

A

Spittle Sermon

PREACH'D

In S^t BRIDES Parish-Church,
on *Wednesday* in *Easter Week*, being the
Second Day of *April*, 1684.

BEFORE

The Right Honourable the

Lord Mayor,

THE

Court of ALDERMEN,
and the SHERIFFS of the now Prote-
stant, and Loyal, City of *London*.

By THOMAS PITTIS, D. D. Rector of *S. Botolph*
without *Bishopsgate London*, and one of His Majesties
Chaplains in Ordinary.

Ecce quàm invicem se amant!

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TO THE
Right Honourable
S^r Henry Tulse,
LORD MAYOR, and to the
Right Worshipful the Court of AL-
DERMEN and SHERIFFS of the City of
LONDON.

May it please your Lordship, &c.

IN obedience to your just Authority,
which I have alwayes, in my small
Sphere, endeavoured to maintain, I have
hardned my self against the Censures of the
World, to comply with your desire to Print
a mean Discourse on a Noble Theme. God
grant that you may, under the Supreme
Being,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Being, and a most excellent King, perfect the Thorow Reformation according to Law, which you have begun; be as Charitable, and Kind, as the following Sermon was designed, by the Preacher, to exhort you unto; and alwayes Loyal to that Most Protestant, and truly Gracious, Monarch, who gave you your Commission; whilst I remain,

Right Honourable, &c.

Your most humble, and most obedient Servant,

THO. PITTIS.

These Books following are written by the same Author,
and are to be sold by Edward Vize, at the Bishop's
Head over against the Royal Exchange in
Cornhill.

A Discourse of Prayer: Wherein this great Duty
is stated, so as to oppose some Principles and
Practices of *Papists* and *Fanaticks*; as they are contrary
to the Publick Forms of the Church of *England*, esta-
blished by her Ecclesiastical Canons, and confirmed by
Acts of Parliament.

A Discourse concerning the Tryal of Spirits: Where-
in Inquiry is made into Mens Pretences to Inspiration
for publishing Doctrines in the Name of God, beyond
the Rules of the Sacred Scriptures. In opposition to
some Principles and Practices of *Papists* and *Fanaticks*;
as they contradict the Doctrines of the Church of *Eng-
land*, defined in her Articles of Religion, established by
her Ecclesiastical Canons, and confirmed by Acts of Par-
liament.

E R R A T A.

ERRATA.

Page 3. line 23. read *their abode* : p. 20. l. 21. r. *Antoninus Pius* : p. 24. l. 5. blot out *He* : p. 27. l. 5. instead of *Streams*, r. *Steames*.

[Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]

Ecclesiastes

ERRATA



Ecclesiastes 11. 6. former part.

In the morning sow thy seed; and, in the evening, withhold not thine hand.—



N the fore-going Verses of this Chapter, we have directions and motives to disperse our Alms, the blessed fruits of an enlarged Charity : A word so big and comprehensive, (when 'tis not restrained as in this Text) that it points out the whole duty of man. This Vertue, being so sacred and divine a Grace, is the foundation of all Gods Com-mands, mentioned both in the Law, and by the Prophets; so that our Blessed Saviour himself informs us, *That, as to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength,* contains the general matter of the first Table of the Law : So, *to love our neighbour as our selves,*

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includes the second, (*Matth. 22.37, &c.*) To the second of these is my Text confined; and though liberal acts are here wrap'd up in Metaphor; yet the words, I have read, are a plain intimation of as necessary a duty of dispersing our abundance, or superfluities, of this World amongst those who stand in need of our relief. For, the expression of *Seed* signifying mens Alms, and *sowing it*, the dispersion of them, cannot appear to be terms very far fetch'd; since the Scriptures of the New Testament, in relation to the Bounty and Liberality of Christians, say, *He which soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully*, (*2 Cor. 9. 6.*) The Seed of our Charity, amongst other things, *springing up unto eternal life*, may easily represent both our duty and reward, and engage us to scatter and sow our Alms, since so large a Crop shall abundantly satisfy for our labour and expence. It is not rare in Scripture phrase, but very frequent, to express its meaning in Allusions or Metaphors, and these, by a continued succession, are sometimes advanced to an Allegory: And the Context, in these cases, will easily determine their sense and meaning. Thus we find here, in my Text, the same duty of dispersing our Charity, which, in the first Verse of the same Chapter, is advised

advised in the expression of *casting bread upon the face of the waters*, phrased, now, by *sowing our seed*.

And therefore, without any torturing Criticisms, or troubling our selves with harder language; The Text I have taken to discourse on, includes only a clear direction to bestow our Charity to those who stand in need of our assistance. And because men, who are so greedy of this World, that they little take care of the advantages of the next, are apt to decline the performance of that, which they cannot but acknowledge to be just and equal, and to raise objections against the practice of what, in speculation, they are willing to own; especially in this duty of Charity and Bounty, that cannot be accomplished without expence: Because some are so addicted to scrape together the dust and rubbish of this lower World, that their sweat and blood shall be drop'd into it, to make it to consolidate and cement together, that it may not be scattered, but fixed to the places and seats of abode: Nay, so greedy are some for the securing their wealth, and so loth to diminish any of their heaps, that they will even venture to dye to save charges. The wise Preacher therefore, in the Chapter of my Text, confirms this necessary duty of Charity, by argument;

and at the same time answers objections: And because the rich, though close, men of the World, are apt to think, that scattering their wealth, is the way to diminish it, and that giving to the needy, is not the method to encrease their store; he assures them, *ver. 1.* that if they *cast their bread upon the waters, they shall find it after many dayes.* That is, though they throw it into a running stream, that is passing by, and never like to return to the same place again; yet it is not impossible by a large circulation, to enter by the caverns of the earth, into the same River: However, the fountain-head still springs, and the great God, of the Sea which is the Parent of the Rivers, can send a greater proportion from above; and, in this case, unless what may be a greater advantage intervenes, his will shall not controll his power. But men may, perhaps, be enclined to adventure something upon the bottom of this hope; only they are afraid to send any large portion of their wealth upon those waters, that may carry it too far out of their reach: They would disperse a small Summ to a few; but they are loth to have the trouble of too many Pensioners. This the Wise-man obviates too, at *vers. 2.* *Give a portion, sayes he, to seven, and also to eight; to some, and to more, according to thy proportion and ability; which*
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one man cannot set for another, unless he is acquainted with his estate and circumstances: And he adds an Argument, and Motive, to this; *For thou knowest not* (sayes he) *what evil shall be upon the earth.* Thou knowest not what mischief thou maist prevent, by thy Charity, to another: Nor what evils may betide thy self, when thou maist, by the mutability of affairs, stand in need of help or assistance from others. But (farther) because, in an affair of this nature, men are so loth to part with that wealth, which they love so well; and to resign a possession, in hope only of a future reversion; and therefore are very curious in making their choice of those Objects, on whom they may bestow their Charity; which must cost them that money which they prize equal to their lives. The Preacher sends them to take a view of the influence of the Heavens, and fetches an argument out of the Clouds; that they may not alwayes look upon the Earth, but sometimes lift up their eyes to Heaven. *If the clouds* (sayes he) *be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth:* And that none may be disheartned, or rather willingly excuse themselves, from Noble, and Godlike acts of Bounty, because the Receivers are frequently so unworthy, or ingrateful; the Wise-man goes on in the third Verse, *If the tree fall*

fall towards the south, or towards the north, it is indifferent, so it falls at all; for in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. Thy Charity, however, let the receiver be never so unworthy or unthankful, shall be accepted by him, who has enjoined it as thy duty, if thou hast placed it with a good mind. For he, that usually stayes too long wavering and deliberating about such things as these, misses often a fitting Object, and frequently does not give at all; but loses his season and reward too: he slips his seed time, and cannot well expect an harvest. For (as it follows, ver. 4.) *He that observeth the wind, will not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds, shall not reap.* So that, upon the whole, when we are able, we must be alwayes willing to give; Because (as it is in the latter part of the Verse, in which my Text is placed) with reference either to time or persons, we may easily be deceived; For *we know not what gift may prosper; either this, or that; or whether they may not be alike good.* Give often therefore, as *Seneca* adviseth, because *perdenda sunt multa, ut semel ponas bene*; many are to be lost, that you may sometimes, or, at least once, place your benefits well. However, follow the advice in my Text, *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand.*

And now, these words, from their plain coherence with the former part of this Chapter, present to us that publick duty of Charity to those who stand in need of our aid and relief. A duty that is inscribed on the minds of men, which nature it self inclines us to; So that we must renounce the Principles of Humanity, and bid defiance to the dispositions of our minds (if they are not fill'd with dirt and rubbish, or shrunk by an unnatural, nay, devilish fierceness and cruelty) when we refuse to commiserate persons in affliction, or cease to be, according to our abilities, charitable to the Poor. The *Jews* would formerly have directed us to this duty; The *Heathen* will upbraid us, if we renounce it; The *Beasts* themselves will gladly suffer their own kind to feed with them; And the *damm'd in Hell* have had so much kindness and compassion too, to wish well to their Brethren, even whilst themselves have been tormented in the flames: Charity is a duty pleasant in the exercise, glorious in it self, and brings a large, and a rich portion, to those who love, and therefore espouse, it: For it entitles men to the blessing of God, which, the Scripture tells us, *maketh rich*: 'Tis that which the covetous, and sordid men of this lower World will commend in others, however they may be loth to practise it themselves;

Nay,

Nay, the Devils in Hell will laugh at us, when we cease to be kind to our own species: 'Tis that, without which, all our larger proprieties must cease; Humane Government and Society must be dissolved: and if a tolerable care were not taken of the Nedy, the greatest Empires would quickly be laid in dust and ruines, when the Poor are every where more numerous, and consequently, stronger, than the rich: It preserves Power and Authority among us, whilst Order, betwixt superiors and inferiors, is, by a suitable allowance to the different states and ranks of men, not violated, but preserved entire. The rich cannot live, without the poor; and in common prudence, they ought to be maintained, that some may do the drudgery of the World: We may as well think, that Trade and Commerce can be supported with Foreigners without Ships, to transport the growth and product of our own soil, and bring to us the advantages of another: That these flying Arks, riding on the Waves, and mounted by the wings of the Wind, can sail with safety, and directly, to their Ports, by the steeridge of a Pilot, without common Sea-men, that may, with toil and labour, hoist, or shift, or take in the Sails. What pitiful Trades should we quickly have in this renowned City, had we not Porters, and Car-

men,

men, to bear the burdens? How would the destroying Plague invade us, had we not Scavengers to cleanse the Streets? Nay, Great men, and the most delicate Ladies, would hardly know how to live; but Pestilence, and Infection would seize their Houses, and the very Air, in which they breathe, had they not those contented, and in their condition, happy Inferiors, to endure the heat and burthen of the day, whilst they keep all sweet and clean. So that the Rich can no more live without the Poor, than they can without the Rich. But, besides all this, the Christian Religion, which we profess, more especially enjoyns Charity to its Disciples; not only that love, which, if sincere, will, certainly, *cover a multitude of sins*; but also their Alms and Bounty, to relieve others: That whilst the Rich enjoy their State and Plenty, none may be starved for want of Bread. There is nothing more frequent than Exhortations, and Commands, with reference unto Charity, so commonly dispersed in the New Testament, as well as the Old; that to repeat them, would be thought an unreasonable lengthning of my discourse, and reflect disparagement upon so Religious, and Honourable, an Assembly; as if I preached to such, who could not, or did not, read the Scriptures.

All therefore that I shall at this time farther attempt, shall be discharged in a performance of two things :

First, In shewing how this Charity, in dispersing our Wealth, may, besides our ordinary and common Alms, be so managed, that we may accomplish the duty we are directed to in my Text.

Secondly, In perswading to the full and frequent exercise of it ; That *in the morning* we may, according to our abilities, *sow our seed*, and *in the evening* may not withhold our hands. And these two things I shall endeavour to accomplish, as plainly, and as briefly, as I may.

First, Let me exhibit the methods and ways, by which we may expend and lay out our Wealth, that may easily be spared from our selves and families ; so as to follow the sacred direction in this Text, and several other in Holy Writ. And, here, I need not speak of the various Objects that are rendred capable of our Charity and Relief : The Government it self is too often forced to beg, though it is to keep us all in order ; And yet it is dismiss'd without a Free-will-offering, when we are obliged to it, by way of gratitude, for that Peace and Security, under the shadow of which we enjoy our own. None can think they shall want Objects, either deser-

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ving or craving their Charity, though they had a Million to expend in its service, supposing it to be confined to the limits of this City; if I may measure the whole, by the bounds of that part, in which I have my lot and residence; though in the computation, we should make a sufficient, and vast, abatement. Any way that by our Charity we may contribute to the advantage, and welfare, of the Goods, Bodies, or Souls of others, that may want help, and accessions, to either, so as it be done according to proportion, and opportunity, will, in the general, discharge this duty in my Text.

But, more particularly, there are three channels, into which our Charity, dispersing it self, may overflow, to the disburthening the fountain, by the disposal of our large, or increasing, *Mammon*. And these are Hospitality, Liberality, and Munificence.

First, We may sow the seed of our Wealth (that I may sometimes use the Metaphor in my Text) by being hospitable in our houses, and entertainments: And this does not only support the dignity of men, to set a lustre on the different Orders in the World, by shewing a decent mixture of Authority and Wealth, that uphold each other. But it invites Inferiors, and those that are entertained, not only to an awful,

and affectionate, regard to the hospitable person; But it causes men to be acquainted with, and to love, each other by keeping up a decent, and, as far as it is fitting, a familiar, friendship; that so Order may be the Parent of Peace; and there may be no Jars or Discords in our various Societies, nor any Complaints heard in our Streets. This vertue of Hospitality, the *Greeks* were wont to express by φιλοξενία, as if it were an essential ingredient to the hospitable man to make his entertainments, not to flow from necessity, but delight: And therefore the pleasure that accrued to him from his kindness to strangers, might be a great compensation for the charge and expence. But farther yet, The exercise of this Splendid and Noble Vertue, gains not only Honour and Reputation in the World, but Friends too. And it is not unfrequently rewarded in this life, by such correspondencies and accessions to our Wealth, by a kind reception of grateful guests, that more than double our favours upon our selves. However, if an affable, courteous and generous temper should not attract to its Owner, its due and just reward here, through any ill Fate, or the Ingratitude of others; but be upbraided by disingenuity and unkindness; yet, to be sure, he shall not alwayes miss his recompence; For his large mind shall,
in

in a future Region, enter, where an Estate cannot; and gain a glorious and eternal habitation, when his most stately Mansion in this World; nay, the Palaces of Princes shall prove so ruinous, that they can no longer house their Inhabitants. For the great God has so twisted our interest with our duty, that he who commands us to use Hospitality, instamping this sacred Vertue upon our minds, writing it also in large characters in the Old Testament and the New, has graciously promised to reward these actions; though their native goodness is a sufficient argument to recommend their practice. If we receive, therefore, strangers with compassion and courtesie, or supply the wants of those, whose necessitous inability, or present misfortunes, cannot make provision for themselves; The most gracious God, whose nature is to be liberal, will not only conduct us in our Pilgrimage here, but hereafter allot us eternal Mansions, full of quiet and pleasant repose, when our dayes shall be accomplished in this lower World, and the dissolution of our bodies shall put a period to the enjoyment of those possessions which we have yet the fruition of. It was always, amongst mankind, not only a piece of good Nature, but Religion, to provide for, and protect, to the utmost of their power, him whom their Favour
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and Hospitality, admitted as a guest into their houses : Hence was it, that the old man of *Gibeab*, when he had received the travelling *Levite* into his house, at such a time as the whole Town were inhospitable, and the Hectoring Blades of the Sons of *Belial*, had a resolution to break the Sacred Bonds, not only of Hospitality, but Chastity too ; and to that end, beset the house, crying out with a large and common throat, *Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him :* offering not only violence to their neighbour, and to one, whose Function, being Sacred, might have been his protection, especially when he was a stranger too ; but to the natural propensity, and Laws of mankind : yet the good old man quickly reprehended such rude violence, though with Rhetorick that might have softned the most uncultivated Clowns, or any except such Miscreants as these : *Nay, my brethren, (sayes he, ver. 23.) nay, I pray you do not so wickedly :* And he draws his Argument from the common right and Laws of hospitality ; *Seeing this man is come into mine house, do not this folly.* Now this is not the only reason to preserve the rights of hospitality sacred ; But the great God (whom all mankind have cause to fear) was not only angry at their rudeness and incivility ; but utterly dissatisfied with, and resolved to punish

punish the crimes both of their desire and action : And this appears in the succeeding punishment : For though the merits of the cause are exhibited to us (*Judges 19.*) yet it is apparent, in the next Chapter, that although the body of the *Israelites* lost forty thousand in two Battels ; the *Benjamites* had their Cities reduced to ashes, and their Beasts and Men smitten with the Sword, and only six hundred escaped this punishment, like *Job's* messengers, that the dislike of such crimes might be continued to posterity. Nor is this example only upon record to encourage hospitality, and deterr men from acting contrary to the Laws of it ; But there are also more early patterns of this Vertue, and great advantages that did attend it. *Abraham* exercising hospitality to strangers, had the honour to entertain three Angels ; and not only so, but at the same time, he had the assurance of a most gracious Promise, that a Son should yet spring from the barren Womb, *in whom all the Nations of the earth should be blessed*, (*Gen. 18.*). His Kinsman *Lot* also, because Generosity then, as it does often now, ran in a blood, was honoured with two Angels for his guests, in the very next Chapter : And though the wickedness of the *Sodomites* seemed to blemish and spoil the Feast, in causing this Entertainment to be Tra-

gical

gical to themselves ; yet hospitable *Lot* was carried from the devouring flames, and plucked as a Brand, out of this dreadful fire, that reduced the whole City into ashes : Now lest any narrow and griping *Precisian* should banish the excellent use of hospitality, because the generosity of some may be abused to the debauchery of others, (as some persons have an excellent Talent to inveigh against the abuses, nay, the very use of things, which, if allowed, must sometimes prove chargeable to themselves) : Lest such, I say, should too much straiten the Vertue of hospitality, as a thing too loose for a Gospel Dispensation, and not agreeable to Spiritual dispositions, that must be fed with a thinner diet ; Those two examples, just now fetched out of the *Old Testament*, are placed in the *New*, to encourage that hospitality which its Precepts do enjoyn : *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, (sayes the Author to the Hebrews) for thereby some have entertained Angels unawares.* Nor is this a duty commanded only to the Clergy under the *New Testament*, from whom men are frequently so unjust, as to expect much, where less is given ; But all other persons as well as these are commanded to be given to hospitality, even all the household and family of the faithful : And therefore *S. Paul* exhorts all

(Rom. 12. 13.) to distribute to the necessities of the Saints, and to be given to hospitality. And S. Peter also backs him in this, by advising men to use hospitality one to another, without grudging; And as every man hath received the gift, (his proportion of outward and worldly blessings) so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, (1 Pet. 4. 9, 10.). Nay, there are not only Precepts to command, and Motives to encourage to this duty in the New Testament, but Examples too, could I spare so much time on this Head, to produce them. What should I tell you of devout *Lydia's* entertainment of S. Paul, and those that accompanied him? (*Acts* 16. 15.) of that splendid Marriage Feast in *Cana of Galilee*, at which the Mother of our Lord, our Saviour himself, and his Disciples, were so plentifully, nay, abundantly treated: (*John* 2.) Of that Parabolical Supper, in the Gospel, where the Poor, and the maimed, the halt, and the blind were entertained; (*Luke* 14.) Nor can I stay now to enlarge upon the hospitality of *Publius* exercised to S. Paul and his Ships Crue, on the Island of *Melita* in the *Lybian* Sea, when they had suffered a dangerous Shipwrack in a Storm; nor on the common *Barbarians* kindness and entertainment, (*Acts* 28.). Let the Old *Germans* shame our

little, narrow, systematical men, and all inhospitable tempers in the World: Of whom, *Tacitus* gives this commendation; That *convictibus & hospitibus non alia gens effusius indulget*; No Nation was more free and generous in their entertainments: *Quemcunq; mortalium arcere tecto nefas habetur; pro fortunâ quisque apparatus epulis excipit*. They were almost prodigal in their hospitality: 'Twas a crime, a wickedness beyond pardon, to bid any one to depart out of their houses; and every one entertained suitable to his Fortune: Strangers were welcome, as well as Friends, to the Tables and Beds of the hospitable man. Amongst the *Lucani*, who dwelt in *Italy*, it was a standing Law, that if a Stranger came about Sunset to any ones house, to desire shelter, and the Master would not permit him to be received, he was presently to be fined and punished, as a cruel and inhospitable man; *Mul-tetur (says my Author) & pœnas luat inhospitalitatis*. How splendid and glorious were such Laws, and a decent and well guarded deportment, suitable to them, in comparison to some girdled, and strait wasted, people among ourselves; when, with them, a man may sooner break his Neck, than his Fast; who shake their heads at the name of any old observation, and yet at home keep an everlasting *Lent*? But alas! such

such men, what ever mortification they pretend, are so far off from the principles of Religion, that they are not arrived at good manners, pretending Temperance, and Abstinence, and the frequent abuses of open hospitality, to hide their Avarice, under the Mantle of Vertue, and a more strict Sobriety: And yet all this while there are none more frequent guests to other men, than such as are averse to tolerable entertainments at their own houses: But when they are guilty of a forced rape upon their common inclinations, and honour causes covetousness to bleed, they give the entertained a Meal, only that they may run the Spit into their Bellies; and like one sort of cruel Heathens, sacrifice their guests to their *Diana*: Alas! how many Treats are made in the World, upon the sole design of preying on the entertained, filling their Bellies, that they may empty their Purses; and laying them to sleep, that they may pick their Pockets, or else rob them of their principles of Honesty or Religion: Nay, too often, men, under the guise of hospitality, defraud others of their honour and reputation, sacrificing the good name of a present guest, to those gods of the World, that may succeed them in the next entertainment, to whom, greater interest commands

greater oblations, whilst they sport together with blemishing the Fame of an absent Acquaintance: Though by such treachery, among good men, we spoil our entertainments, and with the Sacrifice of our Guests, we consume our Honour and our Honesty too. Yet the fault must not always lye at the door of him who is given to hospitality, but sometimes the guest may spoil the entertainment, not only by a tatling humour, and a censorious branding; nay, ripping up the bowels, and unveiling the faults of such acquaintance, as are common to both; But he may offer injury to the hospitable man, and discourage him in the exercise of this generous duty, which cements men together by love and friendship, and relieves those that are in want and misery: And this is done by unfeasonable approaches, or being over-curious in questions and enquiries, or garrulous and prating in other places, of what passed at the last entertainment. *Antonius Pius* asking one, Where he had those Porphyry Pillars? he presently replied, with some smartness, *In alienis aedibus & mutum, & surdum, esse decet*; Under anothers roof, it is decent to be both deaf and dumb. But notwithstanding all this, the accidental abuses of a generous hospitality, must not discourage the practice of so laudable a Vertue; but we must, according

according to our stations and abilities, cheerfully receive, civilly entertain, and courteously dismiss those, whom a solemn invitation, a common accident, or an urging necessity, makes our guests; according to that of the Antient Poet,

Χρὴ ξείνον παρεόντα φιλεῖν, ἐδέλοντα δὲ πέμπειν.

And now I might, justly, take occasion to inveigh against those Great and Rich men in the World, that have shrivel'd Hearts and swollen Purses, who are so far from being hospitable to others, that they are narrow and unjust to their Families and themselves. But as I am not willing to offend the *Gentile*, so I am loth to upbraid the very *Jew*. And therefore I come to my second Head; under which, we may sow the seed of Charity, in a bounteous liberality to those whom Providence causes to live upon that provision, which the Almighty Lord of the whole World, demands as a *Quit-rent*, from those, to whom he has granted an *Estate*, it being his peculiar reserve and portion.

Now because the earthy gifts of this World, cannot immediately reach Heaven, though we raise never so much dust with them (for our goodness extends not to God, *Psal. 16. 2.*) The glo-

rious King of the whole World receives not these reserved Rents himself; which our Blessed Saviour plainly intimates, upon prevision of his Ascension into Heaven (*John 12. 8.*) *The poor ye have alwayes with you; but me you have not alwayes.* Therefore this Vertue of Liberality, commanded by him who is liberal to us all, is practised, by being generous and free to those necessitous persons among our selves, from whom we may expect no other returns than gratitude, and ingenuity; *Parum tribuere ut accipias, magis venatio appellanda quam donatio,* says St. Jerom; *To bestow a small Boon (or a great one either) that we may receive again, is rather a Sale than a Gift.* Therefore the liberal man flies higher, and will not stoop his Charity to such mean designs; nor will he let his benevolence to Hire: And as he does not thus bait his Hook, to catch Fish with Money in their mouths; so neither does he adventure his bountiful dispersions, that his returns may be popularity and fame; though this will always be an attendant: Because they are too mean Consequences of Liberality to be its ultimate scope and end: Hence is that Satyrical Declamation of our Saviour against that old Pharisaical Ostentation, where they blew their Trumpets when they gave their Alms; and deemed their Gifts ill bestowed if their Charity were not publi-

published to the World : It seems Glory and Renown was the great gain which these narrow soul'd Creatures fought for, and designed this thin and airy purchase when they gave an Alms; Therefore the great Lord of the whole Harvest enjoins Christians to be rather secret in their Disposals, and that they should be so far from boasting of their Charity, and noising it abroad among other men, that (if 'twere possible) they should not mind it themselves; nor the left hand know what the right hand did. (*Matth. 6. 3.*) Seneca, also, who is an excellent Moralist, to say no more, (in his 7th. Book *de beneficiis*, cap. 22.) perswades the Donor to forget his gift, lest he should be tempted to boast and publish it: And he farther reflects on those men *Qui beneficium, quod dederunt, omnibus circulis narrant*: That proclaim their Charity on the Stage; and in all Societies brag of their Liberality. That grave Check which Solomon gives to vain-glorious Men, may, in this, gag our Months to silence (*Prov. 27. 2.*) *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own Lips*: For, to publish our own vertue, is to become an Herald to our selves; and vainly to assume the Ensignes of Honour without authority from those in whose power is the right to confer them: Nay, at the same time, when we boast our Liberality, we detract from our reputation

tation and bounty too, and blazoning our actions the wrong way we shadow and disgrace them. Our Saviour, therefore, when he had exercised that work of Charity and Mercy in curing the Leper, (*Luke 5. 13.*) he strictly charges him to tell no Man. The case is the same in Alms and Bounty; endeavouring to be popular by Ostentation, not only loses the excellence of the gift, and the reward from Heaven; but the publick fame which is this way sought, we defeat our selves of by the manner of conveyance. For he who publishes his own Charity, does not only render himself ridiculous, but oftentimes upbraids the Receiver, turning his kindness into an ensnaring Cruelty, and makes Enemies instead of Friends: Nay, those gifts are justly to be suspected as designs and traps, that come from such upbraiding Adversaries. Hence has it been a trite Observation, by its age and use turned into a Proverb, ἐχθρῶν δῶρα ἄδωρα, *The Presents of Enemies, are none at all;* which wise Solomon plainly confirms (*Pro. 27. 6.*); *Faithful are the wounds of a Friend, but the kisses of an Enemy are deceitful.* It is no small accession to the Bounty of Heaven, that all its gifts are freely bestowed; without an expectation of other returns than due gratitude from the Receivers; And though the Supream Being bestows liberal-
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ly, he never upbraids those on whom he confers his Blessings: (*Jam. i. 5.*) So is it with the truly liberal man, who has the Stamp of God upon him; he is so generous in his Disposals, the exercise of his vertue, that as he contemns those pitiful and mean designs to make his gifts become nets to draw worldly advantages to himself; So does he as much abhor to betray men by such Hypocritical methods: He mixes no poyson in that Cup with which he willingly refreshes a thirsty Traveller, nor is his compassion a fair Prologue to any Tragical execution of his Guest, nor does he express his kindness to another to gain the fairer opportunity to expose him: And, indeed, Bounty and Liberality have not their accents of honour given them so much from the greatness of their gifts, as they are raised from the mind and affection of the Donor; One Oblation, therefore, readily tendered upon a low Altar from a willing mind, is better than a constrained *Hecatomb*: *Multò gratius venit quod facili, quam quod plenâ, manu, datur*: That gift, though in it self mean, which is easily obtained, is much more acceptable than that which is extorted by much importunity, though the hand be full which at last conveys it. He that bestows a Charitable gift as great and large as the Language that describes it, if it be not without many doubts

and shrugs, and such groaning Circumstances as proclaim inquietude, and unwillingness within him, *Ambitioni dedit; non mihi*, says Seneca: *He gave not to me, but to his own Ambition*; And indeed he that gives a little with a willing mind, is more to be regarded than he that is scrud to a larger Bounty, and must have an engine to untie his Purse. For as *τὰ χρήματα*, the riches of the World are the Materials to set up the Liberal man, so the charity of the person is not altogether to be measured by the dimensions of the gift, but by the mind and ability of the Bestower: *Dabo egenti, sed ut ipse non egeam*; (says the Moralist) *Sic succurram perituro, sed ut ipse non peream*: *I will give to the necessitous, so as not to bring Poverty to my self; and I will so relieve him whose misery forces him to petition for redress, that I may not throw my self into the pity and compassion of others*: Therefore the Liberal man, whom prudence must guard, is not so prodigal of his Bounty, but that he will reserve a Subsistence for his Family; nor will he be so narrow and restrain'd, but that according to his Proportions he will be the author of good to others. So that as our income should be the measure of our Disbursements, and our Charity must not exceed the proportion of our Receipts; yet we ought not to plead a needless poverty when fit Objects

jects implore our relief. For as a profuse Prodigality is frequently forced to shed tears at its own Funeral; So a griping avarice is often an invitation to Birds of Prey that follow the streams of a loathsome Carcass; It executes its Master by his own austerities, and then buries it self with him, and all that it has done for him, was only to help him buy Mourning for himself, that he may be accompanied to his Grave with a larger Pomp, and more sumptuous Solemnity. But he that observes the due mean betwixt these two opposite extremes, and weighs his Bounty by his Possessions, is not only bless'd in his life, lamented at his death, and entails smiles and kindness on his Posterity; But he conveys to them, together with his estate, the just merit of all his Liberality, and the honour and reputation of his surviving memory. So that now we may easily perceive the rule according to which our Charity is to be extended, by exercising Liberality according to proportion: He that has but a smaller overplus, may be as bountiful as he that wallows in golden dust, and glitters with *Indian* sands about him. *Seneca* that great, and almost Evangelical, author, in his first Book *de beneficiis*, ch. the eighth, gives us a famous instance of this: When many of *Socrates's* Scholars brought him Presents in proportion to their Wealth; *Æschines*

one of his poor Auditors approach'd him, and told *Socrates* that he could find nothing worthy of him, which he might presume to give; And, by this says he, I know that I am poor. I present you, therefore, with what is only properly mine, and that's my self; and how slender soever the gift may appear, I humbly beg that you would receive it kindly, upon this Consideration; That others, whilst they have so plentifully rewarded your care and pains, have enough left, nay more than they bestowed. To whom *Socrates* presently replied, Hast thou not presented me with a great gift? Unless, perhaps, thou accountest thy self little: I will take all the care I can to return thee better than I received thee: Which the Moralist applies to confirm the Argument he is treating of, *viz.* That the measure of Liberality is the largeness of the mind rather than the greatness of a gift: And therefore he concludes with this Inference; *Vicit Æschines, hoc munere, Alcibiadis parem divitiis animum, & omnium juvenum opulentorum munificentiam.* *Æschines*, by this noble Donation of himself, when he had nothing else to give his Instructor, overcame the greatness of *Alcibiades*'s mind, although it was proportionable to his Riches, and out-shined the most glorious munificence in that rich Auditory. But since, an example more

authentick to us, because more sacred, is ready at hand, that may, at once, extend the practice of this virtue to those of the meaner and more inferiour size, and argue our Charity to be then most acceptable unto God when it bears an equal proportion to our Riches; I shall present it to you, that it may be apparent that the Gospel does not cut Morality shorter, but extends it to its just length and measure. When our Saviour saw the rich men casting their voluntary Oblations into the Treasury of the Temple; he perceived a poor creeping Widow casting in two Mites: Upon which he said, (to record it to posterity) *Of a truth, this poor Widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have, out of their abundance, cast in unto the Offerings of God; But she, out of her Penu-ry, hath cast in all the living that she has.* (Luke 21. 1, 2. &c.) So that to be liberal in sowing our seed of Charity, is to be frank upon all just occasions offered, in a true distribution according to the proportion of our Wealth, and the Circumstances attending our Estates and Families. And now every one best knows his Mind, and his Estate, and the Freedom or narrowness of our own Charity, together with our deliberate apprehensions of the necessities or merits of those that would receive; We have heard Injunctions and Examples from the Law, together with

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Precepts, and practice, under the Gospel; and I must leave to the Religion and Prudence of all to measure the proportion and allotments of their gifts, suitable to their Wealth, together with the Objects and designs of their Liberality,

And proceed to the last general way in which men may sow the seed of their Charity, morning or evening, at every seasonable and fitting opportunity, accordingly as Objects present themselves: And this is called Munificence, or Magnificence, and by the *Greeks* μεγαλοσπρέπεια, or μεγαλοδωεία. This advances Bounty and Liberality higher in its charge, and scatters with a full and larger hand; Yet the Reward hereafter will infinitely exceed the greatest weight of our Expences, even in this. Now this concerns the great and mighty men of the World, which a little Wealth cannot accomplish, and therefore it is an height of Charity, that God and Man can only expect from those to whom the Heavens have showred down larger allowances, and the Earth and Sea have clubb'd together to make rich. The hospitable and the liberal person relieve only sudden necessities, and grant supplies for present wants; But the Munificent man lays Foundations and erects Buildings for future ages, and charitably entails an Estate on such as are

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Heirs to very little, or none themselves: And by such great actions, splendid and renowned, they erect large Monuments to themselves, raise Pillars to their Immortal fame, on which are engravened the great Characters of Charity and Munificence, not only for the present age to read, but for Posterity to gaze, and comment on: From hence proceeded our publick Buildings, together with their endowments, that are not confined to single Objects, where the memory of the gift does not die with the first Receiver, but endures as long as Succession lasts, and is continued to many future ages, since it is not written in Dust but Marble, the very ruines of which, if by any iniquity or unfortunate mishap they are demolished, will remain in the Memories of some men as long as the Annals of time shall last till they become as old as History: Hence came our Magnificent Buildings, our Churches, Colledges, Hospitals, and the like things that are the glory of a Land; which Domesticks enjoy, and Foreigners stand amazed at, whilst they make narrow Inspections into them, and carry reports into their own Countreys, that the Examples may be entered amongst the Records of time. From hence proceed our publick Revenues that enrich those Buildings which are an Ornament to themselves; so that they

they become open Attestations to the great, transcendent, and infinite glory of the Supreme God whom we pretend to worship; are Seminaries, and publick Schools of Literature, or a lasting, and perpetual, relief to the Poor; They proclaim the Religion, and Charity of Nations, and are acceptable to all that see, or know, them. These Munificent gifts have been so common in former days, that they, almost, seem needless in our own. So that Charity, which then ran in one stream, has been forced, by Laws, to divert into divers; and yet Channells are opened for more. So that, although, in some times, the sence of Mens Consciences may be more affected with these things; and they, who receive more than ordinary influence from the Heavens, are so spurr'd forward to Gratitude and returns, that their inward shame may forcibly provoke them to publick acts of Benevolence and Bounty: Yet the reason, when time draws men towards the dregs and bottom of the World, why they grow more contracted and penurious, is not because we have fewer Objects, or less Arguments to prevail for our Munificence, but because mens Hearts and Consciences are narrowed, being heated and scorched another way, they are shrunk to this, and, by a long and continued time of tenderness, they now
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grow hard and brawny : Or else because their Iniquities abound so that the Charity of many is waxen cold, and fashionable Vices become so numerous, that they are also very chargeable to maintain. For though it cannot but be apparent to the World that, in this great and renowned City, many famous and publick Buildings have, like the *Phœnix*, arisen out of ashes, and the Charity of well-disposed persons has been sent abroad to both Universities, and to other Publick Places of the Land : Yet the increase of Wealth must alwayes be an argument to enlarge our Bounty, since the Necessitous will continue to be more numerous, than the Rich : And should we take a view of the large and stately Structure of *Solomon's Temple* under the Law, and thereby measure the enlarged hearts of the Professors of that antiquated Religion by those many great and splendid gifts that were amass'd together to compleat the building, and the rich Utensils that were contained in it ; we must presently vilifie and explode our selves, in the same Periods in which we magnifie and extol them : There are two Churches that yet lie waste in this City, which Christian men of ingenuity and Purse, methinks, should have some regard to ; (And this I speak with the more confidence, because I have no Free-hold in either) ; the one bears the name of Christ, the great Saviour and Redeemer

mer of the World (to which two of your Hospitals are specially related : The other that of the most famous S. Paul, who, being his extraordinary Apostle , became the Teacher and Doctor of the Gentiles ; the posterity of whom we cannot deny our selves to be ; unless we had rather be accounted *Jews*. The building these, which are now the blemish, would mightily advance the ornament, of this City ; and far exceed the glory of all the *largest Inscriptions*, and *height* of a Monument. But alas ! I am too mean to direct : However, I wish I had time enough to epitomize Examples of the great Bounty of the Primitive, and most refined, Christians, in works of Piety and enlarged Charity ; although they were harassed with Tryals and Afflictions, yet they liberally dispersed, what the rage of their adversaries permitted them to enjoy : The Rich and the Poor (the hard season then requiring it) threw all into a common bag, laying it at the Apostles feet ; and rather became Objects of their own Charity, than others should want sustenance and relief : And, afterwards, when the Sun shined more favourably on them, they scattered their Bounty, as he did his Rayes ; *In the morning they sowed their seed, and in the evening they withheld not their hands* ; knowing that in proportion to their seed, so would the increase of their harvest be. But alas ! this would be

be too large a task for me to accomplish, and too much for you to hear at once: Nay, a Breviary of their pious and charitable works, might seem only to enlarge our arraignment, and upbraid our neglects. Let us a little consider the fresh charity of later Ages, especially that which I am bound to recommend, and that shall be all that I will trouble you with upon this last Head: And here you must understand the charitable, and encreasing Fund, by the largeness of the Disbursement, which will appear by this *True Report*, &c.

All that I need to note from hence is, what is remark'd in the *Report* it self, that the disproportion betwixt the Revenue and the Disbursements, is an argument to engage the direction of mens Charity to these most Christian and Compassionate Foundations. And now I have nothing else remaining, but to exhort you (according to your abilities) to be followers of the best and most charitable examples: And, in this, I must crave leave to beg a rais'd attention, (though it has been already sufficiently tired) because time commands me to crowd my materials into a narrow room; and only to mention those Heads that might be enlarged to fill a Volume. Charity is so great, and such a spreading duty, that it makes men to be like God himself, who *causes his Sun to shine*, and strains his refreshing showers through the Clouds, *both upon the just and the unjust*; who *giveth liberally*, and *upbraids not the receiver*.

ceiver. It imitates the great Saviour of the World, whose Charity to men, was that which brought him down from Heaven, and was the motive that caused him to mediate betwixt God and man, that a whole Species might not be eternally ruined. This caused him to preach his Doctrine on the earth, to *go about doing good*, and to endure his Tragical Tortures and Death. It treads in the steps of the holy Spirit of God, who diffuses the rayes of glorious light, and sheds his influence on all that are qualified to receive it. Charity is an eternal Vertue, venerable, not only for its excellence, but its age: For as God was from all eternity good, so will he remain beyond all periods: And, as this is a Vertue communicated to men, in which he delighteth, they shall carry it with them into the most lofty Regions, when they shall be for ever with the Lord; when Faith shall be swallowed up in Vision and Prospect, and Hope in an everlasting Fruition. 'Tis the only way that we have here, by which, *in kind*, we are able to make returns to Almighty God for those outward advantages we receive from him: For our works of Charity, tho' done in obedience to his Commands, cannot immediately reach him; no more than bodily and corruptible things can directly affect, and increase, the welfare of that which is immaterial and incorruptible: And therefore *our goodness* (sayes the Psalmist) *extendeth not to him; but to the Saints which*

are on the earth. And as we have it in the Book of Job ;
Can a man be profitable to God, as he that is wise, may be profitable to himself? No certainly: Therefore Charity, that redounds to the relief of others, does, in the end, return upon our selves: And therefore it is a means to encrease our Estates, and by this the only Objection against it must vanish: For, sayes the Author of my Text, Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many dayes. Hence is it, that men are enjoyned, in the Law of Moses, that they should give to the Poor, without any internal regret, Because (sayes the Text) for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto (Deut. 15. 10.). And this promise, after full experience, is repeated and attested by Solomon in his Proverbs, The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. He that giveth to the poor, shall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes, shall have many a curse. And, since my hand is in, take that also, (Prov. 19. 17.) He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay again. Hence are Alms compared to Seed, in my Text, which, being sowed, increase and multiply. And this, however it may be beyond the view of some covetous men, that never were yet generous enough, to adventure the experiment: Yet S. Paul, upon the foundation of such Promises, encourageth the Charity of the Corinthians, and prayes for their increase upon the account of their dispersion; Now he that administreth seed to the sower, both

minister

minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness (2 Cor. 9. 10.). Nay, if we desire Heaven and the Joyes above, when death shall deprive us of our beings here, Charity and Alms are a method to obtain them ; For though this way we should diminish our treasures on earth, yet we lay them up in Heaven; and they are only Harbingers, to fore-run our coming : Our Wealth is sent before hand, to furnish and prepare Mansions for us, and the friends we have made by it whilst we were upon the earth, have sent up their Petitions, in the hands of our Mediator, that we may be received into everlasting habitations. And therefore, sayes he, who has the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, no less than those of Death and Hell, *Make to your selves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, (your decaying riches) that when ye fail, (i. e.) when ye dye) they may receive you into everlasting habitations (Luke 16. 9.).* And what wonder can this be to us ? When he that is the Supream Lord of this World, and has the sole disposal of the next, accepts our Charity, as a Sacrifice of his own appointment ; that which refreshes, and exceedingly delights, him (*Heb. 13. 16.)*. It is even as the Incense of our Prayers; it sends a sweet perfume through the Clouds, till it ascends before the Throne of God : And, therefore, sayes S. Paul to Cornelius, *Thy prayer is heard, and thine Alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God : (Acts 10. 31.)* The truth of which Doctrine he also confirms to the *Philippians (chap. 4. 18.)* *I have received, says he,*

the gifts that were sent from you ; a Sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God ; And as his desire, before, was to receive their Charity, that fruit might abound to their own account ; so it immediately follows, that God should supply all their need according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ. Indeed the exercise of Charity to those that are in want, is an exemplification of that rule of Justice, given by our Saviour, to do to others what we would they should do to us, if our circumstances and conditions were exchanged ; a rule so applauded by the reason of mankind, that no person of sense can oppose it : *Alexander Severus* so highly valued it, that he caused it to be proclaimed by a common Cryer ; to be written on the Walls of his Palace, and publick buildings, (as *Lampridius* tells us in his *Life, cap. 43.*). To conclude, then, this long Discourse in a word ; We all profess our selves to be Christians, and we have plainly heard, that our Religion obliges us to more especial acts of Charity and Bounty ; and this not only by peremptory Commands , but we have Examples enough of it ; and all is attended with Arguments and Motives fully sufficient to perswade to it. And because ours is, for the most part, a suffering Religion, and 'tis under God, the Goodness of our Prince, and the Laws by which he still governs us, and the Religion and Courage of his subordinate Magistrates, that free us from it at this time : yet no man that is a true Professor of Christianity, is able always to secure himself : Nor can any Ensurers in
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the World, give us security, that we shall not stand in need from others: Charity, therefore, to impoverished persons, that are modest, and in distress, will be a probable security to us for the future. Finally, add to all these numerous, begging Arguments, That the great God, whom we worship through Jesus Christ, has, by the publication of the most glorious Gospel, freed mankind from all those numerous and chargeable Ceremonies, and Sacrifices, pretended to be obligatory, either by *Jews* or *Gentiles*, which consumed the Time and the Wealth of those which were devoted to any Religion; by this enabling us Christians to be more expensive in our Charity and Bounty; and this is a return he expects from us for all our plenty that we do enjoy; and this he commands, and requires of us, according to proportion; that so we may have our more spiritual Sacrifices accepted by him through the beloved Jesus Christ, the most good, compassionate, and charitable man that ever was here upon the earth; who being, also, God blessed for ever; To him, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, let us render, as we ought to acknowledge due, all possible Praise, Adoration, and Obedience, now and ever. Amen.

F I N I S.