled in our Souls. Some forbidden Pleasure will be apt to steal into our Hearts; a Fit of Anger, or any other Passion, it is possible, may ruffle us; and the Variety of Objects may dissipate and distract our Minds, and impair the Vigour of those Resolutions we made in the Morning. We must therefore feed this Flame, and fortify it against those Storms of the World it is always exposed to; which cannot be better effected, than by embracing all Opportunities of Conversing with God by Prayer.

It is with this Prospect we should enter into the Courts of the Lord; and our Prayers should partake of the Nature of Fire, which should warm and kindle Devotion

votion in our Minds, and make us willing and zealous to ſerve God to the utmoſt of our Power. And then, when we go out of God's Preſence, it will be with lower Thoughts of all the Enjoyments of this Life, and with a greater Reliſh of Piety and Holineſs, and with more eager Deſires of being made ſuch as He may love and approve of. We ſhall then find our Courage and Reſolution increaſe, and deſire nothing more than to be made perfect in Love.

IV. MAKE *frequent Acts of Mortification, of Patience, of Humility, or of any other Virtue.* It is poſſible that you may not be aware how this Direction can tend to the preſerving that Fervour of Mind which is recommended: but let me adviſe you only to practiſe it, and then Experience will thoroughly convince you of the Truth of it. The great Advantage of it is, that by thus correſponding to the Grace of God, you engage Him to increaſe his Favours towards you, whereby you will become ſtill more diſpoſed to obey Him in every Thing. Beſides, theſe Acts of Virtue, frequently repeated from Time to Time, quicken and awaken our benumbed Minds, and animate them with freſh Vigour and Strength. The Pains you take in practiſing theſe Virtues, and the

the Victory you get over yourself upon these Occasions, put you in Mind of that good God, whose Grace has enabled you; and one Victory gives you new Courage to undertake another, and thereby proceeds Matter for fresh Triumph.

The faithful and constant Practice of these Means, and a stedfast Purpose of pursuing your Perfection, will not fail of meeting with the desired Success; for this Fervour of Mind, this constant Disposition of Soul to serve God to the utmost of our Power, consists in constantly aiming at being perfect as God is perfect, and in desiring above all Things to please Him.

THE

PRACTICE

OF

True Devotion,

In Relation to the MEANS of

RELIGION.

CHAP. XIII.

General Reflections upon that Devotion that relates to the Means of Religion.

IT is not my Design to press you to the daily Observation of all those Means the Christian Religion enjoins for our Growth in Grace: Some of them have their stated Seasons, and the Enjoyment of them depends upon others doing their

their Duty; beſides, the Affairs and Buſineſs of the World challenge a Part of our Time; ſo that it is not expected that we ſhould every Day go through them all. What I deſire of you is, that after having peruſed them all, and having informed yourſelf in the Nature of them, you take Care to make uſe of them upon all convenient Opportunities, and always with that Proſpect and Deſign for which they were enjoined. The main of Religion muſt not be placed in them, but they muſt be uſed as Helps to make us pious and virtuous; and if we do not uſe them to this Purpoſe, they are altogether inſignificant and uſeleſs. Before I come to the particular Enumeration of them, I deſire you to make ſome important Reflections upon them in general.

I. Their *Uſefulneſs.* There is no attaining the End, without the Practice of thoſe Means that lead to it; a Man may as well pretend to be Learned without Study, and Rich without Induſtry, as Pious and Virtuous without obſerving that Method God has enjoined for becoming ſo. Beſides, conſidering the Weakneſs and Impotency of our Nature, we are not of ourſelves able to do any Thing that is Good; there is a Law in our Members warring againſt the Law of our Minds, and

and all our Sufficiency is from God: Now the Means of Religion are eſtabliſhed, on purpoſe for the Conveyance of that Grace and Aſſiſtance, which is neceſſary to enable us to perform our Duty; ſo that he who neglects the Uſe of the Means, forfeits his Share of that ſupernatural Strength without which his Endeavours will prove ineffectual. The great Happineſs a Chriſtian aims at in the next Life, is the Enjoyment of God, which a Man muſt be qualified for by a pious and virtuous Diſpoſition of Mind in this Life; and in order to acquire this happy Frame and Temper of Soul, he muſt frequently pray to God for his Grace to effect it: he muſt take all Occaſions of approaching the Altar, that he may be nouriſhed with all Goodneſs; he muſt attentively read his Word, that he may be thoroughly inſtructed in all the Particulars of his Duty, *&c.* Never complain that the Diſcipline of Religion is burdenſome; that the conſtant Practice of the Means lays a Reſtraint upon our Liberty; if it were much more ſo, the Neceſſity of them, in order to our Happineſs, ſhould more influence a wiſe Man, than any Difficulty that attends them: The great Advantages we receive from them, ſhould be ſufficient to oblige us to practiſe them.

II. The

II. The *Abuſe of them.* Never deceive yourſelf, as too many ignorant Chriſtians are apt to do, who falſly perſuade themſelves that their Salvation is ſecure, tho' their Lives are ſtained with many ſcandalous Vices, becauſe they conſtantly practiſe thoſe Means that are enjoined for the working out their Salvation; they go to Church, they pray, they hear Sermons, and receive the holy Sacrament: Such an Abuſe will as certainly deſtroy thee, as it has already ruined many a Thouſand. Remember always, that the Goodneſs of the Means muſt be eſtimated by their Serviceableneſs to the End; they are never enjoined for their own Sake, but in order to conduct us to the End propoſed; ſo that he who reſts in them, and allows himſelf at the ſame Time in any known Iniquity, endeavours to impoſe upon God, and betrays his own Soul.

He that pretends to the Perfection of true Piety without the Uſe of Means, is preſumptuous; and he that places all Religion in ſuch Performances, is weak and fooliſh. We muſt uſe the Means, becauſe God has enjoined them, and our own Weakneſs has made them neceſſary; and at the ſame Time we muſt carefully avoid every Thing that is Evil: And if we are ſo unfortunate, as upon any Occaſion to

tranſgreſs

tranſgreſs our Duty, we muſt not deſpair of the Goodneſs of God, who, for the Sake of our Saviour's Sufferings, is ready to receive us upon our ſincere Repentance, and to enable us by his Grace to reſiſt the Temptation for the Time to come.

III. The *Attention with which they ought to be performed.* We muſt not only uſe the Means preſcribed, but in ſuch a Way and Manner, that they may become moſt effectual. They muſt have very odd Notions of the Deity, who think to pleaſe Him by drawing nigh to Him with their Lips, when their Hearts are far from Him. To multiply Prayers and Sacraments without Attention, without minding what we are about, is meer Lip-Labour, and looks as if we thought God were to be reconciled to us by the Number of our Prayers, more than by the Diſpoſitions of thoſe that offer them: Beſides, ſuch Sorts of Devotion have as little Effect upon ourſelves, as they have upon God; it not being likely that we ſhould take much Pains to become what we aſk to be made, when we never attend to what we aſk. Exerciſe therefore the Means of Grace with great Seriouſneſs, as in the Preſence of the great God of Heaven and Earth; and that He may be willing to grant thy Petitions, attend to them thyſelf; let

them be offered with thy Heart, as well as thy Mouth; and then, as God will be ready to beſtow what thou deſireſt, ſo thou thyſelf wilt be zealous in all thy Actions to obtain it.

IV. Use *the Means with Faith.* When we have performed thoſe Conditions upon which God is pleaſed to diſpenſe his Favours, we ought to reſt aſſured that He will not fail to beſtow them upon us; which is uſing the Means of Religion with Faith. It is through the Defect of this Truſt and Confidence in God, that ſometimes our Prayers become ineffectual: The Addreſſes that we make to any one are but languid and faint, when we have no Aſſurance of his Power and Readineſs to aſſiſt us. Provided we ſincerely perform our Part, what may we not expect from the Power and Goodneſs of God, who is always ready and willing to communicate himſelf to ſuch who are qualified to receive the Effects of his Goodneſs? What can He deny us, who has given his only begotten Son to die for our Redemption? What may we not hope for from the inexpreſſible Love of the bleſſed Jeſus, who condeſcended to take our frail Nature upon Him, that we might be Partakers of the divine Nature? What Strength and Aſſiſtance may we not receive

ceive from the Holy Spirit, who beſtowed ſuch miraculous Gifts and Graces upon the Apoſtles to fit them to convert the World; and who has in all Ages ſupplied the Wants of faithful and ſincere Chriſtians? The Experience of the admirable Effects that have attended a ſerious and devout Application to the Holy Trinity, both in Life and in the Hour of Death, ſhould ſtir us up to put our Truſt and Confidence in the Mercy and Goodneſs of God.

V. CONSTANCY *and Perſeverance.* Never grow faint and weary of what conduces ſo much to your eternal Happineſs. Some ſet out with great Zeal and Fervour in the Practice of the Means of Grace; they begin with Chearfulneſs, and are ſometimes ſupported with the Novelty of ſuch Performances; but when the ſame Prayers, and the ſame Devotions frequently occur, by degrees they grow careleſs and negligent, and are perfectly tired with the frequent Repetition of them. Now we muſt always remember, that the Pains and Labours we take in the Service of God, that the Care we take in diſcharging the Exerciſes of Piety, will not loſe its Reward in the next World, and is of great Uſe and Advantage to us in our Pilgrimage here upon Earth. The more

Difficulties we contend with at preſent, if we overcome them, the greater is our Virtue, and the brighter will be our Crown. Never diſpenſe with the Neglect of your ſtated Hours of Devotion, with the Omiſſion of the appointed Seaſons of Public Worſhip, and of approaching the Holy Table, except in Caſes of abſolute Neceſſity: Let no Reluctancy or Wearineſs diſcourage you; let not the Raillery and Contempt of bad Men laugh you out of your Duty; but let all ſuch Opportunities be chearfully embraced, as the beſt Helps to ſtrengthen us in our Chriſtian Warfare, and to make the Man of God perfect.

CHAP. XIV.

For SUNDAY.

PRAYER.

ONE of the great Inſtruments of Religion is *Prayer*, whereby we addreſs ourſelves to God for the Relief of all our Wants and Neceſſities, both Temporal and Spiritual: We are commanded to aſk, in order to receive; and a Man muſt have but little Senſe of thoſe good Things

Things which God daily beſtows upon him, that refuſes to give him the Tribute of a thankful Heart; he muſt have but ſlight Notions of his own Weakneſs and Impotency, that does not ſeek for Help from Above. Now Prayer is of admirable Efficacy,

1. WHEN *we are cold and languid.* It is by this Means that our Underſtandings are filled with heavenly Light, that our Wills are diſpoſed to chooſe and embrace that which is Good, that our Affections are inflamed with the Love of God, and that our Hearts are taken off from the Creatures, and fixed upon the Creator. Prayer is as Fire, to which we muſt approach when we find we begin to wax cold, and then we ſhall perceive a gentle Warmth inſenſibly overſpread us, and by degrees it will riſe into a Flame, which will conſume every Thing that oppoſes our true Intereſt, and animate us to give up ourſelves entirely to the Conduct and Guidance of God's Holy Spirit. *While I was thus muſing, the Fire kindled,* ſaith *David.*

2. WHEN *we run aſtray.* It is very difficult, among thoſe various Actions in which we are daily engaged, among thoſe Multitude of Affairs which continually ſurround us, and thoſe Temptations which perpetually ſolicit us, not ſometimes to

tranſgreſs our Duty; and at beſt not to have our Minds wander from their true Center. Now what ſo proper to recover us from any wrong Step we have made, as the Senſe of the Greatneſs and Majeſty of God, whom we have offended? What more likely to reſtore Peace and Quiet to our Minds, than a Senſe of his infinite Goodneſs through *Jeſus Chriſt?* What can ſo ſoon and ſo eaſily recollect our diſſipated Minds, as fixing them upon a Being of infinite Perfection, the true Center of all our Happineſs? If bad Men are ſo monſtrouſly wicked, and good Men ſo imperfectly righteous, whence can it proceed, but from the Neglect of frequent Application to God by Prayer? Sin and Vice get daily Ground upon Men, when God is not in all their Thoughts.

3. When *we are under any Neceſſity.* If you are preſſed with any Temporal or Spiritual Want, let Prayer be your Refuge; for it is by the Means of Application to God that you will be relieved. If Temptations ſolicit you, if Afflictions oppreſs you, if you labour under any Neceſſity, ſeek for Redreſs by Prayer. If your Addreſſes to God are managed with thoſe Qualifications that are required, with Reverence and Attention, with Fervour and Conſtancy, and with an entire Truſt in his

his Goodneſs, they will not fail to meet with Succeſs. *You aſk, and have not, becauſe you aſk amiſs.* The Power, Dexterity, and Art of Man, can never prevail ſo much as the conſtant Prayer of a good Man; this has a Force to which all other Means muſt ſubmit.

As to the Practice of this Duty;

I. LET *your Hours of Prayer be regulated.* Conſidering the other Circumſtances of your Life, allot that Share of Time you can allow to this Exerciſe of Devotion, and be conſtant in your Obſervation of ſuch appointed Times. Never begin the Day without entering into your Cloſet, and addreſſing yourſelf to the great Creator of Heaven and Earth; and never retire to your Reſt, without commending yourſelf to his Protection. If you are a Maſter of a Family, let Morning and Evening Prayer have their ſtated Hours, that the Family may ſo order their Affairs as not to be abſent: This is the beſt Method to keep up a Senſe of Religion among your Children and Servants, without which, other Meaſures will prove ineffectual. As often as you conveniently can, frequent the public Prayers of the Church, which, as they are moſt acceptable to God, ſo they bring the moſt Profit and Advantage to us: This Exerciſe

of our Devotion is the proper Buſineſs of *Sundays*, and therefore we muſt charge ourſelves with it as Matter of Duty, to be preſent in the public Aſſemblies, upon ſuch Occaſions; no ſlight, trivial Excuſe ſhould be admitted to prevent our Attendance in God's Houſe; and the Flame of Piety muſt burn very dimly, if we can omit ſuch Occaſions without Concern, or enjoy them without Pleaſure and Satisfaction. We ſhould likewiſe endeavour ſo to order our worldly Affairs, as to frequent the public Worſhip on *Holy Days*.

II. Accustom *yourſelf to pious Ejaculations*. Theſe ſhort Breathings of the Soul towards God, are very uſeful to preſerve in us a devout Frame and Temper of Mind; they keep our Affections warm, and make us ready and zealous to embrace all Opportunities of doing Good. For this Purpoſe, we neither want a Church nor a Cloſet; but at our Work, at our Study, at our Buſineſs, nay, even in Converſation, we may exerciſe this Sort of Devotion. We ſhould always remember, that we are in the Preſence of God; that our moſt ſecret Actions are expoſed to his View: For this Senſe of God's Preſence will have a great Influence upon the Conduct of our Lives, in reſtraining us from Sin, in fortifying us againſt Temptations,

and

and in animating us with a holy Zeal in all our Actions. These Ejaculations are particularly of use when any Temptation assaults us: *Lord, let not the Enemy prevail against me; be thou my Strength and Support in this Hour of Trial:* When any Affliction happens to us; *It comes, O Lord, from thy Hand; therefore I will receive it with Patience and Submission, and I will wait thy Time for my Deliverance:* When we fall into any Sin; *Miserable Wretch that I am, to offend so good a God; Pardon, for Christ's Sake, O Lord, this my Folly, and enable me to avoid it for the Time to come:* When we are delivered from any Danger; *Thy Power and thy Might have preserved me: I will sing of thy Goodness as long as I live.* When we receive any Blessing; *I owe this Mercy, O Lord, to Thee, who art the Fountain of all Goodness, and I will express my Gratitude by serving Thee faithfully all the Days of my Life:* When Business and Conversation have dissipated our Minds; *Let not the Affairs and Pleasures of Life fill my Head; but let the Thoughts of Thee delight my Soul.* There is no great Time required for these Aspirations of the Soul towards God; a Cast of the Eye, a Gesture, a Sigh, one Word sometimes may be sufficient to testify to God the Bottom of our Hearts, and express the Desire we have to please Him.

III. SET *apart ſome Day peculiarly for ſpiritual Exerciſes.* If we obſerve *Friday*, the Weekly Faſt of the Church, no Day can be more proper to enlarge our Devotions upon than that; becauſe the Memory of our Saviour's Crucifixion ſupplies us with many Arguments to make us ſerious and devout: At ſuch Times it will be very fit to examine the Actions of the Week paſt, and to compare them with the Rule of our Duty; that where we find we have tranſgreſſed, we may repair thoſe Breaches by Repentance, and beg God's Grace to preſerve us for the future. Moſt ſerious Chriſtians ſet ſome Time apart for Prayer before their Approach to the holy Sacrament; which has this Advantage, that it ſtrengthens their Reſolutions, and inflames their Affections, and raiſes their Minds above the trifling Concerns of Life: It is very proper thus to trim our Lamp, when we go to meet the Beloved of our Souls. But ſtill we muſt not impoſe any Method of that Kind ſo neceſſarily upon ourſelves, as to neglect any Opportunity of Communicating when we are prevented in going through with it. Times of Affliction are beſt ſpent in our Cloſets; it is the Apoſtle's Rule, *That if any be afflicted, let him Pray:* Such fervent Intercourſes with

with God, will procure us that Comfort which the World cannot give: When any violent Temptation continues to perſecute us, how can we ſo effectually find Strength to reſiſt it, as by praying earneſtly to God that it may not prevail againſt us? This Advice of ſetting apart ſometimes a Day for Devotion, cannot be obſerved equally by all: Thoſe that have Command of Time cannot better employ it: Thoſe who are confined to Shops and Trades, muſt make themſelves amends by frequent Ejaculations in the midſt of their Buſineſs; and by being conſtant to their Morning and Evening Devotions in their Cloſets, and in their Families.

IV. ATTENTION *and Fervour.* Our Thoughts muſt be ſo intent at our Prayers, as to engage our Hearts, as well as our Lips, in God's Service; we muſt aſk with ſo much Importunity and Fervour of Affection, as to ſhew we are deſirous of the Bleſſings we beg, and that we value and eſteem what we aſk for. You muſt avoid, as much as poſſible, all wandring Thoughts, and recal your Mind as ſoon as you find it run aſtray; never be diſcouraged if you cannot entirely overcome them, but ſtill ſtrive againſt them, and bewail your own Weakneſs, and this in Time will make you more compoſed:

compoſed: We muſt never willingly entertain them, nor indulge ourſelves in thinking upon other Objects without Reſtraint; we muſt keep our Paſſions, as much as we can, under Government, that none of them may prevail ſo far as to diſtract us; and above all, you muſt fix in your Minds an awful Senſe of God's Preſence, which will compoſe your tumultuous Affections, ſtir up your flat and cold Deſires, and engage all the Powers and Faculties of your Souls in his Service.

V. RESPECT *and Reverence.* The modeſt Behaviour and Deportment of the Body, contributes very much to the Deſire and Attention of the Mind. The Greatneſs and Majeſty of God, to whom you ſpeak, and the Quality of a Supplicant, which belongs to you when you pray, ought to inſpire you with great Reverence and profound Reſpect, and ought to oblige you to make uſe of ſuch an humble Poſture, as may be proper not only to excite Devotion in yourſelves, but to have the ſame Influence on thoſe that behold you. And if you pray upon your Knees, with your Eyes fixed down, and your Hands joined together, it is much more likely to have this Effect, than if you ſtand up, and give yourſelf the Liberty of gazing about; which does but

diſtract

diſtract and diſſipate your own Mind, and diſpoſe your Neighbour to the ſame Careleſneſs and Negligence.

WHENEVER your Prayers are vocal, never pronounce your Words with Haſte and Precipitation: What Reaſon is there you ſhould be in ſuch Haſte? Are you tired with the great Honour you have of addreſſing yourſelf to God, and therefore endeavour to get out of his Preſence as ſoon as you can? Or do you run over your Prayers in ſuch a Hurry, that you may the ſooner have Leiſure for your worldly Employment? Alas! Can any Employment be of greater Importance to us than our Addreſſes to God? And ſhould any Thing animate us, and revive us more, than the Liberty of approaching the Throne of Grace? Beſides, when we ſpeak ſo faſt in our Prayers, and hurry ourſelves after that Rate, we cannot have Leiſure to think of what we ſay: This makes our Devotion look more like a Taſk, which we are obliged to go over, than a Piece of Worſhip to God, in which we ſhould be always ſerious and compoſed. It is no Wonder that we return from ſuch Prayers with as little Reliſh of Piety and Devotion, as when we firſt ſet about them; becauſe neither our Hearts nor our Heads are much affected by them.

VI. UNION

VI. UNION *with GOD.* It is this Union of Thought and Affection with God, that the devout Chriſtian ought to aſpire after. You ought to be ſo diſingaged from the Love of the Creatures, that the great Bent and Inclination of your Soul may be towards God. If you make any Progreſs in this Union, it will certainly have this Effect; it will make you think leſs of the Creatures, that you may have more leiſure to fix your Thoughts on God; the happy or unhappy Accidents of Life will have but little Influence upon you, becauſe you put your whole Truſt and Confidence in God, and make Him the Center of your Happineſs. The Hours of Prayer will become pleaſant and delightful, becauſe your chief Satisfaction will conſiſt in Communion with God. Your Mind will be then more intent upon God in your Prayers, and in your Actions; and during the Buſineſs of the Day, you will find your Soul attracted to Him, and inflamed with divine Love: In ſhort, you will have a particular Joy and Pleaſure, whenever any Occaſion offers itſelf of doing or ſuffering any Thing for the Sake of Him to whom you have given your Heart, and with whom you deſire to be moſt intimately united. You muſt unavoidably be ſenſible of the Happineſs

pineſs of ſuch a State and Condition, which ought to excite you earneſtly to contend for it: I ſhall content myſelf at preſent to hint at thoſe Things which tend to hinder this happy Union, that you may lay them aſide, and get rid of them.

1. Too great an Engagement in worldly Affairs, and being overwhelmed by a Multitude of Employments.

2. Too great a Paſſion and Concern for any Thing whatſoever; an Object that we love and hate extremely, will frequently preſent itſelf to us, and interrupt our Attention.

3. Too great an exerting ourſelves in reference to outward Things, over-much ſpeaking, too great Curioſity in ſeeing and hearing every Thing that paſſes.

4. WANT of Care, in avoiding little Faults. All theſe Things hinder our Union with God, and prevent that divine Reliſh we ſhould otherwiſe find in our Devotions. For ordinarily we are ſuch in our Prayers, as we approve ourſelves in the Courſe and Conduct of our Lives.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

For MONDAY.

Reading the Holy Scriptures, and other Books of Piety.

THAT *the Soul ſhould be without Knowledge*, the wiſe Man tells us, *is not good.* Now how is this to be attained, but by ſearching into thoſe Fountains from whence it flows? In order to the regular Practice of our Duty, it is neceſſary our Minds ſhould be acquainted with the true Principles of Religion and Virtue, which are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, and farther explained and enforced by the judicious Writings of wiſe and good Men; ſo that they who neglect to apply themſelves ſeriouſly to acquire neceſſary Knowledge, render themſelves incapable of diſcharging their Duty both to God and Man. The Goodneſs of God has manifeſted itſelf to us in ſo large a Meaſure, that we are not abandoned to the dim Light of our own Reaſon; but he has given us his holy Word to guide and direct us in the Path that leads to everlaſting Life; theſe Revelations contain what is neceſſary for us to believe and practiſe,

practiſe, and therefore we are obliged to learn and digeſt them. This appears,

1. FROM *the Nature and Deſign of them.* The great End and Deſign of writing the holy Scriptures, was to inſtruct Man in the Knowledge of true Religion, and to perſuade and engage him to the Practice of it. *Whatever Things were written aforetime, were written for our Learning, and our Admonition,* that we might earneſtly contend for the *Faith once delivered to the Saints.* But how can the Writing of it contribute to theſe Ends, if we do not ſeriouſly and frequently peruſe them? How ſhould our Minds be informed in the Nature of that Salvation which is purchaſed for us, if we do not acquaint ourſelves with what is revealed concerning it? How can we be ſtirred up to Remembrance, if we do not read what it ſuggeſts to our Memory? How can we be preſerved from offending God, but by Motives and Perſuaſions? But how can Motives and Perſuaſions affect our Minds, if we do not conſult and underſtand them? How can we *contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints,* if we do not learn from the Scriptures what that Faith is, and what thoſe Reaſons are which oblige us to *contend for it?* All other Diſcourſes of Piety, compoſed by devout and judicious

cious Men, have the ſame End in their View, to enlighten our Underſtandings with the Diſcovery of our Duty, and to inflame our Affections with the Love of it. But in order to make them effectual, we muſt ſeriouſly conſider them, and diligently read them; the beſt Arguments can have no Influence upon us, till we weigh their Force, and are convinced of the Goodneſs of them; the ſtrongeſt Motives can never affect us, except we attend to them.

2. FROM *the Dignity and Excellency of them.* Nothing can have greater Authority than thoſe Things which come from God: And when He is pleaſed to ſpeak, nothing can more raiſe the Worth of what is ſpoken. It is a great Perverſeneſs in our Nature, that we ſhould be ſo apt to reſign our Underſtandings to Men, who tho' they may have great Parts, are yet fallible, and at the ſame Time to ſhew any Backwardneſs to rely and depend upon what God affirms, who is Goodneſs and Truth itſelf. And when we receive the Dictates of our Superiors here upon Earth with Awe and Reſpect, ſurely we ſhould not ſlight and neglect the Oracles of God, the great King of all the World. Beſides, this divine Authority of the Scriptures is accompanied with infinite Wiſdom, which aſſures

aſſures us of the Fitneſs of all thoſe Means which are preſcribed in order to our Happineſs; with infinite Truth, which is a Guard againſt Deceit and Impoſture; with infinite Goodneſs and Kindneſs to us, which ſhould convince us of the Importance of what is enjoined: And yet theſe holy Writings do not only recommend themſelves to us by their Authority, but by the Excellency of the Matter they treat about; the Knowledge of God, and his Attributes, and the various Manifeſtations of himſelf to Mankind; the Way and Manner of paying Him our moſt acceptable Services, and the Means of attaining thoſe everlaſting Rewards He has been pleaſed to promiſe: And if theſe Motives will not prevail upon us to read and conſider, we muſt be very ſtupid and negligent in relation to that which is of the greateſt Concernment to us.

3. From *the dreadful Conſequences of neglecting them.* Many Things we may be ignorant of without Blame, and conſequently without Guilt. It is no Reflection upon us, if we do not underſtand the Principles of Philoſophy, nor the Problems of the Mathematicians, when we make neither of thoſe Studies our Profeſſion; but when we own ourſelves Chriſtians, not to know the Will and Pleaſure of

of our Lord and Maſter Jeſus Chriſt, is an unpardonable Neglect. This Matter is not indifferent in itſelf, neither is it left to us to chooſe or refuſe it; but ſince the Chriſtian Law is ſufficiently promulged, we cannot be ignorant of it without the utmoſt Hazard and Danger to ourſelves. In the Scriptures are the Words of eternal Life, which is not to be attained without the Knowledge and Practice of them: In the Scriptures are the Threatnings of eternal Death, which is not to be avoided without obſerving that Method our Saviour has preſcribed to free us from it: So that if we neglect to inform ourſelves in thoſe neceſſary Truths that are offered to us, our Condemnation will be unavoidable, becauſe our Ignorance can have no juſtifiable Excuſe.

THAT the Reading the Holy Scriptures may turn to your Benefit and Advantage;

I. READ *with an entire Submiſſion of your Underſtanding to what God reveals.* Being ſatisfied once that the Revelation comes from God, you ought readily to embrace what he propoſes for the Object of your Faith. We muſt not interpret Scripture by our prepoſſeſt Opinions, but govern all our own Notions by that Manifeſtation God has made of his Will. You muſt

muſt remember, that God is incomprehenſible in his own Nature; that his Perfections are infinite, and therefore above our Reach; and though our Faculties are not able to comprehend his divine Perfections, yet we have all imaginable Reaſon to believe them, becauſe natural Light acknowledges the divine Nature to be Incomprehenſible; and therefore, we have no Reaſon to reject any Doctrine God reveals, though very myſterious, and the Manner of it incomprehenſible. It certainly beſt becomes finite Creatures, as Men are, firmly to believe the Dictates of infinite Wiſdom, though they do not comprehend the Manner of the Things revealed, which are the Objects of our Faith. It is ſufficient, that the Chriſtian Myſteries may be proved from the Teſtimonies of holy Writ, and that the Catholic Church has always believed them in the Senſe we underſtand them. They who are removed from this Foundation, are always liable to be expoſed to dangerous Errors.

II. With *a ſincere Deſire of practiſing what you know to be the Will of God.* The Holy Scriptures were not writ only to fill our Heads, but to warm our Hearts; not only to give us a right Notion of God and ourſelves, but to be a Rule and Guide for the Conduct of our Lives. *He that knows*

knows his Maſter's Will, and does it not, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes. This honeſt Simplicity of Heart, is the good Ground, where the divine Inſtructions thrive and proſper; and Chriſt has aſſured us himſelf, *That he that doth God's Will, ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.* This Sanctification of our Wills and Affections, fits and prepares us for greater Degrees of divine Illumination: *A good Underſtanding have all they that do his Commandments.* This Temper of Mind anſwers the Ends for which the holy Scriptures were deſigned; for though it is neceſſary to know the Way and Manner of appeaſing the Wrath of God, upon which Account, the Goſpel is called the *Word of Reconciliation*; yet except we conform ourſelves to the Method preſcribed, we ſhall never partake of the Virtue of the all-ſufficient Sacrifice; we muſt ſincerely purpoſe to perform the Conditions, if ever we expect to reap the Fruits and Benefits of the Goſpel. God's Threatnings ſhould deter us from Sin, and his Promiſes ſtir us up to holy Obedience. The Lives recorded in Scripture of God's faithful Servants, ſhould excite us to imitate their Virtues, and all his Precepts ſhould direct our Lives. It is better not to have known the Way of Righteouſneſs, than

than when we have known it to neglect and deſpiſe it.

III. Beg *the Aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit.* It is to that bleſſed Spirit that we owe the Scriptures themſelves; for holy Men of God ſpake as they were inſpired; and it muſt be from the Influence of the ſame Spirit, that they become effectual to our Salvation. It is his Property to work upon our Hearts, whereby we perceive and know thoſe Things which we ought to do, and have Power and Strength faithfully to fulfil the ſame. This was *David*'s Practice; *Open my Eyes, O Lord, that I may ſee the wondrous Things of thy Law.* And if ever we deſign to read with Profit, we muſt copy after ſo great an Example; and upon this Occaſion, we may very properly make uſe of that admirable Collect of the Church; *Bleſſed Lord, who haſt cauſed all holy Scriptures to be written for our Learning, grant that I may in ſuch wiſe read them, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt them, that by Patience and Comfort of thy holy Word, I may embrace, and ever hold faſt the bleſſed Hope of everlaſting Life, which thou haſt given me in my Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* Amen.

IV. Read *the Scriptures with particular Attention.* Men miſerably impoſe upon themſelves, when they think they have diſcharged

diſcharged their Duty by reading ſo many Chapters; when, alas! the main Matter conſiſts in ſuch a Comprehenſion of the Senſe of them, as may influence our Lives, and diſpoſe us to practiſe what is contained in them. We can never receive any Profit from any human Writings, except we keep our Underſtandings cloſe to the Senſe of them; but to read the Scriptures careleſly and negligently, is dangerous and ſinful. To fix our Attention, we muſt conſider who it is that ſpeaks to us, the great Majeſty of Heaven and Earth; and the Importance of thoſe Things that are revealed, which concern no leſs than our eternal Happineſs or Miſery. Were ſuch Thoughts thoroughly impreſſed upon our Minds, it is impoſſible we ſhould ſuffer them to wander upon other Objects; ſuch Authority requires our particular Regard, and Matters of ſuch great Moment juſtly challenge the utmoſt Intention of our Souls. If any earthly Prince condeſcends to diſcourſe with us, we affront his Dignity by not liſtening to what he delivers; but how much greater an Affront is it to God, to whom the greateſt Things bear ſo little Proportion, to receive the Words of his Inſtruction after a careleſs and negligent Manner? *Pardon, O Lord, that little Regard*

gard that I have hitherto paid to the Manifeſtation of thy Will; for the Time to come, I will attend with the greateſt Serioufneſs to what thou delivereſt. Speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth.

V. READ *with Reverence.* The Heathen Oracles were always conſulted with great Ceremony and Solemnity, and ſhall we pay leſs Deference to the Oracles of the true God? When we take the holy Bible into our Hands, we ſhould raiſe our Minds to the greateſt Value and Eſteem imaginable of what is contained in it. For they are not the Words of human Wiſdom; they are not the Reſult of human Reaſon; but they deſcend from Above, from the Father of Lights, with whom is no Variableneſs or Shadow of Changing. If we had an habitual Reverence of God upon our Minds, we ſhould never read his Word only for Cuſtom or Diverſion: But yet this habitual Reverence muſt be actually excited by proper Conſiderations; for according to our Value and Eſteem of any thing, will our Endeavours riſe towards the attaining thereof.

VI. APPLY *what you read to your own Soul.* The frequent Calls to Repentance ſo often addreſſed by St *John* Baptiſt, by our Saviour himſelf, and his Apoſtles, to the Generation to which they preached,

were intended to awaken us to Sorrow and Shame for thoſe Sins we have committed, and to ſtir us up to hate and forſake them; for except we repent, we ſhall certainly periſh. It will little avail us to know that black Catalogue of Sins, which St *Paul* aſſures the *Corinthians* would exclude them from the Kingdom of God, except we ſecure ourſelves by Care and Diligence to avoid them: For any of thoſe Crimes indulged, will as certainly ſhut Heaven's Gates againſt us, as it did againſt them to whom that Epiſtle is dedicated. The Promiſes and Threatnings of the Goſpel equally concern us, as they did them to whom they were delivered; and therefore it is reaſonable they ſhould affect our Hopes and Fears as they did theirs. To read Scripture without this Application of it to the State of our own Minds, is to make it very inſignificant to the great Purpoſes for which it was writ.

VII. Use *ſome Paraphraſe or Expoſition to aſſiſt you in the Underſtanding of Scripture.* Any Book writ at that Diſtance from the Times we live in, as the Scriptures were, muſt have Relation to Cuſtoms with which we are unacquainted; muſt have Hints of Things then commonly known, but now out of uſe: Upon this Account, ſome

ſome ſhort Notices of them will give us great Light in underſtanding ſeveral Things, that otherwiſe may appear obſcure. Beſides, when we know the Subject Matter beforehand of any of St *Paul*'s Epiſtles, and the End and Deſign for which he wrote it, we do the more eaſily enter into the Senſe of it; and then ſeveral Phraſes, which appear by themſelves difficult, receive freſh Light from the Knowledge of what he propoſed to treat of: To this End, it might be of great uſe to have Contents to every Book of Scripture, as we have to every Chapter: For from that general Idea of what is contained in the Book, we ſhould be aſſiſted to underſtand Particulars. For thoſe who have not ſuch Advantages, I would adviſe them, when they meet with Difficulties, to apply to their ſpiritual Guides, in order to have their Help and Aſſiſtance in the underſtanding of them, and to take their particular Directions how to read with greateſt Profit; always taking Care that they addreſs to them, not out of vain Curioſity or any Inclination to cavil, but with a ſincere Deſire of informing their Judgment, and rectifying their Practice.

VIII. RECOLLECT *what moſt touches you after Reading.* It will be difficult to charge our Memories with every Particu-

lar: The Exhortations to Virtue are various, and the Diſcouragements from Vice are frequent; yet ſome noted Inſtances may always be retained, as the Subject of our Meditations in the ſeveral Occurrences and Buſineſſes of Life. This may be preſerved as a ſpiritual Noſegay, always ready to refreſh our Minds. Sometimes we may charge our Memory with a particular Promiſe, that encourages our Perſeverance in our Duty; and at another Time with a Threatning, that may deter us from complying with the Vanities and Follies of the Age. The Inſtances of God's bleſſing others in the Diſcharge of their Duty, may be retained as an Encouragement to ourſelves; and thoſe Marks of his Vengeance, with which he has chaſtiſed the Wicked, ſhould be remembered, as proper to deter us from the Commiſſion of any Thing that may diſpleaſe him. By the frequent Practice of this, we ſhall be ſtocked with Variety of Armour, to reſiſt the manifold Attacks of our ſpiritual Enemies, and we ſhall have a proper Remedy for every Temptation that aſſaults us. *That I may read to ſuch admirable Purpoſes, ſtrengthen, O Lord, my Memory, that I may always retain thoſe Things that may moſt contribute to my Increaſe in the Knowledge and Love of Thee; that being conformed to the*

the Image of my bleſſed Saviour here below, I may partake of his Glories in the World to come.

CHAP. XVI.

For TUESDAY.

MEDITATION.

IN a religious Senſe, Meditation is ſuch an Application of the Mind to the Conſideration of any divine Subject, whether it be any Myſtery of the Goſpel Inſtitution, or any Truth or Virtue of the Chriſtian Religion, or any Part of our Saviour's Life or Death; as may beſt diſpoſe us firmly to believe and embrace it, and ſtir up all the Faculties of the Soul to a vigorous Proſecution of it. It conſiſts in exciting holy Motions in our Souls, by virtue of thoſe good Thoughts we entertain and dwell upon: And indeed without this Practice, the Holy Scriptures and other devout Books, will have but little Effect upon us: For it is by this Method that we digeſt what we read, and turn it into the true Nouriſhment of our Minds.

1. MEDITATION *impreſſes the Senſe of our Duty upon our Minds.* Conſidering the

Frailty of our Natures, and our daily Converſe with ſenſual Objects, our Knowledge of divine Things would by Degrees be impaired, if we did not refreſh it by frequent Recollection. All the Motives that encourage our Obedience, and all the Puniſhments that are threatned againſt ſuch as tranſgreſs God's holy Laws, by this Means become effectual to us.

2. It *keeps our Conſcience tender, and afraid to offend.* In the Hurry and Noiſe of the World, we are too apt to neglect the Voice of Conſcience, which, as a faithful Friend, is always ready to direct us in the right Way, and to admoniſh us when we deviate from it: But when we meditate ſeriouſly upon our Duty, it will be difficult to reject the Teſtimony it offers, either by approving what we have done conformable to the Will of God, or by ſeverely reproaching us for thoſe Neglects which we have been guilty of.

3. It *habituates our Minds to ſpiritual Objects.* The daily Neceſſities of our Bodies call for our conſtant Care and Application; and God has thought fit to make it our Duty to provide for them: But yet, it is not reaſonable they ſhould engroſs all our Time, and take up all the Vigour and Strength of our Minds. We have a better Part, infinitely more worth

our

our Care, which, if ever it attains the Happineſs that is prepared for it, muſt converſe with Spirits in God's heavenly Kingdom, and be qualified for ſpiritual Enjoyments; and therefore Meditation is proper to train us up for that holy Society we expect to converſe with; and to make us familiar with ſuch Objects as are out of Sight; and which, for that very Reaſon, might otherwiſe loſe their Force and Influence upon us.

To make our Meditations uſeful to the beſt Purpoſes, we muſt obſerve this Method.

I. PREPARE *your Minds for this Duty by imploring God's Aſſiſtance.* We muſt remember that God is preſent to all our Thoughts, and ſearcheth out all our Ways; that we are unworthy, by reaſon of our Sins, to preſent ourſelves before him; and that we are unable, without his Aſſiſtance, to think any Thing that is Good. *I firmly believe, O God, that thou art here, and every where preſent; that thy Being and thy Power is infinite: I adore Thee with all Humility as my Sovereign Lord, and acknowledge that I am unworthy to appear before Thee, by reaſon of my many Infirmities and Follies; but for the Sake of the bleſſed Jeſus be gracious unto me, and ſo enlighten my Underſtanding, and influence my*

Will and Affections, that the preſent Action may tend to thy Glory, and the Good of my own Soul.

II. CHOOSE *the Subject of your Meditation.* I believe it adviſeable, for the Generality of Chriſtians that apply themſelves to this Method, to read ſome certain Subject out of a pious good Book, which will furniſh their Minds with proper Conſiderations for the Exerciſe of their Wills and Affections; there being few that are able to proſecute a Subject from themſelves, and to ſtrike all that Light which ſhould convince and warm at the ſame Time.

III. FIX *your Minds upon ſuch Conſiderations as are proper to your Subject.* If it relates to any Virtue or Vice, you muſt conſider, 1. *Its Nature, its Object*, and *its Acts.* 2. *Its Qualities*, the Excellence or Baſeneſs of it; the Eaſineſs or Difficulty, *&c.* of this Virtue, or that Vice. 3. *The Oppoſite* to this Vice or Virtue. 4. *The Advantages* of this Virtue, or the Inconveniencies of that Vice, in reſpect of God, yourſelf, and your Neighbour. 5. *The Recompence*, or Puniſhment, in this World and the next. 6. *The Reaſons* for the practiſing this Virtue, and for avoiding that Vice. 7. *The Authority of Scripture* concerning this Vice or Virtue, and the Notions good Men entertain about it.

8. *The*

8. *The Example* of ſuch as have practiſed it, or have avoided it, and what happened to them thereupon; it being probable, that the ſame Thing may be our Caſe. 9. *The Neceſſity* in general, and in our particular Actions, of practiſing this Virtue, or avoiding this Vice. 10. *The Means* of acquiring the Virtue, or of conquering the Vice. 11. *The Difficulties* that oppoſe the Practice of the Virtue. 12. *The Dangers* of falling into the Vice, and of thoſe Things that lead to it.

IF it relates to any Action, as ſuppoſe of our Saviour, we muſt conſider, 1. *The Perſon* that performed it, and thoſe that were preſent. 2. *The Dignity* of the Perſon. 3. *Upon whoſe Account* the Action was performed. 4. *The End* for which it was done. 5. *The Place* and Circumſtance. 6. *The Fruits* and Effects of it.

IF it relates to any Doctrine of the Goſpel, we muſt conſider, 1. *Its Truth*, becauſe God revealed it. 2. *The Neceſſity* of believing it, becauſe made a Condition of our Salvation. 3. *The Advantages* of it, in regard of God, our Neighbour, and ourſelves. 4. *The ill Conſequences* of the Contrary in the ſame three Reſpects. 5. *The Motives* that enforce it. 6. *The Means* that help to it.

It is not always neceſſary to make uſe of all theſe Conſiderations at one Time, neither to excite all the Affections that may be drawn from them; but ſome may be choſe at one Time, and ſome at another.

IV. The *Underſtanding being convinced by Conſideration, excite your Will and Affections to love and deſire, or to hate and ſhun the Object.* Then Arguments have their due Influence upon us, when they ſtir us up to practiſe what they repreſent as amiable and lovely; and when they put us upon avoiding what they convince us to be bad in itſelf, and prejudicial to our true Intereſt.

The Exerciſe of our Affections upon any Doctrine of Chriſtian Virtue, conſiſts, 1. *In believing* the Truth of it. 2. *In Thankfulneſs* for the Diſcovery of it. 3. *In Admiration* that we ourſelves, or others, have ſo little conſidered the Importance of it, and have practiſed it ſo imperfectly. 4. *In Compaſſion* to thoſe who are ſo unhappy as not to conſider it, and neglect the Practice of it. 5. *In Sorrow* for having given it ſo ſmall a Share in our Thoughts and Actions. 6. *In Humility and Confuſion*, upon the ſame Account. 7. *In a Diffidence* of our own Strength, acknowledging our Weakneſs, that without the Grace of God we can neither think

think nor do any Thing that is good. 8. *In a Confidence in God*, who is able to make us conſider, and to give us Strength to perform it. 9. *In giving Praiſe to God*, if we have in any Meaſure performed our Duty, it being owing to his Aſſiſtance. 10. *In reſolving* to practiſe it. 11. *In offering yourſelf to God*, to execute his Will and Pleaſure, and to overcome all the Difficulties that oppoſe it. 12. *In begging the Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit* to enable you to hate every Thing that is evil, and to follow that which is good.

THE *Affections* that relate to an *Action* are, 1. *Admiration* of the Greatneſs of the Action. 2. *Love* of the Perſon who has performed it, eſpecially if it was done upon our Account. 3. *Joy*, congratulating him that has done it, being touched with a Senſe of thoſe Favours and Privileges he has received. 4. *Thankfulneſs* to God for the Grace beſtowed upon him. 5. *Deſire* to imitate it. 6. *Diffidence* of ourſelves. 7. *Truſt in God*, by whoſe Grace you may be enabled to imitate it. 8. *Reſolution* to imitate it. 9. *An Oblation* of yourſelf to God for that Purpoſe. 10. *Prayer to God* for his Aſſiſtance.

5. THE *Conſiderations that relate to any Subject, and the Affections excited thereby, muſt be followed with Reſolution.* This is the

the great Deſign of entertaining our Minds with ſpiritual Subjects, that by converſing with them we may be directed and excited to amend our Lives. When we have been convinced of the Reaſonableneſs and Neceſſity of any Virtue, we muſt form a firm Purpoſe of Mind to practiſe it in our Lives and Converſation: When we are poſſeſſed with the Unſeaſonableneſs, and with the fatal Conſequences of any Vice, we muſt reſolve to ſhun and avoid it. When a divine Doctrine is ſufficiently revealed, we muſt readily believe and embrace it. When we are acquainted with the great Things Jeſus Chriſt has done for us, we muſt reſolve to make him the Returns of our Gratitude and Obedience. This Reſolution muſt, 1. *Extend* to all the *Particulars* of our Duty, for they all equally oblige us. 2. *To all Times*, preſent as well as future, under Temptation, as well as when we are free from it. 3. *To the avoiding all Occaſions* that betray us to the Breach of our Duty. 4. *To the Uſe of all Means* that help us to perform it; as Prayer and the frequent Receiving the Holy Sacrament.

VI. CONCLUDE *your Meditation with a particular Addreſs to God*; that he would be pleaſed to affect your Mind with a conſtant Senſe of your Duty, in all the Particulars

ticulars of it; chiefly that he would enable you to practiſe that Virtue, or to ſhun that Vice that you have been meditating upon; and that he would ſtrengthen you in performing thoſe Reſolutions you have made of advancing in Piety and Virtue; that he would not leave you to yourſelf, nor to thoſe Temptations that daily aſſault you; but that he would ſo continually aſſiſt you with his Grace, that you may continue his faithful Servant to your Life's End.

You will do very well to retain ſome particular Thought of your Meditation, as Matter for a pious Ejaculation, which you may frequently repeat in the ſeveral Intervals all the Day long.

CHAP. XVII.

For WEDNESDAY.

EXAMINATION.

AMong all the Inſtruments of Religion, none ſeems to be of greater Uſe than the daily calling ourſelves to a ſtrict Account for all our Actions, comparing them with the Laws of God, the Rule and Meaſure of our Duty. It is of that Importance, that the greateſt Part of our ſpiritual Improvement ſeems to depend upon

upon it; for our relapſing daily into the ſame Fault, and making no Advancement in Piety, chiefly proceeds from the Neglect of this Practice. Men do not well conſider the Source of their vicious Inclinations; they do not entertain an Horror of their daily Sins; they do not reflect upon thoſe fatal Occaſions which are uſed to betray them to the Breach of God's Laws; neither do they make firm Purpoſes and effectual Reſolutions of Amendment. Whereas, if we ſubmitted ourſelves to this Examination every Evening, it would be impoſſible that the Seeds of Vice ſhould take any deep Root in our Hearts; neither would evil Habits be able to prevail upon us. To make us impartial in this Search, let us conſider,

1. THE *Preſence of God.* It is true, his Throne of State is eſtabliſhed Above, and the Splendors of his Glory ſhine only on the Bleſſed; but yet his unlimited Eye looks down upon this lower World, and he beholds all the Ways of the Children of Men. If we are in Public, he marks our Steps; if we retire, he is not excluded; he is conſcious of all the ſecret Contrivings of our Minds; and though we may impoſe upon ourſelves and others, yet nothing can be hid from his Omniſcience. Since therefore our Faults cannot be concealed from

from God, let us not endeavour to be ignorant of them ourſelves, but let us bring our moſt private Actions to the Teſt of his Laws, and impartially conſider, how much Evil we have been guilty of, and how little Good we have done, in compariſon of what we might and ought to have done.

2. THE *Voice of Conſcience.* When Men are once well inſtructed in the Nature of that Duty which they owe to God, their Neighbour, and themſelves; if they will but ſeriouſly attend to the Judgment of their own Minds, they will eaſily be convinced of the ſeveral Sins they are guilty of; ſo that they will never be able to recover the Peace of their own Minds, and ſilence the Reproaches of their Conſciences if they are not impartial in repenting of all thoſe Sins that gave them any Trouble and Diſquiet. Indeed, Sins of Omiſſion are not ſo apt to ſtartle the Mind, as Sins of Commiſſion: Theſe latter are apt to terrify us, and make us apprehenſive of the Wrath of God; whereas we eaſily find Salvo's to allay that Senſe of Guilt that ariſes from the former: Tho' to awaken Men, our Saviour has declared, that the Enquiry of the great Day will turn chiefly upon the Neglects of our Duty.

3. THE *dreadful Tribunal.* There is no Doctrine more clear and expreſs, and fundamental

damental in the Word of God, than that of *eternal Judgment*. *We muſt all appear before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt*, ſaith St *Paul*. And God has given *Aſſurance unto all Men, that he will judge the World by Jeſus Chriſt, in that he hath raiſed him from the Dead*. Our Words and Actions nay, our very Thoughts, will be then expoſed to public View, and we ſhall be tried for all we have done in the Body: Now an impartial Examination of ourſelves at preſent, may help to abate the Terrors of that dreadful Trial, by tending to make our Peace with God, and to reconcile ourſelves to him by a ſincere Repentance; for if we judge and condemn ourſelves, the Sentence of Condemnation ſhall not paſs upon us.

In the Practice of this Duty, we muſt,

I. Beg *God's Aſſiſtance*. Our Hearts are deceitful, and we are too much inclined to impoſe upon ourſelves: Our Vileneſs and Sinfulneſs is great, and the Sight of it is apt to ſhock and diſturb us, which makes us too willing to conceal it. Our ſinful Paſſions pleaſe and delight us, which makes us loth to part with them. And when we have diſcovered our Sins and Infirmities, we are apt to make too ſlight of them, and not to entertain that Senſe of their Guilt and Deformity

formity which they juſtly deſerve. *Make me ſenſible, O God, of my own Vileneſs, by reaſon of my Sins which are a Reproach to my Reaſon, as well as contradictory to thine eſſential Purity. Let me ſearch out all my wicked Ways, that I may forſake them: Enlighten my Eyes, that I may not reſt in Blindneſs and Hardneſs of Heart.*

II. SET *apart ſome Time every Evening to this Purpoſe.* The longer this Work is deferred, the more Difficulty there is to perform it aright. Several Inſtances of our Frailty and Infirmity may ſlip out of our Memories, and we may poſſibly forget Things of Importance to us: But by charging our Memories only with the Actions of a Day, we may eaſily recollect the whole Time, from our Riſing to our going to Bed: So that before we commit ourſelves to Sleep, we may heartily beg God's Pardon for the Sins of the Day, and thankfully acknowledge the Bleſſings received. This Method will make our Examination eaſy and advantageous to us; the ſucceeding Day may teach us to grow wiſe by the Faults of the preſent; and we may learn to keep our Guard in the right Place, that the ſame Sin may not ſurprize us.

III. SERIOUSLY *conſider the End and Deſign of examining yourſelf.* The Point we ſhould aim at, ſhould be to under-

ſtand

ſtand the true State and Condition of our Souls; what Temptations we are moſt liable to, and what Occaſions moſt eaſily overcome us; what Virtues we are moſt defective in, and what Sins generally prevail upon us: Without propoſing ſomething of this Nature to ourſelves, our Search will be but loſt Labour, and our Examination will never paſs for an Inſtrument of Religion: But if we uſe it as we ought, it will make our Repentance full and complete, becauſe it will extend to all thoſe Particulars wherein we have tranſgreſſed God's Laws; it will promote our Increaſe in Piety and Virtue, by making us ſenſible where we fall ſhort, and what Meaſures are neceſſary to make us acceptable in God's Sight. By this Means we may prevent the inſupportable Weight of the Sins of a whole Life falling upon us all at once, when it may be, we may not have ſufficient Preſence of Mind to recollect ourſelves, much leſs to perform any proper Act of Repentance. We ought particularly to conſider the weakeſt Parts of our Minds, by Nature or Cuſtom leaſt defenſible: becauſe there lies our greateſt Danger, and there ought to be our greateſt Watchfulneſs.

IV. EXAMINE *yourſelf in relation to thoſe Sins you have committed by your Thoughts.* For ſo far as your Thoughts are

are ſubject to the Laws of God, ſo far are they capable of the Breach of them. As thus: *Have I employed them in contriving and compaſſing any forbidden Thing; either to gratify Revenge, or to fulfil the Luſts of the Fleſh? Have I entertained any diſhonourable Opinion of God? any groundleſs Suſpicions to the Prejudice of my Neighbour? any proud and arrogant Conceits of my own Worth?* For pious Opinions of God, charitable ones of our Neighbour, and humble ones of ourſelves, are Duties incumbent upon our Minds. But as for other irregular Thoughts, which ſpring up in our Minds whether we will or no, and are no farther Sins than they are Principles of a ſinful Choice; here the chief Enquiry muſt be, *Have I endeavoured to throw them from me? Have I delighted to dwell upon them? Have I conſented to them?* For according as we aſſent or diſſent to thoſe firſt Motions which are out of our Power, ſo will our Thoughts have the Notion of virtuous or ſinful Thoughts.

V. EXAMINE *yourſelf in relation to theſe Sins you have committed by your Words.* By thy Words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy Words thou ſhalt be condemned. Our Words being more under our Government than our Thoughts, we ſhall be called to a ſtricter Account

for

for them: For tho' the Tongue be an unruly Member, yet it is in our Power to chain it up by Silence, which is the ſecureſt Method, when any Temptation offers of tranſgreſſing its Bounds. Thus you muſt examine: *Have I been guilty of Evil-ſpeaking? Have I aggravated it by ſpeaking ill of my Parents or Governors in Church or State? Have I divulged any Ill I knew of them, when neither Juſtice nor Charity required it? Have I in my Anger uttered injurious Words? Have I, by falſe Words, by Lying, excuſed myſelf, and defrauded others? Have I been guilty of profane Swearing and Curſing? Have any obſcene Words, and ſuch as tend to corrupt Mens Minds, proceeded out of my Mouth? any Words that grieve and afflict my Neighbour?* He that offends not in his Tongue, is a perfect Man, and muſt have his Duty always in his Eye. Now Converſation being one of the chief Ways of employing our Time, eſpecially for a great Part of the World, our Words muſt be of great Moment, either to our Juſtification or Condemnation.

VI. EXAMINE yourſelf in relation to thoſe Sins you have committed by your Actions; to diſcover which, you muſt enquire: *Did I in waking dedicate my firſt Thoughts to God? Did I perform my Morning*

ing Devotions; and with what Attention and Fervour of Mind? Have I followed my Labour and Buſineſs with Diligence? Have I exerciſed exact Juſtice and Honeſty in my Calling? Did I offer my Actions to God that they might be pleaſing to him? Have I been punctual in the particular Duties of my Station; as a Servant, as a Maſter, &c. *Did I at my Meals ſay Grace? Was I moderate and temperate in the Uſe of God's Creatures? Have I converſed with Candor and Affability? Have I endeavoured to make my Converſation uſeful and profitable unto others? How have I improved the Leiſure I have had?* If you have diverted yourſelf, examine, *Whether it was with Innocence, and within the Bounds of Chriſtian Moderation?* If you have received particular Mercies, *Whether you have been thankful?* If you have had any Opportunities of doing Good, *Whether you have embraced them?* If Temptations have aſſaulted you, *Whether you have reſiſted them?* A few Minutes before our Evening Devotions, will ſerve to recollect all the Actions of the Day.

VII. PARTICULARLY *examine your Sins of Omiſſion.* We ſhall certainly be called to an Account for neglecting to do ſuch Things as God commands, as well as for doing ſuch Things as he forbids; therefore

therefore we ought to examine ourſelves as to theſe: *Have I frequent and ſerious Thoughts of God? Do I maintain in my Mind firm Purpoſes and Reſolutions of obeying him? Do I conſtantly perform the Duties of divine Worſhip? Do I ſerve him with Devotion? Am I active and zealous in doing all the Good I can to the Bodies and Souls of Men? Do I comply with the holy Inſpirations of God's Spirit? Have I made uſe of the Occaſions that have preſented for practiſing Humility, Charity, Mortification, and Patience?* &c.

IT is not ſufficient that we ceaſe to do Evil, but we muſt alſo learn to do Good, or elſe we ſhall never be qualified for that Happineſs which God has promiſed to his faithful Servants.

VIII. CONFESS *to God with hearty Sorrow, and Reſolution of Amendment, whatever you have been guilty of in Thought, Word, or Deed.* The Deſign of Examination being in order to beg Pardon for thoſe Sins and Frailties we have committed, the Sight and Senſe of our Vileneſs ſhould make us ſolicitous to find a Remedy, which can only be had from the infinite Mercy of God, through the Merits of our bleſſed Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: But then it is our Part to qualify ourſelves for the Exerciſe of this Mercy;

we muſt confeſs and forſake our Sins, before we can be made capable of Forgiveneſs; we muſt ſincerely repent, before we can partake of that Pardon our bleſſed Saviour has purchaſed for us: And if we have a true Senſe of our paſt Follies, and expect Forgiveneſs from God, we muſt renew our Reſolutions of better Obedience, and firmly purpoſe to ſtand upon our Guard, that the ſame Temptations may not overcome us: And though we may ſometimes be foiled in the Combat, never to be diſcouraged; knowing that we ſhall be Conquerors *if we faint not.*

IX. SET *apart a longer Time upon ſome Occaſions for this Purpoſe: As on Faſting Days, and in the Preparatory Exerciſes for receiving the Holy Sacrament.* A great Part of Mankind, who actually get their Living by the Sweat of their Brows, have not Leiſure for ſo much Retirement as this Rule ſuppoſes, and yet they are not excuſed from Examining themſelves, and from Receiving the Communion; and therefore this preparatory Work muſt be performed by them in the Intervals of their Labour, and on the *Lord's Day*, which ſhould be dedicated to the Improvement of their Minds. But ſuch who have a Command of their Time,

are

are obliged to employ part of it to ſuch excellent Purpoſes. Upon ſuch Occaſions, they may try themſelves by ſome Heads of Examination, ſuch as are collected together in ſeveral Books of * Piety; and where they find themſelves guilty, they ſhould write down the ſeveral Inſtances of their Crimes, with the ſeveral Aggravations; whether committed againſt Knowledge, whether with the free Conſent of their Wills, whether in deſpite of the Checks of their Conſciences, whether they have been often repeated, whether tranſient Acts, or ſettled Habits? And upon theſe Occaſions they muſt particularly obſerve, what previous Steps have led them to offend God, and which though innocent in themſelves, muſt be avoided by them as Temptations to Sin. They may then be large in their Profeſſion of Repentance; earneſt in their Supplication for Mercy and Forgiveneſs; particular in their firm Purpoſes and Reſolutions of better Obedience; importunate for further Meaſures of God's Grace to ſtrengthen and enable them in the Performance of their Duty. And this

* *See Mr* Hele's Select Offices of Private Devotion, *ſold by* J. Oliver, *in* Bartholomew-Cloſe. *In the* Office for the Holy Communion, *there are Directions for* Examination.

this they will find by Experience, that the daily Trial of themſelves will facilitate theſe larger and more particular Examinations.

CHAP. XVIII.

For THURSDAY.

CONFIRMATION.

AS ſoon as we are born into this World of Danger, the Goodneſs of God has provided his Miniſters to diſpenſe to us holy Baptiſm, and to wipe out the Guilt of our Birth, our Original Sin, by that Laver of Regeneration. When we come to riper Years, and underſtand what a ſolemn Vow, Promiſe, and Profeſſion we then made, and are thereby rendered capable of making a public Profeſſion of our Chriſtian Faith; his chief Miniſters, the *Biſhops*, to whom, as Governors of the Church, this ſolemn Rite is appropriated by all the primitive Records of Chriſtianity, ſtand ready to *lay* their *Hands* upon us, and by fervent and *authoritative Prayer*, to *confirm* and cheriſh our growing Belief; procuring for us, by their praying over us, and bleſſing us, a proportion-

able Degree of God's Grace and Holy Spirit, that we may be ſo led into the Knowledge and Obedience of his Word, that in the End we may obtain everlaſting Life. The Advantages of Confirmation are,

1. A NEW *Engagement to a Chriſtian Life.* The great Buſineſs we have in this World, is to fit and prepare ourſelves for the Happineſs of the next: We are now Candidates for Eternity, and according as we behave ourſelves in this our State of Pilgrimage, ſo will our Lot and Portion be happy or miſerable for ever. The ſtronger therefore our Engagements are, to live according to our Chriſtian Profeſſion, the more probable it is we ſhall ſucceed in the Diſcharge of it: This ſolemn Rite therefore is of great Advantage to us, becauſe it is a laſting Admonition and Check, not to diſhonour our Chriſtian Profeſſion, when we have publicly, in the Face of the Congregation, declared our Reſolution to live and die in the Faith and Obedience of a Diſciple of the bleſſed JESUS; becauſe it is a perpetual Warning not to deſert the Banner of the Captain of our Salvation, having declared that we will fight under it to our Lives End.

2. IT *is a Teſtimony of God's Favour and Goodneſs to thoſe that receive it.* Conſidering what potent Enemies we have to encounter,

counter, the Devil, who by his Subtilty is ready to deceive; the World, which by its Flattery is ready to betray us; and the Flesh, a domestic Enemy at hand to ruin us; nothing can be a greater Blessing than divine Grace, to enable us to encounter all their various Attacks. Now this is conveyed to us in this solemn Rite, by the authoritative Prayer of God's lawful Minister, ordained among other Ends for this very Purpose. Besides, this lawful Minister, declaring that God accepts our Proficiency, and advancing us to an higher Degree in the Church, by placing us among the Faithful, and giving us a Title to approach the Holy Table of the Lord, is a farther Mark of God's Kindness and Indulgence towards us; for hereby we are admitted to the most intimate Act of Communion with God, and are in a particular Manner made Partakers of the Benefits of that all-sufficient Sacrifice, whereby God the Father is rendered favourable and propitious to repenting Sinners.

3. It *preserves the Unity of the Church.* Were all young People duly prepared by such necessary Instructions as ought to precede Confirmation, they would certainly be acquainted with those Orders that God has established in the Church for the Work of the Ministry, and a Reason would be

given them, why a Biſhop, and not a Preſbyter, nor a Deacon, can adminiſter that ſolemn Rite: this would make them ſenſible of their Obligation to live in Epiſcopal Communion; and convince them, that their Obedience is due to ſuch Paſtors and Eccleſiaſtical Governors, as are endued with all thoſe Powers that were left by the Apoſtles to their Succeſſors. How much this would tend to the Unity of the Church, is evident to all thoſe who know what Breaches are made for want of this neceſſary Knowledge: That Confirmation may have its due Effect, ſince it is an Act that ought not to be repeated, the Candidates for this ſacred Ordinance ought to be thoroughly inſtructed,

I. In *the Nature of their Baptiſmal Vow, which they now ratify.* Were the Orders of the Church better obſerved, our Youth would be better prepared for this ſolemn Rite; for ſhe requires, that none be preſented to the Biſhop for Confirmation, till *they can give an Account and Reaſon of their Faith*; of which the Miniſter, who is to preſent them, is to be the Judge; and not even then to be confirmed, unleſs the Biſhop approves of them. Now when they were made Members of the Church by Baptiſm, there was a Covenant ſtipulated between God and them: He was pleaſed graciouſly

graciouſly to condeſcend to adopt them for his Children, and to give them a Title to everlaſting Glory: and they engaged to avoid every Thing that was evil, whether tempted to it by the *Devil*, the *World*, or the *Fleſh*; to believe all thoſe Doctrines that were revealed by Jeſus Chriſt, and to keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and to perſevere in the Practice of them. So that in this Covenant, the Favours and Bleſſings God promiſes, are made upon Condition we perform our Part. All this ſhould be well underſtood, before we ratify our Baptiſmal Vow; for though to entitle us to the Privileges of Baptiſm, the Church admits of Proxies, who promiſe for us; yet, ratifying it perſonally at an Age of Underſtanding, ſhe requires we ſhould be inſtructed in the Nature of it; which is neceſſary in order to our Practice.

II. IN *the Nature of that Obligation they lie under to perform it.* Though their Sureties made this Promiſe for them in their Infancy, yet they muſt always remember, that they made it in their Name and Stead, and that the Engagement is really their own; and that as ſure as the Privileges of Baptiſm belong to them, ſo ſure are they obliged to make good the Conditions of it. As Members of Chriſt's Church, they

ſtand bound to obſerve all thoſe Rules that conſtitute that Society: Now the great Reaſon why Chriſt gave himſelf for us, was, *to purchaſe to himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* As God's Children, they are obliged to imitate their heavenly Father in his moral Perfections; and that great Honour and Privilege certainly requires Obſervance and Obedience. As Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, they are obliged not to forfeit their Title, which we can never be made Partakers of, but by a patient Continuance in Well doing.

III. In *the Nature of the holy Rite that is performed.* Now this plainly appears to be a public conſenting to that Promiſe their Sureties made for them, and ratifying it before the Church, and promiſing themſelves, that they will evermore endeavour faithfully to obſerve ſuch Things as they, by their own Confeſſion, have aſſented unto: Whereupon the Biſhop ſolemnly bleſſes them; and having received Authority thereunto, prays over them, that they may receive the ordinary Gifts of God's Holy Spirit: But the Church being for ſome Time ſettled, the Holy Ghoſt governs it by ſecret and inviſible Communications; and theſe common Graces are obtained by ſuch as are qualified to receive them and ſeek them in

a

a regular and Miniſterial Way. They who are preparing themſelves for Confirmation, ſhould frequently read over the Office compoſed for that Purpoſe, which clearly explains the Nature of it.

IV. IN *the Character of that Church-Officer that adminiſters it.* This, it is poſſible, may ſeem unneceſſary to ſome People; but if our Youth were early inſtructed in the Nature of a Church, as a Society; and that the Governors of it, called Biſhops, are Succeſſors to the Apoſtles, and receive their Commiſſion by a divine Authority, it would have a mighty Influence upon the future Conduct of their Lives; they would not be toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every *Wind of Doctrine, by the Slight of Men, and cunning Craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*; they would become ſtedfaſt to the Communion of the Church by Principle, which is the only Means to ſecure them true Members. Now the preparing for Confirmation ſeems to be a proper Time for ſuch Inſtruction; becauſe the Candidate then firſt finds a Biſhop's Preſence neceſſary to perform the Office.

V. THEY *ſhould prepare themſelves farther by Prayer and Faſting.* After all the Pains we have taken to inform ourſelves in the Nature of our Duty, we muſt beg

of God that He would open our Eyes, that we may ſee the wondrous Things of his Law; it is from Him that our Underſtandings muſt receive Light to diſcover our Duty, and our Wills Strength and Ability to perform it; and therefore to Him we muſt addreſs for that Temper and Preparation of Mind, that may qualify us to receive the happy Effects of this ſolemn Rite; and in order to make our Prayers more effectual, we ſhould accompany them with Faſting; a Duty all along obſerved by devout Men, and acceptable to God, under the Old and New Teſtament, both as it was helpful to their Devotion, and as it became a Part of it.

VI. By *a ſincere Repentance for their paſt Sins.* Nothing is a greater Let and Hindrance to the Influences of God's Holy Spirit, than the cheriſhing and indulging any Breach of his holy Laws: It is not reaſonable to expect any Teſtimony of his Favour and Kindneſs, as long as we remain in a State of Rebellion againſt Him; now by conſenting to any known Iniquity, we offer the greateſt Affront imaginable to the divine Majeſty; and therefore if we pretend to receive the Influences of his Holy Spirit, we muſt reconcile ourſelves to Him by an humble Confeſſion of our paſt Follies, by an hearty Sorrow

Sorrow for having offended Him, and by ſincere and effectual Reſolutions of better Obedience for the Time to come: This Repentance will qualify us to partake of the Mercy of God, which, for the Sake of Chriſt's Sufferings, He is ready to beſtow upon all thoſe that ſeek Him with their whole Heart.

VII. By *a ſerious Reſolution of living anſwerably to their Obligations.* By this ſolemn and public Profeſſion of our Faith, we may impoſe upon Men, becauſe they cannot diſcover the Secrets of our Hearts; nay, Charity obliges them to think us ſincere, if they have not full Evidence to the contrary: But God, whoſe particular Attribute it is to know the Heart, is privy to our moſt retired Thoughts, and conſequently, if we engage only out of Cuſtom, and in Compliance with the Faſhion of the World, as He rejects our pretended Dedication of ourſelves to his Service, ſo he may withhold that Grace which commonly attends this Ordinance, ſince we render ourſelves unworthy of the Influences of it, by never really deſigning what we openly appear to profeſs. As you value therefore the Bleſſings of this holy Rite, you muſt ſeriouſly reſolve to practiſe what you ſolemnly engage to perform; you muſt endeavour to bring your

Life to a Conformity with that Pattern you have now propoſed; this may draw down the preſent Aſſiſtances of God's Holy Spirit, and may diſpoſe him to pity thoſe Frailties and Infirmities, to which Surpriſe and Temptation may expoſe you, by granting farther Meaſures neceſſary for your Recovery. In order to this Purpoſe, it will be very fit frequently to read over the Offices of *Baptiſm* and *Confirmation*, whereby you will be acquainted with the Bleſſings you may expect, and the Duties you are obliged to perform.

CHAP. XIX.

For FRIDAY.

Receiving the Holy Communion.

THIS is juſtly reckoned one of the moſt important Actions of our holy Religion; whereby, as we diſtinguiſh ourſelves to be the Diſciples and Followers of the bleſſed Jeſus, ſo we are admitted to the higheſt Act of Communion with Him. If Men were more ſenſible of their Duty in frequenting the Lord's Table, it is impoſſible they ſhould run to

that Exceſs of Wickedneſs which now too generally abounds among us; and if they who do approach more regularly, would endeavour to trim their Lamps; and to ſpiritualiſe their Affections, true Chriſtian Zeal would increaſe inſenſibly; and we ſhould not find that Backwardneſs and Indifferency to every Thing that is Good.

Imprint, O God, upon my Mind a juſt Senſe of this important Duty, and let all my Approaches to thy Holy Table, be governed with profound Humility and hearty Devotion.

THAT we are obliged frequently to receive the Holy Communion, appears,

I. FROM *the poſitive Command of our bleſſed Saviour.* Before he entered upon the laſt Scene of his Sufferings, He celebrated the Jewiſh Sacrifice of the Paſſover with his Diſciples, and then, at the Concluſion of it, ſubſtituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, as the Chriſtian Sacrifice, in the Room of the Paſſover; and ordained it as a Rite to invocate his Father by, inſtead of the manifold and bloody Sacrifices of the Law; and then obliges all the following Ages of Chriſtians to perſiſt in the ſame Practice by his expreſs Command; *Do this in Remembrance of me.* How can we pretend

to

to be his Diſciples, if we neglect this plain and public Declaration of his Will? How can we call him Maſter, if we do not what he commandeth us? Has the bleſſed Jeſus inſtituted a ſolemn Worſhip among Chriſtians, and ſhall Chriſtians refuſe to partake of it? Did he leave this laſt Injunction to his Followers, when he was laying down his Life for their Sakes; and ſhall they who pretend to be his Followers, never concern themſelves in complying with his dying Command? To perſiſt in the conſtant Neglect of this poſitive Precept of the Chriſtian Religion, is inconſiſtent with the ſolemn Vow of our Baptiſm, and contradicts that Character we profeſs, of being the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt. *Pardon, O bleſſed Saviour, my paſt neglect: I am now convinced that thou requireſt my Attendance at thy holy Table; that Thou haſt commanded me to commemorate thy dying Love; and I am reſolved to give Thee this Inſtance of my Obedience to thy holy Will. I am ſatisfied that thy infinite Goodneſs and Mercy will bear with my Imperfections, but nothing can excuſe my Neglect of thy expreſs Command.*

II. From *thoſe great Wants we labour under.* Men muſt be very great Strangers to themſelves, if they are not ac

quainted

quainted with the Impotency and Corruption of their Nature; they muſt know but little of their Circumſtances in this World, if they are not aware of thoſe Enemies which are continually deſigning their Ruin: There are few ſo happy and ſo ſteady in their Duty, as not ſometimes to deviate from it; the Strength of Temptation, and the Violence of Paſſion, too frequently prevail upon us. Now if we were duly affected with thoſe Wants we labour under, we ſhould certainly apply ourſelves to the Uſe of ſuch Remedies as are proper to relieve them. To this Purpoſe, nothing is ſo effectual as a frequent Participation of the Lord's Supper: This will purify our corrupt Nature, by applying the Merits of Chriſt's Blood: This will ſtrengthen our Weakneſs, by communicating the Influences of his Grace, which He has purchaſed for us by his Death: This will ſupport us under all Temptations, by a lively Repreſentation of thoſe great Things Chriſt has ſuffered for us: This will reſtore that Peace and Quiet to our Souls which Sin robs us of, by ratifying our Pardon, and making our ſincere Repentance acceptable to God. This will ſubdue the Violence of our Paſſions, by ſpiritualizing our Affections, and by placing them

them upon right objects. *The Senſe of my Follies have hitherto, O Lord, diſcouraged my Approach to thy Altar; but I am now convinced, there is no Remedy that will cure them, but thy Body and Blood; and ſince I am reſolved to get rid of my Sins, they ſhall no longer prevail upon me to abſent myſelf from thy Table, where the Bread of Life is ſo freely diſpenſed to thoſe that ſeek it with their whole Heart.*

III. From *the End and Deſign of this holy Sacrament.* One great End of this Chriſtian Sacrifice was, to perpetuate the Memory of the greateſt Bleſſing that was ever beſtowed upon the Sons of Men; to be a ſtanding Monument of the infinite Love of our dying Redeemer, who thought not his Life too dear to purchaſe eternal Salvation for us. Now if we have a due Senſe of thoſe great Things He has done for us; if we value the Wonders of his Love, and ſet a juſt Price upon that Redemption He has purchaſed for us; ſurely we ſhall not be backward to do what in us lies to publiſh to all the World this unparalleled Inſtance of Goodneſs, to teſtify our Gratitude for ſuch ineſtimable Favours, and to offer our humble Tribute of a thankful Heart. What Senſe have they, O Lord, of thy Love, who refuſe

refuſe to perpetuate the Remembrance of it? What Regard have they to the ineſtimable Sacrifice of thy Death, who neglect the beſt Opportunities of applying to their own Souls the Merit of it? *I love Thee, O Lord, and therefore, I will approach thy Altar: I am deſirous that all the World ſhould love Thee, and therefore I will declare the Wonders thou haſt done for the Children of Men.*

IV. From *the Danger of neglecting it.* We muſt conſider, it is not an indifferent Thing, whether or no we approach the Lord's Table; and by abſtaining, we in vain think to ſecure ourſelves. It is true when we do not receive, we cannot draw upon ourſelves the Puniſhments of unworthy Receiving; but then we run into another Extreme, which will be equally pernicious to us. To neglect and refuſe the Advantages that are provided for us at God's Table, and to which we are ſo earneſtly invited, loudly proclaims our Contempt of them; we declare our Reſolution to continue in our Sins, if we refuſe an Opportunity of procuring our Pardon: We are not much concerned to do our Duty, when we avoid thoſe Occaſions of improving our Strength, and receiving that Grace, without which it is impoſſible to perform it. And can we continue in this

Neg-

Neglect without offending God, who has made it our Duty? Can we deſpiſe his Grace, without increaſing our Guilt, and provoking his Wrath and Indignation againſt us? We expoſe our eternal Salvation, by leaving undone the Things which he has commanded, as well as by doing thoſe Things He has forbidden. *Lord, I will come to thy Table, that I may declare how much I value thoſe good Things thou haſt there provided for me; and that I may avoid that Guilt which Abſence will certainly expoſe me to.*

THAT you may be qualified frequently to participate of this holy Sacrament,

I. INFORM *yourſelf carefully in the Nature and End of this ſacred Inſtitution.* We can never offer an acceptable Service to God, if our Minds are wholly ignorant of the Nature of thoſe Duties we perform: and therefore that our Approach to the Altar may turn to our Profit and Advantage, our firſt Step muſt be, to learn what is meant by this holy Action. Now the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was ordained for a continual Commemoration of the Sacrifice of Chriſt's Death, and of the Benefits we receive thereby. Our Saviour, by ſuffering Death upon the Croſs, made a full, perfect, and ſufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction for the Sins

of

of the whole World; and as He intercedes for us, by Virtue of this Sacrifice, in Heaven; ſo we on Earth commemorate this his Sacrifice on the Croſs, by offering Bread and Wine, which, after Conſecration, become the Symbols of his Body and Blood, which in this Sacrament are repreſented to God the Father, that thro' the Merits of the Death of Chriſt, He may be favourable and propitious to us. The Remembrance of that Pardon of Sins, and of that Title to eternal Happineſs, which He has purchaſed for us, are proper to encourage our Repentance, and our Perſeverance in all holy Purpoſes to the End of our Lives. When we have once poſſeſſed our Minds with that neceſſary Knowledge which relates to this holy Action, it will continue a ſtanding Qualification in all our future Communions: So that as this Sacrament was eſtabliſhed for the Commemoration of the Sacrifice of the Death of Chriſt, it does alſo convey the Benefits of it to all thoſe who ſincerely believe, and heartily repent of all their former Sins.

II. Constantly *endeavour to live as becomes a Chriſtian.* The beſt Preparation for the Sacrament, is a Life governed by the Precepts of the Goſpel; for he that really believes the Chriſtian Religion, and makes

makes it his conſtant Buſineſs to perform what our Saviour has enjoined, has all that ſubſtantial Preparation which qualifies Chriſtians to partake in this holy Ordinance, and ought therefore to receive when any Opportunity preſents; for this holy Sacrament does not ſo much oblige us to new Duties, as it enables us to make good thoſe Obligations which the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity has already laid upon us. Therefore let a Man examine himſelf never ſo much, faſt never ſo ſtrictly, and pray never ſo long and ſo fervently, if his Life has not been pious towards God, juſt towards his Neighbour, and ſober in reference to himſelf; or at leaſt, if he does not take vigorous and effectual Reſolutions of making it ſuch for the Time to come, all thoſe other Duties in which he employs himſelf for ſome Time before he receives, will never be able to make him a fit Gueſt at God's Table; they are indeed good preparative Helps, when they tend to repair thoſe Breaches that Sin has made in our Souls; but without ſteady and fixed Purpoſes of Amendment, they are of no Value in the Sight of God, and conſequently will not be able to qualify us for a worthy Participation of Chriſt's Body and Blood. In vain we approach the holy Altar, if our Lives

prepare

prepare not the Way for our Offerings. This may juſtly deter all ſuch Sinners who receive out of Cuſtom, and in order to qualify themſelves for a good Employment; but all ſincere Chriſtians, who are wearied and grieved with the Burden of their Sins, ought not to be diſcouraged; becauſe here they will find their proper Remedy; here they will meet with that Strength and Aſſiſtance which is ſo neceſſary to enable them to lead that holy Life which they purpoſe for the Time to come.

III. EXAMINE *yourſelf before you receive the Holy Sacrament.* Frequent Examination of our Conſciences, is one of the beſt Inſtruments of a Chriſtian Life, and therefore it ought not to be neglected, when we have Time and Leiſure to make any conſiderable actual Preparation. The Reaſon whereof is, that when we make a ſolemn Profeſſion of Repentance, we ought to be particular in confeſſing our Sins to God, and in bewailing the ſeveral Aggravations of them. Now it is impoſſible to do this to purpoſe, except we ſearch into our own Minds, and compare our Actions with the Rule of God's Laws: But as to this Point, I refer you to the Chapter concerning *Examination*; wherein you may be informed in the Way and Man-

ner

ner of it: All that I ſhall ſay at preſent is, to recommend it as very fit to be practiſed, when we are preparing ourſelves to approach the holy Table of the Lord: For if ever we are concerned to ſearch out all our wicked Ways, and to forſake them, it is certainly when we remember the infinite Love of our Saviour in ſuffering for them.

IV. Exercise *ſolemn Acts of Repentance.* When you have diſcovered your Sins by Examination, you muſt confeſs them to God, with Shame and Confuſion of Face, with a hearty Sorrow for having committed them, and with a full Purpoſe and Reſolution of forſaking them for the Time to come; without this Temper of Mind, it is impoſſible we ſhould be fit Gueſts at the Lord's Table; for this was the End of his Death, which we there commemorate, to reconcile us to God, by turning us from our Iniquities. The Merit of his Death will deliver none from the Puniſhment due to Sin, who do not make uſe of that Grace he has purchaſed to overcome the Power and Dominion of it. With what Confidence can we pretend to commemorate our Saviour's Sufferings, if we do not renounce and deteſt the Occaſion of them? How can we expect to be received with Favour and Kindneſs by our Lord,

Lord, if we do not declare War againſt all his Enemies? If we do not proſecute and torment thoſe ſinful Luſts and Affections which tormented and crucified Him? *O may I approach this awful Myſtery with penitential Preparation, and a Heart fully diſpoſed to love Thee.*

V. Stir *up in your Minds a moſt thankful Senſe of the Benefits of Chriſt's Death.* What better becomes the Remembrance of ſuch invaluable Kindneſs, than Gratitude and Thankfulneſs? And what ſo proper to make us heartily and affectionately thankful, as the Conſideration of thoſe great Evils our Saviour has delivered us from, and of thoſe great Bleſſings He has purchaſed for us? Pardon and Peace for the Relief of our Sin-ſick Souls, Grace and Aſſiſtance for our weak and impotent Minds, and eternal Happineſs, to reward our ſincere, though imperfect Obedience. The Nature of theſe Gifts are moſt excellent in themſelves, and are ſtill more endeared to us by the Price he paid for them, even his moſt precious Blood. And can ſuch aſtoniſhing Kindneſs, that ſtopt at no Difficulties, and was diſcouraged by no Provocations, be ever fitly remembered, without a due Acknowledgment of ſuch Bleſſings, without a high Value and Eſteem of them, and without our utmoſt

Endea-

Endeavours to make all poſſible Returns. *Let the Remembrance of thy Death, O Lord, ſet all the Powers of my Soul on work, that I may deſire and pant after Thee, that I may admire and adore Thee, and with Praiſe and Thankſgiving receive Thee into my Heart, and entertain Thee always with Joy and Gratitude.*

VI. Exercise *Charity to thoſe that have offended you.* When we go to commemorate that infinite Love which took Pity of us when we were his Enemies, it becomes us to lay aſide all Reſentment againſt thoſe that have injured us. Can we diſpute whether we ſhould forgive a Hundred Pence, when the vaſt Debt of Ten Thouſand Talents has been remitted to us? In this Memorial of my Saviour's Sufferings, I ſee how He did forgive me, how He did love me when I was his Enemy. The Remembrance of ſuch Love ſhould work me into a Conformity with it, and ſhould make me deſirous and ready to be reconciled to all thoſe that have offended me; to be at Peace with all the World, as I deſire to be loved and forgiven, and to be at Peace with my Saviour. Shall not we forgive other Men, who are undone ourſelves, unleſs we are forgiven? Or how can we have the Confidence to aſk Pardon, when we find no Inclination

in

in our Hearts to grant it to others? *O my God, all that have any Way injured me, I freely forgive for thy Sake; O do thou forgive them, and incline them to that brotherly Charity, which is the Badge and Mark of thy Disciples.*

VII. RESIGN *up your whole Man, Body, and Soul, to your Saviour's Service.* By commemorating the Sacrifice of his Death, you acknowledge the Purchase He has made of you, even at the Price of his own Blood; and therefore who can pretend a juster Claim to you? Should not he have the Benefit of your Service, who has paid so dear for it? Especially considering He will put you to no Use, but what will be to your infinite Advantage. If we were at Liberty, it is certain, we could not dispose of ourselves to more Profit; for He loves us better than we do ourselves, and wants neither Wisdom, nor Power, nor Inclination, to make us happy. But now we add Injustice to our Folly, if we refuse Him that Obedience which is due to Him; and therefore every considerate Man will never suffer the World and the Flesh to usurp any Empire over his Heart, which is his Saviour's Property, and which, without Reserve, ought to be his. Let therefore your Understandings be employed in the Contemplation of Di-

vine

vine Truth, your Wills in chooſing and embracing every Thing that is Good, and let your Affections be ſet on Things above; let your Body be governed with Soberneſs and Chaſtity; that ſo the whole Man being devoted to your Saviour, as a reaſonable, holy, and lively Sacrifice, you may receive the Benefits of his All-ſufficient Sacrifice upon the Croſs, and of that commemorative Sacrifice you are now about to offer.

VIII. SETTLE *in your Soul a lively Faith in God's Mercy through Chriſt.* A true Senſe of our own great Unworthineſs will be apt to make us deſpond, if we are not ſupported with a ſtedfaſt Belief of the infinite Goodneſs of God manifeſted in the Work of our Redemption. The Corruption of our Nature is ſo great, and our Practices have been ſo vile and heinous, that a thorough Sight of them might make us deſpair, if we had not an affectionate Reliance on the Merits and Mediation of the crucified Jeſus. Now, If we believe Chriſt to be our Lord and Maſter, we ſhall honour and obey Him: If we believe Him to be our great Benefactor, we ſhall take all Occaſions to expreſs our Love and Gratitude: If we believe that his Death procured for us the Pardon of our Sins, we ſhall heartily

tily repent of them; if we believe that it purchaſed the Aſſiſtances of God's Holy Spirit, we ſhall endeavour after them; if we believe that it gave us Title to eternal Life, we ſhall do whatever he has commanded. The ſure Method of fixing a lively Faith, of receiving the happy Effects of God's Mercy through Chriſt, muſt be founded in the Sincerity of our Endeavours in performing thoſe Conditions, upon which our Saviour has promiſed ſuch great Salvation. *We are happy, O Lord, upon any Terms to obtain thy Favour: If thou hadſt commanded ſome great Thing, ſhould we not have done it? How much more, when thou only requireſt us to waſh and be clean?*

IX. Relieve *the Wants of your Fellow-Chriſtians.* When we go to commemorate ſo much Bounty and Liberality exerciſed towards us, can we refrain from making the Poor and Neceſſitous ſhare in the good Things we enjoy? We muſt be ready to do Good to all Men, becauſe they are God's Creatures; but neceſſitous Chriſtians muſt partake of our Beneficence, becauſe they are Members of the ſame Body, and are particular Objects of the Mercy and Tenderneſs of our bleſſed Saviour. Beſides, this is made one of the great Signs and Marks

of the Sincerity of our Love to God; for *whoſo hath this World's Goods, and ſeeth his Brother have need, and ſhutteth up his Bowels from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* And when ſhall we be concerned to evidence the Sincerity of our Love to God, if not when divine Love diſplays itſelf to us, in the bleeding Wounds of the Suffering JESUS?

X. SPIRITUALIZE *your Affections by fervent Prayer.* In our preparatory Exerciſes for the Holy Sacrament, Prayer ought to have its due Proportion, becauſe it helps us to that Temper of Mind which makes us welcome Gueſts at God's Table, and fills our Thoughts with ſuch ſpiritual Objects as are proper to entertain them upon ſuch Occaſions. We muſt lay aſide, as much as we can, our Thoughts of Buſineſs and Affairs, when we ſolemnly approach God's Preſence; and ſhould apply our Minds entirely to ſuch ſpiritual Subjects as the Chriſtian Sacrifice naturally ſuggeſts to us. Now Prayer, in its own Nature, takes off our Thoughts from the Things of the World, and all ſenſible Entertainments, and raiſes them to the Conſideration of God, and thoſe good Things that concern our eternal Salvation. It by degrees maſters our

our evil Habits, by impreſſing a lively Senſe of our Duty, and fortifies us againſt Temptation, by the Strength it communicates to us. And therefore when we deſign to approach the holy Table, we ſhould prepare the Way by Devotions that particularly relate to that Subject, and by being more exact in attending the public Prayers of the Church. We muſt take Care not to preſcribe ſuch a burdenſome Method to ourſelves, as to make it grievous to us to go through it; nor ſo long a one, as ſhould make us neglect receiving, when we are by any unforeſeen Accident prevented in going through with it. It is our Duty to communicate; and provided we are ſerious and ſober in our Lives, we muſt not neglect an Opportunity, though we have not Leiſure for all that actual Preparation which we ſometimes, to our great Edification, make uſe of; becauſe in ſuch Caſes, when we have not Time, that actual Preparation ceaſes to be a Duty: And therefore the Want of it muſt never be pleaded as an Apology for our not receiving the Holy Communion.

CHAP. XX.

For SATURDAY.

Hearing Sermons.

IT has always been reckoned one Part of the Office of the ſacred Function to explain the Scriptures, and to make Diſcourſes of Piety and Religion to the People, which is generally called *Preaching*; and it has been eſteemed a Part of the Peoples Duty ſeriouſly to attend ſuch Diſcourſes: And although the great Corruption of the preſent Age, gives one but too much Reaſon to complain of the ſmall Fruit and Effect it has upon the Lives of Men; yet it is in itſelf an admirable Means, when performed with Serioufneſs and Judgment, to inſtruct the Ignorant; to reclaim the Wicked and Profane; to awaken and rouſe the careleſs Sinner, and to confirm and ſtrengthen well-diſpoſed Minds in their good Reſolutions. What if weak People have given it the Preference to other more valuable Parts of Chriſtian Worſhip; yet the Strong ought not to deſpiſe it, ſince thoſe who are the beſt Inſtructed, may want to be ſtirred up to the Practice

tice of their Duty. Indeed it is wonderful that ſo few are wrought upon by thoſe pious and ſeaſonable Diſcourſes which are ſo frequently delivered from the Pulpit; that ſo few are perſuaded to entertain ſincere Purpoſes of reforming their Lives. To diſcover the Cauſes of this great Evil, will be a good Step towards a Remedy, and it will appear chiefly to proceed,

I. From *the Power of ſome evil Habits.* The conſtant Practice of any known Sin has a very great Influence upon the Underſtanding, and indiſpoſes it to apprehend the Force of thoſe Arguments that are urged to expoſe the Horror of Vice, and to perſuade us to hate and forſake it. When we are once blinded by any irregular Paſſion that is indulged, we eaſily reſiſt the Checks of our Conſciences, and put a Bar to all thoſe powerful Perſuaſions which ſhould work upon us. This Diſpoſition ſomewhat partakes of the Nature of a Mother's Fondneſs toward her Child, which prevents her perceiving it to be ever in the Wrong, and thinks it lovely, notwithſtanding all its Faults, and cannot bear that any one ſhould reprove it. The Will being thus corrupted, inſenſibly debauches the intellectual Faculty, and inclines it to make

a wrong Judgment of Virtue and Vice; and perſuades it to call Evil Good, and Good Evil. Now how is it poſſible that a Sermon ſhould work upon a Man that is prepoſſeſt with ſuch falſe Notions; that diſputes the moſt evident Principles, and reſiſts the cleareſt Arguments, and hears without the leaſt Deſire of reforming himſelf? If ever we expect to receive any Benefit from the Preaching of ſerious Truths, we muſt endeavour to cleanſe our Hearts from all Iniquity, and from the Sin that does moſt eaſily beſet us; we muſt prepare the Ground of our Hearts, ſo that the good Seed may fructify in us; we muſt pray to God earneſtly and frequently, that he would be pleaſed to aſſiſt us in removing all thoſe Hindrances, which prevent the Influences of the moſt moving Diſcourſes; and that he would ſtir up in us ſincere Deſires of reforming our Lives. *Nothing, O God, is too hard for the Operation of thy Grace! Rectify my corrupt Will, that it may never put a falſe Bias upon my Underſtanding, and work in me ſuch a Diſpoſition and Temper of Mind, that I may receive Profit and Advantage from all the pious Exhortations of thy Miniſters.*

II. FROM *Ignorance of the Principles of Religion.* Some People have been ſo neg-

neglected in their Education, that they are not acquainted with the Grounds of their Christian Profession; they know not neither what they are obliged to believe, nor what they are obliged to practise: Now though Sermons may sometimes stir up in such Minds Desires of reforming their Lives, yet they are so much at a Loss how to put them in Execution, that it in a great Measure deprives them of the Advantage of such holy Motions: Now when the Grace of God touches the Hearts of such Persons, they ought to apply themselves to their spiritual Guides, and inquire of them what they should do to be saved: If they can Read, they should procure some pious Books, that will direct them in the Manner of performing their Duty to God, their Neighbours, and Themselves; and which will lead them, as it were by the Hand, thro' the whole Course of their Christian Duties. Thus St *Paul*, upon his Conversion, was admonished by a Voice from Heaven to apply himself to *Ananias*; and it is reported of St *Augustin*, when he was touched to change his Course of Life, that he heard a Voice which ordered him to consult the Epistles of the great Apostle, where he found all those Directions, which were necessary to guide

him in his present Circumstances. *I lament, O God, the Ignorance and Blindness of my Mind: Instruct me in all the Particulars of my Duty, and grant that I may apply myself to all those Means thou hast established, in understanding those great Things thou requirest of me.*

III. From *the false Apprehensions of the Impossibility of doing their Duty.* They have so long indulged their vicious Inclinations, which they have strengthned by ill Habits, that the Difficulty of reforming them damps all their Attempts. Among all the Temptations of the Devil, this appears the most dangerous, because it naturally inclines Men to despair of a Change: but it is at the same Time the least plausible; because nothing is more chimerical than this pretended Impossibility. Men must form an extravagant Opinion of the Goodness of God, to imagine that he solicits them by the Voice of the Preacher, to any Thing they are not able to perform: He knows our Abilities better than we do ourselves, and provided we do but sincerely resign ourselves to the pressing Instances of his Word, he stands always ready to supply us with supernatural Strength, which will make it not only possible, but easy to conquer our most inveterate Habits. *I*

am

am reſolved, O Lord, that I will no longer be diſcouraged by my own Vileneſs: Though my Sins be as Scarlet, thou canſt make them as white as Snow; though they be red like Crimſon, through thy Grace they may become as Wool.

To the End that you may receive Profit and Advantage from the Word of God preached to you;

I. ATTEND *to what you Hear.* The moſt edifying Diſcourſes can have no Effect upon us, if we do not give them the Attention of our Minds; for Arguments do not work like Charms, but ſo far prevail upon us, as we conſider the Force and Power of them. To work ourſelves up to this Attention, we muſt remember that the Word preached comes from the great God of Heaven and Earth; that the Meſſage delivered is from the King of all the World; that through the great Uncertainty of Life, it is doubtful whether we ſhall enjoy ſuch another Opportunity of being inſtructed in our Duty; that if we trifle away the preſent Seaſon of God's gracious Invitation, we may in vain lament the Loſs of it to all Eternity. Theſe Conſiderations ſhould diſcharge our Minds of all vain and wandering Thoughts; we ſhould not be careleſs or negligent when Matters of

ſuch great Importance are laid before us; for what can be able to provoke us to ſerious Attention, if Things that relate to our eternal Happineſs or Miſery, have not Power to prevail upon us to liſten to them?

II. BEG *the Aſſiſtance of God's Grace to make the Word preached effectual to you.* All Ordinances for our ſpiritual Improvement, receive their Power and Efficacy from the Co-operation of God's Holy Spirit; we may hear the Words, and comprehend the Senſe of the Arguments; but it is the Grace of God that touches our Minds with the Weight and Moment of them. But we have no Reaſon to expect this ſupernatural Influence, if we neglect to deſire it; and it is no wonder Men hear Sermons ſo frequently, to very little or no Purpoſe, when they miſcarry in this preparative Work; when they go out in their own Strength, and apprehend no Want of that Aſſiſtance which is neceſſary for their Illumination. Say therefore with *David*, the Royal Prophet, *Lord, open thou mine Eyes, that I may ſee the wondrous Things of thy Law; make me to underſtand the Way of thy Precepts.*

III. ENDEAVOUR *to remember what you Hear.* It is not to be imagined that all People

People have Memories good enough to carry away the entire Diſcourſe that is made; but if they hear attentively, it is impoſſible but that ſomething that is delivered will ſtick with them, eſpecially if they endeavour to carry ſomething away with them. It is not enough that we are affected with the Sermon, our greateſt Duty is ſtill behind, which is, to put thoſe good Inſtructions into Practice. Now, how is it poſſible to perform any thing, if we remember nothing? Our Care therefore muſt be, to ſtore our Memory, at leaſt, with the great End and Deſign of the Diſcourſe; and we muſt carry away with us what the Preacher chiefly aimed at: Something will affect us, and that we muſt make our own. Let us therefore follow St *Paul*'s Advice, *To give the more earneſt Heed to thoſe Things that are ſpoken, leſt at any Time we ſhould let them ſlip.*

IV. Apply *what you hear to your own Soul.* If we do not think ourſelves particularly concerned in what is delivered by the Miniſter, we ſhall neither attend nor remember what may redound to our Profit and Advantage; and except we apply Inſtructions to our own Caſe, we ſhall advance but ſlowly in any ſpiritual Improvement. The Seed brings forth

no

no Increaſe in the Granary, it muſt be thrown into the Ground before it will fructify; if the Nature of any Duty is explained, we muſt conſider whether we truly underſtand it; if ſeveral Inſtances of it are laid down before us, we muſt conſider how far we come up to them in our Practice. If Directions are preſcribed to get the Maſtery of any Vice, we muſt conſider how far we comply with them; and where we are defective, we muſt reſolve to take thoſe new Meaſures that are offered. If the Deformity and Ingratitude of Sin is expoſed, we muſt ſhun it as the greateſt Evil. If the Advantages and Pleaſures of Virtue are deſcribed, we muſt ſecure them to ourſelves by an unwearied Continuance in Well-doing. This Method put in Practice, will certainly intitle us to the greateſt Profit imaginable from Preaching.

V. HEAR *without Prejudice.* It were to be wiſhed that all the Prieſts of the Lord were circumſpect in their Lives, and blameleſs in their Converſation; but ſince they are Men, clothed with Fleſh and Blood, and liable to the ſame Temptations that others are expoſed to, their Perſonal Infirmities ſhould not ſo far poſſeſs Peoples Minds, as to deprive them of the Advantage of their good Inſtructions.

So

So far as the Miniſters of God fall ſhort of their Duty, they will themſelves anſwer for the Neglect of it; but ſtill the People muſt give an Account for not improving under their frequent Calls to Repentance and Amendment of Life. Let not therefore any particular diſadvantageous Character ſo far inſinuate itſelf into you, as to rob you of the Profit and Advantage of a good Diſcourſe: Conſider what is ſaid, more than any Report that may diminiſh the Preacher's Reputation; which very often may be falſe, and yet, if true, may be really no Hindrance to your own Improvement, if you make a right Uſe of the Sermon.

VI. Resolve *to Practiſe what you hear.* If Men come only to a Sermon, to gratify their Curioſity with the Beauties and Ornaments of a Diſcourſe; if they only aim at increaſing their Knowledge, that they may be the better able to talk concerning the Myſteries of the Goſpel, it is no wonder that their Lives continue unreformed. The great Advantage of the Chriſtian Inſtitution is, that it offers to the World a better Method, and a more exact Rule for the Conduct of Life, than was ever known before; and if you really deſign any Profit to yourſelf by underſtanding it, you muſt immediately put it in

in Practice. Judge not therefore of your Improvement by those good Desires that may be ſtirred up in your Mind, but by the Influence the Inſtructions have upon your Practice. You hear a Diſcourſe of Humility to ſome Purpoſe, when from the Senſe of Conviction, you ſubmit to the loweſt and meaneſt Offices for promoting the Welfare of your Fellow Chriſtians. You profit by a Sermon upon the Duty of Family Prayer, if having hitherto neglected it, you immediately eſtabliſh it in your Families: The like Inſtances might be made in any other Virtue, or in any other Divine Inſtitution. The great End of Hearing is not fulfilled when we are affected with a Sermon, the main Matter is ſtill behind, which is, the putting uſeful Inſtructions into Practice; nay, the Convictions we receive of the Neceſſity of performing our Duty, will increaſe our Condemnation at the great Day, if we do not govern our Lives by them.

VI. In *your Retirement reflect upon what you heard.* This is the concluding Means of making the Preaching of the Miniſter profitable and advantageous to you; it is like Digeſtion to our Victuals, it turns it into true Nouriſhment. The Pleaſures and Diverſions of the World are apt to blot out thoſe ſerious Thoughts, which

which were impreſſed upon our Minds in the Church; the Cares and Buſineſs of the World are apt to choke the Word, ſo that it brings no Fruit to Perfection. To remedy theſe Hindrances of our ſpiritual Edification, we muſt take a convenient Opportunity to retire from Buſineſs and Pleaſure; and ſurely on the Lord's Day nothing ſhould prevent it; and when we are by ourſelves, we ſhould ſeriouſly reflect upon thoſe great and uſeful Truths which have that Day been delivered to us. We ſhould conſider the Importance of them, to excite our Induſtry and Diligence in attaining them; we ſhould weigh the Excellency of them, that they may engage our Affections; we ſhould reflect how neceſſary they are to our Happineſs, which will diſcover our own Folly in having neglected them hitherto, and make us truly wiſe for the Time to come. When we have thus made them familiar to our Thoughts by Conſideration, they will be ready at Hand for all the Uſes and Purpoſes of a Chriſtian Life: They will direct us in our Duty, when it becomes dubious or difficult, and always ſtir us up by way of Remembrance; they will make us ſtedfaſt and immovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, ſo that our Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.

THREE

THREE HYMNS FOR MORNING, EVENING, *and* MIDNIGHT;

From Biſhop KENN's MANUAL *for* Wincheſter *Scholars.*

WITH DEVOTIONS *for the* CLOSET, *and for the* FAMILY, *and at the Holy* COMMUNION; *and upon ſeveral other Occaſions.*

A Morning Hymn.

I.

AWAKE, my Soul; and with the Sun
Thy daily Stage of Duty run;
Shake off dull Sloth, and early riſe
To pay thy Morning Sacrifice.

Redeem

II.

Redeem thy miſ ſpent Time that's paſt;
Live this Day, as if 'twere thy laſt:
T'improve thy Talents take due Care;
'Gainſt the great Day thyſelf prepare.

III.

Let all thy Converſe be ſincere;
Thy Conſcience as the Noon-day clear:
Think how th'all-ſeeing God thy Ways,
And all thy ſecret Thoughts ſurveys.

IV.

Wake, and lift up thyſelf, my Heart,
And with the Angels bear thy Part;
Who all Night long unwearied ſing
Glory to thee, Eternal King.

V.

I wake, I wake, ye heav'nly Choir;
May your Devotion me inſpire:
That I like you my Age may ſpend;
Like you may on my God attend.

VI.

May I like you in God delight;
Have all Day long my God in Sight;
Perform like you my Maker's Will:
O! may I never more do Ill.

Glory

VII.

Glory to Thee, who ſafe haſt kept;
And haſt refreſh'd me whilſt I ſlept:
Grant, Lord, when I from Death ſhall wake,
I may of endleſs Life partake.

VIII.

Lord, I my Vows to Thee renew;
Scatter my Sins as Morning Dew;
Guard my firſt Spring of Thought and Will,
And with Thyſelf my Spirit fill.

IX.

Direct, controul, ſuggeſt this Day,
All I deſign, or do, or ſay;
That all my Pow'rs, with all their Might,
In thy ſole Glory may unite.

X.

Praiſe God, from whom all Bleſſings flow;
Praiſe Him, all Creatures here below:
Praiſe Him above, y' Angelic Hoſt:
Praiſe Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

An Evening Hymn.

I.

GLory to Thee, my God, this Night,
For all the Bleſſings of the Light.
Keep me, O keep me, King of Kings,
Under thy own Almighty Wings.

II.

Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,
The Ills that I this Day have done;
That with the World, myſelf, and Thee,
I, ere I ſleep, at Peace may be.

III.

Teach me to live, that I may dread
The Grave as little as my Bed;
Teach me to die, that ſo I may
Triumphing riſe at the laſt Day.

IV.

O may my Soul on Thee repoſe;
And with ſweet Sleep mine Eyelids cloſe:
Sleep that may me more vig'rous make,
To ſerve my God when I awake.

V.

When in the Night I ſleepleſs lie,
My Soul with heav'nly Thoughts ſupply:

Let

Let no ill Dreams diſturb my Reſt,
No Pow'rs of Darkneſs me moleſt.

VI.

Let my bleſt Guardian, whilſt I ſleep,
Cloſe to my Bed his Vigils keep;
Divine Love into me inſtil,
Stop all the Avenues of Ill.

VII.

Thought to Thought with my Soul converſe,
Celeſtial Joys to me rehearſe;
And in my ſtead, all the Night long,
Sing to my God a grateful Song.

VIII.

Praiſe God, from whom all Bleſſings flow;
Praiſe Him, all Creatures here below:
Praiſe Him above, y' Angelic Hoſt;
Praiſe Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

A Midnight Hymn.

I.

LORD, now my Sleep does me forſake,
The ſole Poſſeſſion of me take:
Let no vain Fancy me illude,
No one impure Deſire intrude.

My

II.

My Soul, when I ſhake off this Duſt,
Lord, in thy Arms I will intruſt:
O make me thy peculiar Care,
Some heav'nly Manſion me prepare.

III.

Give me a Place at thy Saints Feet,
Or ſome fall'n Angel's vacant Seat:
I'll ſtrive to ſing as loud as they,
Who ſit Above in brighter Day.

IV.

O may I always ready ſtand,
With my Lamp burning in my Hand:
May I in ſight of Heav'n rejoice,
Whene'er I hear the Bridegroom's Voice.

V.

Glory to Thee, in Light array'd,
Who Light thy Dwelling-place haſt made:
An immenſe Ocean of bright Beams
From thy all-glorious Godhead ſtreams.

VI.

The Sun in its Meridian height,
Is very Darkneſs in thy Sight:
My Soul O lighten, and inflame
With Thought and Love of thy great Name.

Bleſt

VII.

Bleſt Jeſu! Thou, on Heav'n intent,
Whole Nights haſt in Devotion ſpent:
But I, frail Creature, ſoon am tir'd,
And all my Zeal is ſoon expir'd.

VIII.

Shine on me, Lord, new Life impart,
Freſh Ardors kindle in my Heart:
One Ray of thy all-quickning Light
Diſpels the Sloth and Clouds of Night.

IX.

Lord, leſt the Tempter me ſurprize,
Watch over thine own Sacrifice;
All looſe, all idle Thoughts caſt out,
And make my very Dreams devout.

X.

Praiſe God, from whom all Bleſſings flow;
Praiſe Him, all Creatures here below:
Praiſe Him above, y' Angelic Hoſt:
Praiſe Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

A Morning Prayer for a Child.

GLory be to Thee, O Lord, for all the Bleſſings I daily receive from Thee; for thy particular Preſervation and Refreſhment of me this Night paſt; but above all, for thy infinite Love in redeeming me by the precious Blood of thy Son Jeſus Chriſt.

TEACH me to believe in Thee, to fear Thee, and to love Thee with all my Heart; to worſhip Thee, and to give Thee Thanks; to honour thy holy Name, and to ſerve Thee truly all the Days of my Life.

MAKE me to love my Neighbour as myſelf; and to do unto all Men, as I would they ſhould do to me; make me obedient to my Parents, and to all my Governors in Church and State.

GRANT, O Lord, that I may order myſelf lowly and reverently to all my Betters; that I may hurt no Body by Word or Deed; that I may keep my Hands from Picking and Stealing, and my Tongue from Evil ſpeaking, Lying, and Slandering; that I may demean myſelf with Temperance, Sobriety and Chaſtity; that I may never covet nor deſire other Mens Goods, but learn and labour truly to get my own Living, and to do my Duty in that State of Life to which it ſhall pleaſe Thee,

Thee, O Lord, to call me. And all this I beg for the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt my Saviour; in whoſe holy Words I ſum up all my Wants; ſaying,

OUR Father which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from Evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Love of God, and the Fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt, be with me this Day, henceforth and for evermore. *Amen.*

An Evening Prayer for a Child.

O Lord God, my heavenly Father, I do moſt humbly implore the Pardon and Forgiveneſs of all my Sins, eſpecially of thoſe I have committed this Day, either in Thought, Word or Deed, for the Sake of thy Son Jeſus Chriſt. Cleanſe me from all my Wickedneſs, ſtrengthen my Weakneſs, that I may over-

overcome all the Temptations that daily ſurround me.

Assist me, good Lord, by thy Grace, that I may worſhip Thee, ſerve Thee, and obey Thee as I ought to do. Supply me with all Things needful while I live in this World, and fit and prepare my Soul for the Happineſs of the next. Make me to avoid all Occaſions of offending Thee; and ſuffer me not to be tempted above what I am able; but defend me in all Dangers both of Body and Soul; keep me eſpecially from Sin and Wickedneſs, and from everlaſting Death.

I commend to thy divine Providence *(my Father and Mother, my Brethren and Siſters)* and all my Friends and Relations; vouchſafe them all thoſe Graces and Bleſſings thou knoweſt moſt ſuitable for them.

O Thou that never ſlumbereſt nor ſleepeſt, watch over me this Night, and refreſh me with ſeaſonable Reſt, that I may riſe the next Morning more fit for thy Service.

I return, O Lord, to Thee, all Praiſe and Thankſgiving, for all thoſe Mercies Thou haſt this Day beſtowed upon me. As long as I live I will praiſe the Lord; as long as I have any Being, I will mag-

nify thy holy Name. Hear my Prayers and accept of my Praiſes, for the Sake of my Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; in whoſe holy Words I ſum up all my Wants,

Our Father, &c.

THE Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *&c.* Amen.

A Morning Prayer for a Perſon in private.

ALmighty and eternal God, who haſt created me after thine own Image and Likeneſs; who haſt made me capable of loving Thee and enjoying Thee eternally; I adore Thee with all Humility as my Sovereign Lord; give me, I beſeech Thee, ſuch a Senſe of thy infinite Goodneſs, as to return unto Thee all poſſible Love and Obedience.

O my God, upon whom all Things depend, I acknowledge that I have nothing but what is the Effect of thy Bounty; bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and declare his Loving-kindneſs to all Generations. I humbly and I heartily thank Thee, for all the Graces and Favours Thou

Thou haſt beſtowed upon me; for making me a rational Creature, and for ſecuring my Preſervation by the conſtant Effects of thy Providence; for redeeming me by the Death of thy Son, and for providing the Grace of thy Holy Spirit to ſanctify my corrupt Nature; for bringing me to the Knowledge of the Chriſtian Religion; for bleſſing me with plentiful Means of Salvation, and for preparing a glorious Inheritance for thoſe that love Thee, and keep thy Commandments; for the many Temporal Bleſſings Thou haſt conferred upon me; for repairing the Infirmities of my frail Body with comfortable Reſt and Sleep; for the Preſervation of me this Night, and the reſt of my Life, from innumerable Accidents and Dangers; O! may I always delight to praiſe and glorify thy holy Name, and above all thy Benefits to love Thee, my great Benefactor.

O Father of Mercies, ſhut not up thy Bowels of Compaſſion towards me, a vile and miſerable Sinner; deſpiſe not the Work of thine own Hands, the Purchaſe of my Saviour's Blood. I moſt humbly implore the Pardon and Forgiveneſs of all my Sins, whether of Omiſſion or Commiſſion, for the Sake of Jeſus Chriſt

thy only Son our Lord; I am heartily ſorry that I have offended Thee; I deteſt my Sins, becauſe they are diſpleaſing to Thee, who art infinite Goodneſs; I am reſolved, by the Aſſiſtance of thy Grace, to return no more to Folly, to avoid all Occaſions of Evil, and to live better for the Time to come.

I dedicate to Thee, O Lord, my Body and Soul, and all that I am; and becauſe through the Weakneſs of my mortal Nature, I can do no good Thing without Thee, grant that all I ſhall do or ſuffer this Day, by the Help of thy Grace, may tend to thy Glory, and the Salvation of my own Soul.

ENLIGHTEN my Mind with a true and thorough Knowledge of my Duty, and enable me by thy Holy Spirit to perform it with Care and Diligence: Make me ſenſible of my own Vileneſs and Corruption, and let me never want thy gracious Aſſiſtance to correct and reform it. Let me frame a right Judgment concerning the Vanity and Emptineſs of all tranſitory Enjoyments, that they may never prevail upon me to tranſgreſs thy holy Laws; but that by the Contempt of them, I may fix my Heart upon thoſe Pleaſures, which are

at

at thy right Hand for evermore. And grant that all the Afflictions of this Life, which Thou in thy wiſe Providence ſhalt think fit to lay upon me, may turn to my ſpiritual Profit and Advantage; that I may bear them with Patience and Submiſſion to thy holy Will, and thereby learn greater Gratitude to thy Goodneſs for the Mercies I enjoy. Let no anxious or ſolicitous Cares ever diſorder or diſtract my Mind, but let me truſt in thy Providence to bleſs my honeſt Diligence; being aſſured, that if I ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and its Righteouſneſs, all other Things ſhall be added unto me.

Defend me by thy Almighty Power from all thoſe Snares and Temptations which continually ſolicit me to offend Thee; and from all thoſe bodily Dangers to which I am ſubject in this my Pilgrimage here upon Earth; that all my Thoughts, Words and Actions, may be ſo guided by thy Holy Spirit, that I may ever ſeek thy Honour and Glory, and that the main Concern of my Life may be, to fit and prepare myſelf for that everlaſting Salvation Thou haſt promiſed.

KEEP me all this Day in Innocence, and in Love to Thee, and to all Men: Let me manage all my Temporal Affairs with Uprightneſs and Integrity, converſe with Candor and Affability; do Thou direct my Paths, and teach me to guide my Affairs with Diſcretion; but let not the Purſuit of the Things of this Life, rob me of that Time which ought to be employed in the Concerns of my Soul, nor divert me from the ſerious Thoughts of the World to come; that walking faithfully before Thee all my Days, and being found watching when my ap-

On Sunday, *inſtead of the oppoſite Paragraph, ſay this.*

AND now I am going to the Place of thy public Worſhip, let thy Holy Spirit aſſiſt me in the Duty and Service I am about to perform; touch me with ſuch a Senſe of thy Preſence as may fix my wandering Thoughts, compoſe my tumultuous Affections, ſtir up my flat and cold Deſires, that I may be devout, ſerious, and attentive. Let me join in the Prayers and Praiſes of the Church with fervent and heavenly Affections. Let me hear thy Word with great Attention, and with a Reſolution of Mind

appointed Time ſhall come, I may from a Life of Righteouſneſs be tranſlated to a Life of Glory.

Mind to practiſe my Duty; and whenever I approach thy Table, let me ſhew forth Humility and Devotion, and all thoſe holy Deſires which become the Remembrance of a Crucified Saviour. Let me ever eſteem it my Privilege and Happineſs to have a Day of Reſt ſet apart for thy Service, and the Concerns of my Soul; and let me employ it to all thoſe holy Purpoſes Thou haſt appointed.

EXTEND, O Lord, thy Pity and Compaſſion to the whole Race of Mankind: Enlighten the Gentile World with the Knowledge of thy Truth, and bring into thy Flock thy ancient People the Jews, and let all who name the Name of Chriſt depart from all Iniquity. Be gracious to thy holy Catholic Church: Grant that ſhe may always preſerve that Doctrine and Diſcipline which Thou haſt appointed, and that the Gates of Hell may never prevail againſt her. Grant, O Lord, that all my Governors in Church and State may be uſeful and ſerviceable to thy Glory, and the Public Good, remembering the great Account they muſt

one Day give. Be merciful to all that are in Affliction or Diſtreſs, that labour under Poverty or Perſecution, under Bodily Pains or Diſeaſes, or under Temptation or Trouble of Mind; be pleaſed to ſupport and comfort them, and in thy good Time to deliver them, according to thy great Mercy. Bleſs all my Friends, Relations and Acquaintance; thoſe that are in Sin, convert them; thoſe that are in Grace, confirm and ſtrengthen them; thoſe that are in Adverſity, comfort and relieve them; and thoſe that are in Proſperity, ſuffer them not to forget Thee. Unite us all, O God, to one another by mutual Love, and to thyſelf, by the conſtant Practice of Piety and Holineſs.

MAKE me mindful of that Time when I ſhall lie down in the Duſt; and becauſe I know not the Day nor the Hour, when I ſhall be ſummoned to the great Tribunal, let me be always upon my Guard, and never live in ſuch a State as I ſhall be afraid to die in; but that my daily Care may be, to get my Soul raiſed more and more into ſuch an holy, heavenly Temper, ſuch Delight in God, ſuch unſpotted Purity, and fervent Charity, as may beſt qualify and prepare me for the Company of Saints and Angels

gels in thy heavenly Kingdom; through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; in whoſe bleſſed Name and Words I conclude my imperfect Prayers, ſaying,

Our Father, &c.

THE Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Love of God, and the Fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt, be with me this Day, henceforth and for evermore. *Amen.*

A Prayer for a Perſon that daily Works at his Trade, to be added to the former Prayer.

ALmighty God, who in thy wiſe Providence haſt conſtituted ſeveral Ranks and Qualities of Men, that they might mutually ſubſiſt to the Support of each other: Teach me to be content with the Station wherein Thou haſt been pleaſed to place me; Grant that I may honeſtly and diligently diſcharge the Duties of my Calling; and without Anxiety depend upon thy Bleſſing

for the Succeſs of my lawful Endeavours. That however contemptible my Profeſſion may be in the Eyes of Men, my Fidelity and Induſtry may be acceptable in thy Sight: That they may bring me in the Return a convenient Subſiſtance for my Family in this Life; and in the next, the Reward Thou haſt promiſed to all thoſe that truly love and fear Thee, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

An Evening Prayer for a Perſon in private.

MOST great and glorious Lord God! I deſire to proſtrate myſelf in all Humility before thy divine Majeſty, under a deep Senſe of my own Unworthineſs: With Shame and Sorrow, and Confuſion of Face, I confeſs and acknowledge thy infinite Mercy and Goodneſs to me, and my own Vileneſs and Ingratitude to Thee. I have, O Lord, abuſed thy Gifts and Bleſſings, deſpiſed thy Goodneſs, neglected thy Service, preferred my Paſſions and other Creatures,

Creatures, before my Duty and thy Commands. I have neither believed in Thee, O my God, nor obeyed Thee, nor loved Thee as I ought, and as I ſolemnly vowed I would. O Lord God, moſt gracious and reconcileable, pity and pardon me; I lament, O Lord, my deteſtable Impiety, for having ſo long, and ſo often, and ſo obſtinately offended Thee. I confeſs and will forſake my Wickedneſs, and am ſorry for my Sins. It grieves me, O moſt amiable Goodneſs, it grieves me that ever I offended Thee; with all my Heart, O my God, do I now renew the ſacred Vow, which, alas! I have ſo often violated. I utterly renounce, O Lord, all Things that may any way diſpleaſe Thee; from them all let it be thy good Pleaſure to deliver me. I know, Lord, I cannot love Thee but I muſt hate Evil; and therefore I renounce and deteſt it. Turn thou me, O Lord God, and ſo ſhall I be turned; turn the whole Stream of my Affections from ſenſual Love to the Love of Thee. O my God, let thy heavenly Love be the conſtant Bias of my Soul: O, may it be the natural Spring and Weight of my Heart, that it may always move towards Thee. Father, I have ſinned

againſt

againſt Heaven, and in thy Sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son; but I return with the Prodigal: O let thy Paternal Bowels yearn over me, and for Jeſus Chriſt his Sake graciouſly receive me. Lord, accept of my imperfect Repentance, and ſend thy Spirit of Adoption into my Heart to inſtil true filial Affections, that I may again be owned by Thee for thy Child, and call Thee Father, and ſhare in the Bleſſings of thy Children, and at laſt become an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

O my God, fill my Soul with ſo entire reverential a Love of Thee, that I may love nothing but for thy ſake, or in Subordination to thy Love. Give me Grace to ſtudy thy Knowledge, that the more I know Thee, the more I may love Thee. Create in me a ſincere Obedience to all thy Commands, a ſubmiſſive Patience under all thy Chaſtiſements, and an abſolute Reſignation unto all thy Diſpoſals.

MAKE me, O Lord, ſo tender of thy Honour, that I may ſhew a due Regard to all the Parts of thy Worſhip: That I may always enter thy Houſe with recollected Thoughts, compoſed Behaviour, becoming Reverence, and ſincere Intentions of Love; that I may hear thy Word with

with a ſerious Attention and inflameable Heart, and a particular Application; that I may frequent the public Prayers, and approach thy Table with fervent and heavenly Affections, and with holy Impatience for the Bleſſings of thy Love. Give me Grace, for thy deareſt Sake, to pay a ſuitable Veneration to all ſacred Perſons, or Places, or Things, which are thine by ſolemn Dedication, and ſeparated for the Uſes of divine Love, and the Communications of thy Grace, or which may promote the Decency and Order of thy Worſhip, or the Edification of faithful People.

MAY I ever, O Lord, have awful Thoughts of Thee; may I never mention thy venerable Name, unleſs on ſolemn, juſt and devout Occaſions; may I never mention it on thoſe Occaſions without Acts of Love and Adoration. O let it be the great Buſineſs of my Life, to love and glorify thy holy Name by all the poſſible Ways I can; by my Mouth, by my Converſation, by my public Confeſſion of Thee before Men, even to Death, whenever Thou art pleaſed to call me to it; by engaging all I can to glorify and love Thee. Fix in my Mind an habitual pure Intention of thy Glory in all my Actions, that whether I Eat or Drink,

or

or whatever I do, I may do all to the Glory of Thee, my God.

O Lord, let thy unwearied and tender Love to me, make my Love unwearied and tender to my Neighbour, and zealous to procure, promote and preſerve his Health and Safety, Happineſs and Life; and ready to ſuccour and relieve, to comfort and reſcue, and pray for all, whom thy Love, or their own Neceſſities or Miſeries, recommend to my Charity. Make me Peaceful and Reconcileable, always ready to return Good for Evil, to repay Injuries with Kindneſs, and eaſy to forgive; unleſs in thoſe Inſtances, where the Impunity of the Criminal would be Injuſtice and Cruelty to the Public. Make me like thy own Self, all Meekneſs and Benignity, all Goodneſs and Sweetneſs, all Gentleneſs and Long-ſuffering. And, O thou Lover of Souls, let thy Love raiſe in me a compaſſionate Zeal to ſave the Life, the eternal Life of Souls, and by fraternal, and affectionate, and ſeaſonable Advice, or Exhortation, or Reproof, to reclaim the Wicked, to win them to love Thee.

CREATE in me, O Lord, a perfect Abhorrence of all Impurity, that I may purify

purify myſelf, as Thou, Lord, art pure. I know, O Lord, that I can never be Partaker of the Divine Nature, unleſs I eſcape the Pollution that is in the World through Luſt. O do Thou therefore cleanſe me from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, that I may perfect Holineſs in thy Fear. Give me Grace to poſſeſs my Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour, and to keep thy Temple holy, that thy Spirit may always there inhabit. Give me Grace, O Lord, to fly all Incitements, Opportunities or Inſtruments of defiling either my Neighbour or myſelf; to beat down my Body, and to bring it into Subjection: Let me live ever Watching or Praying, or profitably imployed, that I may leave no Room, if poſſible, for any unclean Spirit to enter into my Soul, and tempt me.

Lord, make me contented and thankful, and well pleaſed with that Portion thy wiſe Providence has allotted me in this World, and to acquieſce in thy Choice, as beſt for me. O let the World never more have Place in my Heart; all my Affections I withdraw from that, to fix on Thee.

Be pleaſed, O Lord, to take me into thy Protection this Night, and defend

me

me from all the Dangers of it; refreſh my Body with ſuch comfortable Reſt and Sleep, that in the Morning, with my renewed Vigour, I may be the better diſpoſed to do Thee all faithful Service. Let not evil Spirits or evil Men approach to hurt me; let me lie down with holy Thoughts of Thee; and when I awake, let me be ſtill with Thee.

Add this Paragraph on SUNDAY *in the Evening.*

" PARDON, O Lord, all thoſe Im-
" perfections that have accompanied me
" this Day, in my Attendance in thy
" Houſe; forgive the Deadneſs and Dul-
" neſs of my Affections, the Wanderings
" of my Thoughts, and the Diſtractions
" of my Mind. Sanctify to me all thoſe
" Means of Grace, which by thy Bounty
" I have this Day been Partaker of; and
" help me in the Week following, to live
" according to my Profeſſion and my
" Prayers, according to the Inſtructions
" and Exhortations which I have receiv-
" ed out of thy holy Word; that my
" Converſation may be as becometh the
" Goſpel of Chriſt: Let me not abuſe

" theſe

" theſe Means by reſting in them, but let " them bring forth the peaceable Fruits " of Righteouſneſs."

SHEW Mercy, O Lord, to the whole World; let the Goſpel of thy Son run, and be glorified throughout all the Earth; let it be made known to Heathens and Infidels; and let it be obeyed by all that are called Chriſtians. Be merciful to this Nation wherein I live; grant that we may be ſo humbled and reformed, that we may be pardoned and ſpared. Multiply thy Bleſſings upon our Sovereign, and all the Royal Family; give them Grace to exceed others as much in Goodneſs as in Greatneſs, and make them ſignal Inſtruments of thy Glory, and of the Public Good. Be gracious to all thoſe that miniſter in holy Things, that they may diligently watch over thoſe Souls committed to their Care, inſtructing them in ſaving Knowledge, and guiding them by their own Examples, Praying for them, and Bleſſing them, exerciſing ſpiritual Diſcipline in thy Church, and rightly and duly adminiſtring thy holy Sacraments. Viſit in Mercy all the Children of Affliction; relieve all their particular Neceſſities of Body and Mind,

and

and lighten all their Burdens; give them Patience and Submiſſion to thy bleſſed Will, and in thy due Time deliver them from all their Troubles. Bleſs all my Friends and Relations, let them firſt ſeek the Kingdom of God and its Righteouſneſs, and then let all other Things be added unto them.

ADORED be thy Goodneſs, O Lord, for thoſe Mercies, both Temporal and Spiritual, which Thou from Time to Time haſt beſtowed upon me; that Thou haſt ſupported my Body with the good Things of this Life, and that Thou haſt prepared for my Soul the Happineſs of the next; particularly, I deſire to offer to Thee my humble and hearty Thanks for the Preſervation of me the Day paſt from innumerable Accidents and Dangers: If I have eſcaped any Sin, it is the Effect of thy reſtraining Grace; if I have avoided any Danger, it was thy Hand directed me, and to thy holy Name for both be given all Glory and Praiſe. Let the Senſe of all thy Bleſſings have this Effect upon me, to make me better, and to lead me to Repentance. And all this I beg for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake; in whoſe bleſſed Name

Name and Words I continue to pray, ſaying,

Our Father, &c.

THE Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *&c.*

* *

A Morning Prayer for a Family.

ALmighty God, Father of all Mercies, we thy unworthy Servants do give Thee moſt humble and hearty Thanks, for all thy Goodneſs and Loving kindneſs to us and to all Men. We bleſs Thee for our Creation, Preſervation, particularly, that Thou haſt vouchſafed to deliver us from all the Perils and Dangers of the Night paſt, and for all the Bleſſings of this Life: But above all, for thine ineſtimable Love in the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; for the Means of Grace, and for the Hope of Glory. And we beſeech Thee to give us that due Senſe of all thy Mercies, that our Hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may ſhew forth thy Praiſe, not only with our

our Lips, but in our Lives, by giving up ourſelves to thy Service, and by walking before Thee in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all our Days.

We acknowledge, O Lord, that our many great and crying Sins, have rendered us unworthy of any of thy Favours; but, O Almighty and Everlaſting God, who hateſt nothing that thou haſt made, and doſt forgive the Sins of all them that are penitent, create and make in us new and contrite Hearts, that we worthily lamenting our Sins, and acknowledging our Wretchedneſs, may obtain of Thee, the God of all Mercy, perfect Remiſſion and Forgiveneſs. Raiſe up thy Power and come among us, and with great Might ſuccour us, that whereas through our Sins and Wickedneſs, we are ſore lett and hindered in running the Race that is ſet before us, thy bountiful Grace and Mercy may ſpeedily help and deliver us. And Thou, O God, who knoweſt us to be ſet in the midſt of ſo many and great Dangers, that by reaſon of the Frailty of our Natures we cannot always ſtand upright, grant to us ſuch Strength and Protection, as may ſupport us in all Dangers, and carry us through all Temptations.

GIVE unto us, O Lord, the Aſſiſtance of thy Holy Spirit, that for the Time to come we may think and do always ſuch Things as be rightful; that we, who cannot do any Thing that is Good without Thee, may by Thee be enabled to live according to thy Will; that thy Grace may always ſo prevent and follow us, as to make us continually to be given to all good Works.

GRAFT in our Hearts the Love of thy Name, increaſe in us true Religion, nouriſh us with all Goodneſs, and of thy great Mercy keep us in the ſame; and Thou, O God, whoſe never failing Providence ordereth all Things both in Heaven and Earth, put from us, we beſeech Thee, all hurtful Things, and give us thoſe Things which are profitable for us. And ſince it is Thou alone canſt order the unruly Wills and Affections of ſinful Men, grant that we may love the Things which Thou commandeſt, and deſire that which Thou doſt promiſe, that ſo among the ſundry and manifold Changes of the World, our Hearts may ſurely there be fixed where true Joys are to be found. Diſpoſe us, by all the Means of Grace we enjoy, to attain that everlaſting Salvation Thou haſt promiſed, that we may both

both perceive and know thoſe Things which we ought to do, and may have Grace and Power faithfully to fulfil the ſame.

TEACH us, O Lord, ſo to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom; and grant that neither the Splendor of any Thing that is Great, nor the Conceit of any Thing that is Good in us, may any way withdraw our Eyes from looking upon ourſelves as ſinful Duſt and Aſhes; but that we may preſs forward towards the Prize of the High Calling that is before us, with Faith and Patience, with Humility and Meekneſs, with Mortification and Self-denial, with Charity, and conſtant Perſeverance unto the End; that ſo when we ſhall depart this Life, we may ſleep in the Lord; and at the general Reſurrection in the laſt Day, may be found acceptable in thy Sight, and receive that Bleſſing which thy beloved Son ſhall then beſtow upon all thoſe that truly love and ſerve thee.

CHARGE thy holy Providence, O Almighty God, we beſeech Thee, with us this Day; and vouchſafe to direct, ſanctify, and govern both our Hearts and Bodies, in the Ways of thy Laws, and in the Works of thy Commandments, that through

through thy moſt mighty Protection, both here and ever, we may be preſerved in Body and Soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

Add this Paragraph on SUNDAYS.

" ALMIGHTY and merciful " God, of whoſe only Gift it cometh that " thy faithful People do unto Thee true " and laudable Service; grant, we be- " ſeech Thee, that we may ſo ſpend this " thy holy Day in the Exerciſes of Piety " and Devotion, that we may hear thy " Word with ſo much Attention, and " pray with ſo much Fervour, that we " fail not finally to attain thy heavenly " Promiſes, through the Merits of Jeſus " Chriſt our Lord."

We make our Prayers and Supplications to Thee, O everlaſting God, in behalf of all Mankind. We humbly beſeech Thee to inſpire continually the univerſal Church, with the Spirit of Truth, Unity and Concord; and grant that all they that do confeſs thy holy Name, may agree in the Truth of thy holy Word, and live in Unity and godly Love. We beſeech Thee alſo to ſave and defend all Chriſtian

Chriſtian Kings, Princes, and Governors; eſpecially thy Servant our Sovereign. Grant that all inferior Magiſtrates may truly and indifferently miniſter Juſtice, to the Puniſhment of Wickedneſs and Vice, and to the Maintenance of thy true Religion and Virtue. Give Grace, O heavenly Father, to all Biſhops and Curates, that they may both by their Life and Doctrine ſet forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly adminiſter thy holy Sacraments. And of thy great Goodneſs, O Lord, comfort and ſuccour all them, who, in this tranſitory Life, are in Trouble, Sorrow, Need, Sickneſs, or any other Adverſity. Look upon them with the Eyes of thy Mercy, give them ſure Truſt and Confidence in Thee, and in thy due Time a happy Iſſue out of all their Afflictions. Aſſiſt all thoſe who draw near the Time of their Diſſolution; ſo fit and prepare them for the Hour of Death, that after their Departure in Peace, and in thy Favour, they may be received into thy everlaſting Kingdom, through the Merits and Mediation of thy only Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; in whoſe bleſſed Name and Words we conclude our imperfect Prayers, ſaying,

Our Father, &c.

THE

THE Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Love of God, and the Fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt, be with us this Day, henceforth, and for evermore. *Amen.*

An Evening Prayer for a Family.

ALmighty God, Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Maker of all Things, Judge of all Men; we acknowledge and bewail our manifold Sins and Wickedneſſes which we from Time to Time moſt grievouſly have committed, by Thought, Word, and Deed, againſt thy divine Majeſty; provoking moſt juſtly thy Wrath and Indignation againſt us: We do earneſtly repent, and are heartily ſorry for theſe our Miſdoings; and the Remembrance of them is grievous unto us.

HAVE Mercy upon us, O Lord, after thy great Goodneſs, according to the Multitude of thy Mercies do away our Offences; waſh us thoroughly from our Wickedneſs, and cleanſe us from our Sins. Spare all thoſe who confeſs their Sins unto Thee, that they whoſe Conſciences by Sin are accuſed, by the merciful Pardon may be abſolved; and grant that we may ever hereafter ſerve and pleaſe

Thee in Newneſs of Life, to the Honour and Glory of thy Name.

And Thou, O God, who art the Protector of all that truſt in Thee, without whom nothing is ſtrong, nothing is holy, increaſe and multiply upon us thy Mercy, that thou being our Ruler and Guide, we may ſo paſs through Things Temporal, that we finally loſe not the Things Eternal: And becauſe through the Weakneſs of our mortal Nature we can do no good Thing without Thee, grant us the Help of thy Grace, that we may withſtand the Temptations of the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, and with pure Hearts and Minds follow Thee, the only God; and that in keeping thy Commandments, we may pleaſe Thee both in Will and Deed.

O Lord, who haſt prepared for them that love Thee ſuch good Things as paſs Man's Underſtanding, pour into our Hearts ſuch Love towards Thee, that we loving Thee above all Things may obtain thy Promiſes, which exceed all that we can deſire. And Thou, who haſt taught us that all our Doings without Charity are nothing worth, ſend thy Holy Ghoſt, and pour into our Hearts that moſt excellent Gift, the very Bond of Peace and of all Virtues, without which

which whoſoever liveth is counted dead before Thee.

GRANT us, O Lord, ſo perfectly and without all Doubt to believe in thy Son Jeſus Chriſt, that our Faith in thy Sight may never be reproved; that being not like Children, carried away with every Blaſt of vain Doctrine, we may be eſtabliſhed in the Truth of thy holy Goſpel; and knowing our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and following the Steps of thy holy Apoſtles, we may ſtedfaſtly walk in the Path that leadeth to Eternal Life: So that we who know the now by Faith, may, after this Life, have the Fruition of thy glorious Godhead. Grant that our Hearts and all our Members being mortified from all worldly and carnal Luſts, and forſaking all covetous Deſires, and inordinate Love of Riches, we may in all Things obey thy bleſſed Will, and continue Chriſt's faithful Soldiers and Servants to our Lives End. And ſince Thou haſt given us thy only begotten Son, to be unto us both a Sacrifice for Sin, and alſo an Example of godly Life, give us Grace moſt thankfully to receive this thine ineſtimable Benefit, and daily to endeavour ourſelves to follow the bleſſed Steps of his moſt holy Life.

GRANT, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the Death of thy Son our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; ſo by continually mortifying our corrupt Affections, we may be buried with him; and that thro' the Grave and Gate of Death we may paſs to a joyful Reſurrection: Beſeeching Thee, that it may pleaſe Thee of thy gracious Goodneſs, ſhortly to accompliſh the Number of thine Elect, and to haſten thy Kingdom; that we, with all others already departed in the true Faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect Conſummation and Bliſs, both in Body and Soul, in thy eternal and everlaſting Glory.

Add this Paragraph on SUNDAYS.

" O God, we beſeech Thee mercifully " to receive thoſe Prayers, which we " have this Day offered up to Thee in " the public Congregation, and have " Compaſſion upon our Infirmities, that " our Blindneſs and Unworthineſs may not " deprive us of the Advantage of them. " And grant, we beſeech Thee, that we " may in ſuch wiſe mark, learn and in- " wardly digeſt what we have this Day " heard, that by Patience and Comfort " of thy holy Word, we may embrace

" and

" and ever hold faſt the bleſſed Hope
" of everlaſting Life, which Thou haſt
" given us in thy Son our Saviour Jeſus
" Chriſt."

We commit ourſelves, O Lord, this Night to thy gracious Protection; and Thou who ſeeſt we have no Power of ourſelves to help ourſelves, keep us both outwardly in our Bodies, and inwardly in our Souls, that we may be defended from all Adverſities that may happen to the Body, and from all evil Thoughts which may aſſault and hurt the Soul.

O God, the Creator and Preſerver of all Mankind, we humbly beſeech Thee for all Sorts and Conditions of Men, that it may pleaſe Thee to make thy Ways known unto them, and thy ſaving Health unto all Nations. Let thy continual Pity cleanſe and defend thy Church: and becauſe it cannot continue in Safety without thy Succour, preſerve it evermore by thy Help and Goodneſs. Receive our Supplications and Prayers, which we offer before Thee for all Eſtates of Men in thy holy Church, that every Member of the ſame, in his Vocation and Miniſtry, may truly and godly ſerve Thee.

Finally, we commend to thy Fatherly Goodneſs all thoſe who are any ways

afflicted or diſtreſſed in Mind, Body, or Eſtate: That it may pleaſe Thee to comfort and relieve them according to their ſeveral Neceſſities, giving them Patience under all their Sufferings, and a happy Iſſue out of all their Afflictions.

We beſeech Thee mercifully, O Lord, to incline thine Ears to us, that have made now our Prayers and Supplications unto Thee; and grant that thoſe Things that we have faithfully aſked according to thy Will, may effectually be obtained, to the Relief of our Neceſſities, and to the ſetting forth of thy Glory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; in whoſe bleſſed Name and Words we conclude our imperfect Devotions, ſaying,

Our Father, &c.

The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *&c.*

A Prayer for a Sick Perſon; to be added upon Occaſion, either to the Cloſet or Family Prayer.

O Father of Mercies, and God of all Comfort, our only Help in Time of Need, we fly unto Thee for Succour, in

in Behalf of thy Sick Servant lying under thy Hand in great Weakneſs of Body. Viſit *him*, O Lord, with thy Salvation, and deliver *him* in thy good appointed Time from that bodily Pain and Sickneſs which *he* now labours under; prolong *his* Days here upon Earth, that *he* may live to Thee, and be an Inſtrument of thy Glory, by ſerving Thee faithfully, and doing Good in *his* Generation: In the mean Time, O Lord, grant that *he* may take *his* Sickneſs patiently, and entirely ſubmit to thy bleſſed Will. Sanctify, we beſeech Thee, this thy Fatherly Correction to *him*, that the Senſe of *his* Weakneſs may add Strength to *his* Faith, and Serioufneſs to thy Repentance; give *him* Comfort and ſure Confidence in Thee; defend *him* from the Danger of the Enemy; and keep *him* in perpetual Peace and Safety, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

A Prayer for a Sick Perſon, when there appeareth ſmall Hope of Recovery.

ALmighty and immortal God, the Aid of all that need, the Helper of all that fly to Thee for Succour; we

call upon Thee in Behalf of thy Servant, who now lies in a dangerous and very languiſhing Condition. Look graciouſly upon *him*, O Lord, and the more the outward Man decayeth, ſtrengthen *him*, we beſeech Thee, ſo much the more continually with thy Grace and Holy Spirit in the inner Man; give *him* unfeigned Repentance for all the Errors of *his* Life paſt, and ſtedfaſt Faith in thy Son Jeſus, that *his* Sins may be done away by thy Mercy, and *his* Pardon ſealed in Heaven, before *he* go hence, and be no more ſeen. Grant that whatever Defilements *his* Soul may have contracted in the midſt of this miſerable and ſinful World, through the Luſt of the Fleſh, or the Wiles of Satan, may be purged and done away by the Blood of that immaculate Lamb, that was ſlain to take away the Sins of the World; ſo that it may be preſented pure and without Spot before Thee. We know, O Lord, that there is no Word impoſſible with Thee, and that if thou wilt, thou canſt yet raiſe *him* up, and grant *him* a longer Continuance among us; yet foraſmuch as in all Appearance the Time of *his* Diſſolution draweth near, ſo fit and prepare *him*, we beſeech Thee, againſt the Hour of Death, that after

his

his Departure hence in Peace, and in thy Favour, *his* Soul may be received into thine everlasting Kingdom, through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ, thy only Son our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer for a Person under Trouble of Mind.

O Blessed Lord! the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort; I beseech Thee, look down with Pity and Compassion upon me thy afflicted Servant. Unto Thee do I cry for Help, O thou great Physician of Souls; uphold and comfort my weak and dejected Spirit; strengthen it against all inordinate vain Fears and Terrors; and deliver me from all those unprofitable Troubles and Scruples of Conscience with which I am oppressed. I am conscious, O Lord, that I deserve this Punishment for my past Sins, and that I reap the just Reward of my former Iniquities: but I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and truly repent of all my Misdoings; and therefore I beg for the Sake of my Saviour's Merits,

that by thy Pardon and Peace I may be cleanſed from all my Sins, and may ſerve Thee with a quiet Mind all my Days. Let my preſent Uneaſineſs and Diſorder make me humble and patient, and teach me to put my Truſt and Confidence in Thee. I entirely ſubmit to thy bleſſed Will, till thou ſhalt think fit to remove the Torment I groan under, beſeeching Thee, in the mean Time, to enable me to bear it by the Support of thy Holy Spirit; and when I am prepared for ſo great a Mercy, deliver me from my Trouble; lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon me, and give me Peace, through the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt my bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A Prayer before a Journey.

ALmighty God, in whom all Things live, move, and have their Being; who doſt govern all Things by thy wiſe Providence, and whoſe Protection is my only Defence and Security; I humbly beſeech thy divine Majeſty, to give thy holy Angels charge over me in the Journey I am now about to undertake.

take. Let no Temptation that may offer itſelf, prevail upon me to tranſgreſs any of thy holy Laws; but let the Power of thy Grace ſecure me in all thoſe Places and Companies, where my Occaſions ſhall lead me. Let not the Freedom and Liberty of Converſation at ſuch Times, make me forget thoſe Rules which my Chriſtian Profeſſion obliges me to; neither let the Kindneſs and Hoſpitality of others, betray me to the leaſt Exceſs, either in Eating or Drinking. Defend me from Thieves and Robbers, that lie in wait to exerciſe Acts of Violence; and protect me from all Dangers and evil Accidents which may diſturb or annoy me: Preſerve my going out, and my coming in; let thy Providence be my Guard, thy Grace my Defence, and thy bleſſed Self my Portion, both now and for evermore, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

A Thankſgiving after a Journey.

ALmighty God, upon whom all Things depend, who redeemeth our Life from Deſtruction, who crowneth us with Loving-kindneſs and tender Mercies,

Mercies, who is greatly to be praiſed, and whoſe Greatneſs is unſearchable. Bleſſed be thy holy Name, that Thou haſt brought me ſafe to the End of my Journey; that thou haſt preſerved me from innumerable Accidents and Dangers to which I have been expoſed. It is of thy Mercy that my Health has been continued to me, notwithſtanding thoſe various Circumſtances that might have impaired it. It is of thy Goodneſs that no evil Men have made any Aſſault upon me, when others have ſuffered by their unjuſt Violence. It is from thy Providence, that I have been protected from Falls, ſo that not one Bone is broken. How many unforeſeen Dangers, O Lord, haſt thou delivered me from! And how many that have threatned me, haſt thou over-ruled! Lord, thou haſt made me glad thro' the Operation of thy Hands, and I will triumph in thy Praiſe: And let my Heart be always ready to expreſs my Thankfulneſs, not only by my Words, but by my Life, in being more obedient to thy holy Commands. Continue thy Goodneſs to me, that I, whom thou haſt preſerved, may ſerve Thee in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all the Days of my Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer

A Prayer of Thankſgiving for a Perſon recovered from Sickneſs. To be added upon Occaſion to the Cloſet or Family Prayer.

O Almighty God and merciful Father, to whom alone belong the Iſſues of Life and Death, we deſire to bleſs and praiſe thy holy Name, in behalf of thy Servant, whom thou haſt been pleaſed to raiſe from the Bed of Sickneſs, and to reſtore to *his* former Health. Thou haſt perfected thy Strength in *his* Weakneſs, and haſt graciouſly heard our Prayers, and known *his* Soul in Adverſity and Trouble. Praiſed be thy holy Name for thy gracious Diſpenſation towards *him*; as long as *he* lives, let *him* praiſe thee; as long as *he* has any Being, let *him* give Thanks unto thy holy Name: And we beſeech thee, O Lord, let the Remembrance of thy late Mercies vouchſafed unto *him*, ſo affect *his* Soul, that *he* may be afraid, as well as aſhamed to offend thee; that the Remainder of *his* Life may be dedicated to the Service of that God, who hath dealt ſo bountifully with *him*. Strengthen and confirm *him* in the Performance of all thoſe good Reſolutions

ſolutions *he* made in the Day of *his* Diſtreſs; and for the Time to come, let *him* place *his* chief Joy and Satisfaction in running the Way of thy Commandments, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

" Theſe Prayers may be uſed by the " Perſon that is Sick, troubled in Mind, " or recovered, by changing *he* into *I*, " *him* into *me*, *his* into *my*, &c."

A Prayer to be uſed for a Woman drawing near the Time of her Travail; to be added to the Cloſet or Family Prayer upon ſuch Occaſions.

O Lord, look down from Heaven, behold, viſit, and relieve thy Servant that draweth near the Time of her Travail; look upon her with the Eyes of thy Mercy, give her Comfort and ſure Confidence in Thee; of thy Goodneſs, O Lord, let her have Strength and Courage to meet her Pains, Patience and Submiſſion under them, and in thy due Time a ſafe Deliverance; that being preſerved from the great Danger of Child-Birth, ſhe may, through thy Fatherly

Care

Care and good Providence, become a joyful Mother of a hopeful Child, which may live to be an Inſtrument of thy Glory, by ſerving thee faithfully, and doing Good in its Generation, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and only Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer when any Perſon cometh into the Church.

ALmighty and merciful God, of whoſe only Gift it cometh that thy faithful People do unto Thee true and laudable Service; Grant, I beſeech Thee, that I may join in the Prayers of thy Church with Reverence and Devotion, and hear thy holy Word with Attention, and obediently follow the ſame; that my Thoughts and Deſires being fixed on Thee, the Words of my Mouth, and the Meditation of my Heart, may be now and ever acceptable in thy Sight, O Lord, my Saviour and my Redeemer. *Amen.*

A Prayer after the Service of the Church is ended.

O Lord, I beſeech Thee mercifully to receive thoſe Prayers which I have at this Time offered unto Thee, and let thy Word take deep root in my Heart; and be pleaſed to pardon all thoſe Imperfections that have accompanied my weak Performances; O! by the Uſe of theſe Means graft in my Heart the Love of thy Name, increaſe in me true Religion, nouriſh me with all Goodneſs, and of thy great Mercy keep me in the ſame, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and Saviour *Amen.*

A Prayer to be uſed by any Perſon preparing for Confirmation; *and which, during that Time, may be added to their Morning and Evening Prayers.*

MOST merciful God, by whoſe gracious Providence I was born of Chriſtian Parents, and early dedicated to Thee in holy Baptiſm, wherein I was made a Member of the Catholic Church, whereof

whereof Jeſus Chriſt is the Head, adopted thy Child, and intitled to the unſpeakable Happineſs of thy glorious Kingdom; I do moſt heartily thank Thee, O Lord, for calling me to this State of Salvation, and for beſtowing upon me ſuch bleſſed Privileges: O, diſpoſe my Mind, by thy heavenly Grace, carefully and diligently to perform thoſe Conditions thou requireſt to qualify me for ſuch ineſtimable Benefits, and that I may continue in the ſame unto my Life's End.

And now, O Lord, that I am preparing myſelf to receive a further Degree of thy Grace and Favour, which will advance me into the Number of the Faithful, by being admitted to approach thy holy Table; I humbly beſeech Thee to enlighten my Mind with the true Knowledge and Underſtanding of that ſolemn Vow which I made in my Baptiſm, and which I am now about to ratify and confirm publicly in thy Preſence; that I may conſtantly renounce the Devil, by avoiding all thoſe Temptations by which he ſeeks to deſtroy me, and by abſtaining from all thoſe Sins which partake moſt of his diabolical Nature; that I may reſiſt all covetous Deſires of Honour, Riches, and Pleaſure, and all thoſe evil Cuſtoms and Maxims of the World,

World, which alienate Mens Minds from the Love of God; that I may mortify all the inordinate Appetites of my own corrupt Nature; that I may believe all thy holy Revelations, and keep thy bleſſed Will and Commandments all the Days of my Life. O! inſtruct me in all the Particulars of my Duty, that I may herein exerciſe myſelf, to keep a Conſcience void of Offence, towards God, and towards Man.

GIVE me, O Lord, unfeigned Repentance for all the Errors of my Life paſt, that my many and great Sins, which I have committed, may not deprive me of the Aſſiſtances of thy Holy Spirit, which I am about to receive; but let my hearty Sorrow, through the Merits of Chriſt, waſh away all that is paſt, and let Power and Strength, communicated to me from Above, mortify and ſubdue them for the Time to come. I am unable, O Lord, of myſelf, to help myſelf, mercifully grant, that thy bleſſed Spirit may in all Things rule and direct my Heart, that by his holy Inſpiration I may think thoſe Things that are good, and by his gracious Guiding may perform the ſame, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer

A Prayer after Confirmation.

I Bleſs and Praiſe thy holy Name, O Lord God, for thoſe renewed Aſſurances that Thou haſt vouchſafed me, of thy Favour and gracious Goodneſs towards me; and tho' in thy infinite Wiſdom Thou haſt thought fit to withdraw the extraordinary Gifts of thy Holy Spirit, yet Thou art pleaſed to guide thy faithful Servants by his ſecret and inviſible Communications, when they ſeek them in a regular and miniſterial Way. O therefore! let the Bleſſing which I have received by the Hands of thy Servant the Biſhop be with me, and remain with me, and moſt powerfully aſſiſt and ſupport me in all Trials and Temptations, when I moſt need the Help of thy Holy Spirit.

Let Him be unto me a Spirit of Sanctification, to purify my corrupt Nature; a Spirit of Counſel in all Difficulties, of Direction in all Doubts, of Courage in all Dangers, of Conſtancy in all Perſecutions, of Comfort in all Troubles, eſpecially in Times of Sickneſs, and at the Hour of Death; and of Submiſſion and Reſignation to thy holy Will and Pleaſure

Pleaſure in all Afflictions that are moſt grievous to Fleſh and Blood.

Leave me not a Moment to my own human Frailty, without his Aſſiſtance; but let him conſtantly inſpire me with Fear, Love, and Devotion towards thee; with Truth, Juſtice, and Charity, towards my Neighbour; and with Abſtinence and Sobriety towards myſelf.

O! make me ſenſible, O Lord, of that ſolemn and public Profeſſion of my Faith, which I have declared in the Preſence of God and the Congregation, and of thoſe Promiſes of endeavouring faithfully to obſerve and keep thy holy Commandments, and of perſevering in the ſame: Make me always true to theſe Engagements of Living according to the Maxims of the Chriſtian Religion; that walking uprightly before Thee all my Days, and being found watching when my appointed Time ſhall come, I may from a Life of Righteouſneſs be tranſlated to a Life of Glory, through Jeſus Chriſt, my only Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A SHORT

OFFICE

FOR THE

HOLY COMMUNION.

"AS ſoon as the Sermon is "ended, while the Miniſ-"ter is preparing for the "holy Table, we ſhould "be preparing our Minds "for the worthy Participation of the holy "Myſteries, by an humble Addreſs to "God, ſo to aſſiſt us by his Holy Spirit "that we may be fit Gueſts at this hea-"venly Banquet."

A Prayer

A Prayer for the due Celebration of the Chriſtian Sacrifice; which may be uſed, not only at the Time of Communicating, but may be added to our Morning and Evening Prayers, when we are preparing to Communicate.

O Bleſſed God, who haſt diſpoſed me by thy Grace to approach thy holy Myſteries; who haſt wrought in me a Deſire to ſeek what is ſo valuable in itſelf, and ſo neceſſary to my own Happineſs; it is thy infinite Mercy which has provided ſuch a Remedy for my Weakneſs, and which has not left me to periſh in my own Corruption. Grant, O Lord, that I may ever be thankful for this Miracle of thy Love, and that I may partake of it in ſuch a Manner, that my Soul may be nouriſhed with all Goodneſs, that Jeſus may ever live in me, and I in him.

To this End, O Lord, compoſe my Mind to great Seriouſneſs and Devotion, that the Thoughts of this World may not interrupt me in my Attendance upon Thee; but that I may have ſuch a deep Senſe of thy infinite Mercy, and my neceſſary Dependance upon Thee; ſuch an Apprehenſion of thy unſpeakable Goodneſs

neſs to poor, miſerable, ſinful Worms, in this holy Sacrament, that I may be awed into a becoming Reverence, and confirmed againſt all Diſturbances and Diſtractions.

ENLIGHTEN, O Lord, my dark Mind with the Rays of the Sun of Righteouſneſs; inflame my cold Heart with thy holy Love, that I may be fervent in what I aſk; raiſe my Mind, by a lively Faith and a confirmed Hope, that I may have an aſſured Expectation of all neceſſary Supplies from thy Goodneſs; and give me ſuch a true Underſtanding of all that is Eternal, that I may at all Times remember how much it is my Concern, that my Soul ſhould be ever longing after it, and that I ſhould deſire it with an Earneſtneſs above all that belongs to earthly Things, and with Importunity pray for all thoſe Helps that are neceſſary to bring me to the unchangeable Poſſeſſion of Thee, my God, through the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, my only Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer when we offer our Alms.

IT is, O Lord, the Effect of thy Goodneſs that I am enabled to relieve others; and the Effect of thy greater Mercy that I am ready and willing to perform it. Accept, O Lord, of this Teſtimony of my Love and Gratitude, and make me truly thankful for all thoſe happy Opportunities thou giveſt me of doing Good. *Amen.*

" In the following Part of the Com-
" munion Service, we muſt be ſure to
" join moſt affectionately with the *Prieſt*
" that officiates, and never to uſe our
" private Prayers when he calls upon us to
" accompany him; only in the *Exhorta-*
" *tion*, the *Invitation*, and the *Abſolution*,
" we ſhould not repeat the Words after
" him; becauſe in the two firſt he ſpeaks
" to us, and in the *Abſolution*, he exer-
" ciſes a Part of the *Prieſt*'s Office, which
" does not belong to us.

" When thoſe Portions of Scripture
" are read that follow the Abſolution,
" and are deſigned to beget in us a lively
" Faith and Confidence in God's Mer-
" cy, we ſhould make ſhort Ejacula-
" tions

" tions after them in the following Man-
" ner, *viz.*

Come unto me, &c.

REFRESH, O Lord, thy Servant wearied with the Burden of Sin.

So God loved the World, &c.

LORD, I believe in thy Son Jeſus Chriſt, and let this Faith purify me from all Iniquity.

This is a true Saying, &c.

I embrace with all Thankfulneſs that Salvation that Jeſus has brought into the World.

If any Man ſin, &c.

INTERCEED for me, O bleſſed Jeſu! that my Sins may be pardoned, through the Merits of thy Death.

A Prayer immediately after the Elements are conſecrated.

I Adore thee, O bleſſed Jeſus, who didſt humble thyſelf to the Death of the Croſs, that I might be redeemed from a State of Sin and Miſery: I remember with all Thankfulneſs this thy wonderful Condeſcenſion for my Salvation. Bleſſed be thy holy Name for this Chriſtian Sa-

crifice thou haſt provided for us, to convey to us the Benefits of that all-ſufficient Oblation once offered for the Sins of the World. Grant, O Lord, that the Power of it may ſtrengthen my Weakneſs, and fortify me againſt all Temptations; that the Wiſdom of it may enlighten my Mind, and cure my Ignorance; and that the Purity of it may ſanctify me throughout in Body, Soul, and Spirit. *Amen*, Lord Jeſu, *Amen*.

A Prayer before receiving the conſecrated Bread.

I Acknowledge, O Lord, with all Humility, my great Unworthineſs to partake of this heavenly Feaſt, where thou feedeſt all devout Minds with the precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jeſus Chriſt; my many and great Sins may juſtly render me odious in thy Sight, as they make me contemptible in my own; and the Devil and my own Fears might ſo magnify the Horror of them, that they would ſink me into Deſpondency and Dejection of Spirit, if I had not a ſure Truſt and Confidence in thy infinite Goodneſs, manifeſted in the bleeding Wounds

Wounds of my crucified Saviour. For his Sake therefore, O Lord, I humbly beseech Thee to have Mercy upon me; for the Merits of his Death to accept of my imperfect Repentance, and by the Virtue of his most precious Blood, to cleanse me from all my Sins. Pardon, O gracious Father, my light and rash Words, my vain and impure Thoughts, and all my wicked and impious Actions, and whatever I have committed against Thee at any Time before; with Shame and Confusion, with hearty Grief and Sorrow I reflect upon all my Transgressions, and resolve, by the Assistance of thy Grace, to avoid all Sin, as the greatest Evil, for the Time to come; enable me, by the Help of thy holy Spirit, to be constant and vigorous in this Purpose of Mind, and to serve Thee in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of my Life.

The Purity of Angels, and the Devotion of Saints, is not sufficient to make me worthy of the Blessings of thy Table; but thy Goodness has declared, that thou wilt favourably receive those that are sincerely grieved for their Sins, and groan under the Burden of them; that earnestly long for their Deliverance, and desire Power and Strength to resist them; such are assured to find in Thee the Bowels

of a tender Father, and to be received with the Welcome of such Blessings and Graces as their Necessities require. Grant, O Lord, that nothing may be found in me that may obstruct the happy Effects of these thy gracious Intentions towards me.

Possess me, O Lord, with such a Sense of thy Love, and such Thankfulness for all thy Favours, as may transform me into thy Likeness, and may make me ready and willing to do and suffer any Thing for thy Honour and Glory.

What couldest thou do more, O blessed Jesu, than to die upon a Cross for our Redemption, and before thy Death to institute this Pledge and Earnest of thy Love, this perpetual Memorial of thy Sufferings, that thy Church may never want the Benefits and Advantages of them?

Let that immortal Food, which thou hast now prepared for me in the Holy Eucharist, instil into my weak and languishing Soul new Supplies of Grace, that I may desire Thee above all Things as my chiefest Good, and may delight in Thee as the only Happiness of my Soul; that I may continually think on those Joys thou hast prepared for those that love Thee, and undervalue all Things compared to my Salvation; that it may be henceforth

henceforth the greatest Torment I can endure, to rebel against the Bowels of a loving Father, a merciful Redeemer, and a daily Benefactor; that I may no longer live according to the Principles of my natural Man, according to the false Maxims of a sinful and degenerate World; but that I may be quickened by thy Spirit, and govern all my Actions by the Dictates of thy holy Word, and be renewed after thy own Image, in Righteousness and true Holiness; that I may always press forward towards the Prize of the high Calling that is before me, with Faith and Patience, with Humility and Meekness, with Mortification and Self-denial, with Charity, and constant Perseverance unto the End; that living in thy Fear I may die in thy Favour, and may be numbered among thy Saints in Glory everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

When the Priest approaches to deliver the consecrated Bread.

DEAR Jesus! my Refuge and my Joy, the chief Object of my Desires, enter into my Heart, take Possession of it, that I may continue thine for ever,

and daily increaſe in thy holy Spirit more and more, until I come into thy everlaſting Kingdom. *Amen.*

After receiving the conſecrated Bread.

BLeſſed be thy holy Name, O Lord, for feeding my Soul with this Bread of Life: Who can forbear being tranſported with Joy, that knows himſelf ſo highly honoured? Who can contain from breaking into Songs of Praiſe, that is ſo regarded by the King of Heaven? As long as I live, I will magnify thy holy Name; as long as I have any Being, I will ſing Praiſes unto my God.

LET me ſhew my true Value for this divine Nouriſhment, by frequenting thy holy Table; let me teſtify my real Concern for my Miſery and Weakneſs, by being ſolicitous in laying hold of this beſt of Remedies: Let me manifeſt my Deſire of increaſing in all Virtue and Godlineſs, in uſing this ſureſt Means to promote it. O let thoſe Eyes be chaſte, that have beheld the God of Purity; let that Mouth be clean, that has received the Bread of Heaven; and that Soul raiſed above this World, that has been refreſhed with the divine

divine Preſence. Let me live to thee, who haſt died for me; and embrace all the World with Kindneſs and Charity, who have been favoured at this rate, notwithſtanding my great Unworthineſs. *Amen.*

When the Prieſt approaches with the conſecrated Wine.

O MY Soul, conſider the wonderful Price of thy Redemption, no leſs than the Blood of the Son of God; I moſt thankfully rejoice in this aſtoniſhing Inſtance of Goodneſs; I will truſt in it as long as I live; this ſhall be the conſtant Cordial to my ſinking Spirits; and I am reſolved, O Lord, eternally to devote myſelf to thy Service, who haſt purchaſed me at ſo great a Price. *Amen.*

After receiving the conſecrated Wine.

ALL poſſible Thanks and Praiſe be given unto thee, O bleſſed Jeſus, for entertaining me with theſe Wonders of thy Love; for admitting me, wretched Sinner, to partake in the Comforts of this

Chriſtian Sacrifice. Pardon my Vileneſs and Unworthineſs, and for the Time to come let my Heart be entirely fixed on thee: Heal all my Infirmities with thy bleeding Wounds, and let thy dying Love be ſo impreſt upon my Mind, that I may deſire to know nothing but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified. O! let this holy Flame burn ſo bright in my Soul, that I may contemn all the gilded Vanities and Allurements of the World, and that it may conſume all other Loves but thine.

Sanctify my Soul, O Lord, with ſincere and conſtant Obedience to all thy holy Laws: Crown what thou haſt begun, by a continual Supply of thy heavenly Grace, that I may never forget whom, or what I have received; but being purified by thy Blood, and ſtrengthned by thy Body, againſt all future Temptations; I may conſtantly run through all the Parts of a holy Life, to the Poſſeſſion of thy glorious Kingdom.

O let me diligently ſeek Thee, my chiefeſt Good. O let me earneſtly deſire Thee, a Being of all Perfection. O let me continually pant after Thee, the only Reſt and Center of immortal Souls. *Amen.*

"If

" IF there be any Time before the " Adminiſtration of the Holy Sacrament " is finiſhed, it will be very proper to uſe " a Prayer of *Interceſſion*, and a general " *Thankſgiving*."

A Prayer of Interceſſion.

GRANT, O Lord, that the Benefit of thy Son's Death may be as extenſive as the Deſign and Intent of it; that the Heathen World may be brought to the Knowledge of Chriſt; and that the fulfilling of thy ancient Promiſes to the Remnant of thy once beloved *Iſrael*, may be haſtened; and that all Chriſtians may live as becomes the Goſpel of our Saviour. That all Governors may rule with Wiſdom and Juſtice, and Subjects obey with Love and Chearfulneſs. That the Prieſts of the Lord may be found in their Doctrines, holy and exemplary in their Lives, and particularly zealous for the Salvation of Souls. That the People may be humble and tractable, moſt deſirous to hear, and fully bent to follow wiſe Inſtructions. That the Sick and Weak may receive Health and Recovery, and the Poor and Needy Relief and

and Aſſiſtance. That the Widows and Fatherleſs, the Priſoners and Captives, may find Friends, with all thoſe that groan under any Oppreſſion. That the troubled in Mind may be reſolved and comforted; and that all under dangerous and preſſing Temptations, may be ſuccoured and ſtrengthened. That they who ſuffer for a good Conſcience, may rejoice in that they are counted worthy to bear Teſtimony to thy Truth; and that all who have communicated this Day, may perſevere in their pious Reſolutions. Give Ear, O Lord, to theſe my humble Supplications in behalf of others, for the Sake of Jeſus Chriſt my only Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A general Thankſgiving.

ALL Honour and Praiſe be given to thee, O Lord God Almighty, for all thy Mercies and loving Kindneſſes beſtowed upon me, and for all thoſe Bleſſings I expect as the Effect of thy infinite Goodneſs.

I bleſs and praiſe Thee for making me a rational Creature; that I was born within the Pale of the Chriſtian Church, whereby

whereby I have enjoyed the Means of Grace, and received a Title to the everlaſting Happineſs of Heaven.

Blessed be thy Name for preſerving me from innumerable Accidents and Dangers through the whole Courſe of my Life, for Help and Succour in my Wants and Neceſſities, for Relief and Comfort in all my Tribulations and Afflictions, for ſparing me ſo long, and giving me ſo large a Time for Repentance.

But above all, I praiſe and magnify thy holy Name, for the wonderful Work of our Redemption, for the perfect Pattern of our Saviour's Life, for the Excellency of his Doctrine, and for the meritorious Sufferings of his Death and Paſſion.

I bleſs and praiſe Thee for all the Gifts and Graces of thy holy Spirit; for thoſe miraculous Powers whereby Chriſtianity was propagated throughout the World; and for thoſe Aſſiſtances Chriſtians have received in all Ages for the doing thy holy Will.

I bleſs and praiſe Thee for the Senſe and Knowledge I have had of my Duty towards Thee, and that I have been any Ways diſpoſed to love and ſerve Thee; that I have been touched with the Folly and Miſery of tranſgreſſing thy Laws; and

and that I have made ſerious and ſtrong Reſolutions of conforming to them for the Time to come; and for the happy Opportunity thou haſt this Day given me of approaching thy holy Table.

WHAT ſhall I render unto the Lord for all the Benefits he has beſtowed upon me? I will ſhew forth his Praiſe, not only with my Lips but in my Life, by giving up myſelf to his Service, and by walking before him in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all my Days. *Amen, Amen.*

" WHEN the Miniſter has finiſhed " the Communion Service, conclude the " Whole with a ſhort Prayer in the fol- " lowing manner."

PArdon, O God, thoſe many Imperfections that have accompanied me in the Performance of this holy Duty; and grant that thoſe Things which I have faithfully aſked according to thy Will, may effectually be obtained to the Relief of my Neceſſities, and to the ſetting forth of thy Glory, through Jeſus Chriſt my only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

A Prayer

A Prayer in our Retirement, after receiving the Holy Sacrament; which may be uſed as ſoon as we come Home, or be added to a Perſon's Evening Prayer.

WHAT Thanks can I return, O moſt gracious God, unto thy divine Majeſty, for the Opportunity thou haſt this Day given me of approaching thy Altar; for the Senſe thou haſt given me of my Duty, and for that Strength and Power whereby thou haſt in ſome meaſure enabled me to perform it? I will praiſe and magnify thy great and glorious Name; and I will entirely devote myſelf to thy Service as long as I have any Being.

BLESSED be thy Name for thoſe freſh Supplies of Grace I have received at the Holy Communion; grant that they may make me run the Way of thy Commandments with Delight and Pleaſure, that I may never any more faint, or droop, or tire in my Duty.

BLESSED be thy Name for thoſe comfortable Aſſurances thou haſt given me of Pardon and Forgiveneſs. Let this thy compaſſionate Goodneſs, be a perpetual Obligation to Love and Gratitude: Let

Let it put me upon my Guard, that I may watch over all my Ways, and do always that which is well-pleaſing in thy Sight.

BLESSED be thy Name for that Peace and Quiet thou haſt reſtored to my Soul; for thoſe Reſolutions thou haſt wrought in me to perſevere in thy Service to the End of my Days: Make them firm, vigorous and conſtant; and never let any ſinful Paſſions any more ruffle and diſcompoſe my Mind.

BLESSED be thy Name for that Reliſh thou haſt given me of ſpiritual Delights, that Deſire of poſſeſſing the eternal Inheritance: Let the Enjoyments of Senſe appear mean and contemptible; and let not the Pleaſures of the World any more prevail upon me to tranſgreſs thy holy Laws.

GRANT, O Lord, that I may walk worthy of theſe thy diſtinguiſhing Mercies, and live as becomes the Redeemed of the Lord; remain therefore, O Lord, and abide with me for ever; I ſhall then be enabled to do thy Will in this Life, and thereby be qualified to partake of thy Glories to all Eternity in the next, through Jeſus Chriſt my only Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Grace

A Grace before Meat.

WE acknowledge thy Goodneſs, O Lord, in making this Proviſion for us: Pardon our Sins, which render us unworthy of theſe and all other thy Mercies. Bleſs us with a thankful Uſe of theſe thy Creatures, that they may never miniſter to Luxury and Senſuality; but that we may be enabled, through the Strength of them, to do Thee all faithful Service, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

A Grace after Meat.

BLeſſed and praiſed be thy holy Name, O Lord, for that Refreſhment which we have at this Time received from the Uſe of thy good Creatures: Teach us to labour for the Meat that endureth to everlaſting Life; that as we are maintained by thy Bounty, ſo we may live to thy Praiſe, Honour, and Glory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

FINIS.

BOOKS *Printed for and Sold by* B. Dod, *at the* Bible *and* Key *in* Ave Mary Lane, *near* Stationers-Hall, London.

Dr Green's (late Lord Bishop of *Ely*) four Discourses on the Four Last Things, *viz. Death, Judgment, Heaven*, and *Hell*; wherein these important Subjects are earnestly recommended to the serious and frequent Consideration of all Christians, as a Means of inducing them to lead a Holy Life in this World, on which their eternal Well-being in the next does so greatly depend. With a suitable Prayer to each Subject. 12*mo*. Price 2*s*.

A Plain Method of Christian Devotion: Laid down in Discourses, Meditations, and Prayers, fitted to the various Occasions of a Religious Life. In Three Parts. Translated and Revised from the *French* of Monsieur Jurieu, by William Fleetwood, D. D. late Lord Bishop of *Ely*. The Twentyninth Edition. Price 2*s*. 6*d*.

Burkitt's Poor Man's Help and Young Man's Guide: Containing, I. Doctrinal Instructions for the right informing his Judgment. II. Practical Directions for the general Course of his Life. III. Advice for well managing every Day; particularly in Family-Worship, Private-Prayer, Reading the Holy Scriptures, Hearing the Word, Receiving the Lord's Supper. With suitable Prayers and Hymns. The Thirtyfirst Edition. Price 1*s*.

The Reasonable Communicant: or, an Explanation of the Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in all its Parts, from the Communion-Service. In a Discourse between a Minister and one of his Parishioners. The Nineteenth Edition. Price 1*s*. It may be had in a smaller Size, Price 2½*d*. or 15*s*. a Hundred, stitch'd.

The Life of God in the Soul of Man: or, the Nature and Excellency of the Christian Religion, with the Methods of attaining the Happiness it proposes: Also an Account of the Beginnings and Advances of a Spiritual Life. With a Preface, by Gilbert Burnett, late Lord Bishop of *Sarum*. The Ninth Edition corrected. Price 1*s*. 6*d*.

3 1158 01114 9233

SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 001 121 748 6