Mr. Foxcroft's SERMON
UPON
Evangelic Preaching.
Some Seasonable Thoughts on Evangelic Preaching; its Nature, Usefulness, and Obligation.

A SERMON
Deliver'd (in Part) at the Old-Church-Leisure in Boston, Thursday, Oct. 23. 1740.
To a numerous Audience.

Occasion'd by the late Visit, and uncommon Labours, in daily and powerful Preaching, of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield.

—The Brother, whose Praise is in the Gospel, throughout all the Churches.
Published at the general Motion of the Hearers.

By THOMAS FOXCROFT.

"You are not to stand up here [in the Pulpit] as a Professor of ancient or modern Philosophy, nor an Utterer in the School of Plato, or Seneca, or Mr. Locke: but as a Teacher in the School of Christ. — Thus saith the Prophet, or Thus saith the Apostle; he carries greater Weight with it both to convince and persuade, than a long Series of Demonstrations from remote Principles, tho' they should be firm and strong as those of Euclid, or Sir Isaac Newton.—'Tis in the vain Exaltation of vain'd Nature, that makes the Gospel so despis'd in our Age.

Dr. Watts, Humble Attempt.

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Some seasonable thoughts upon Evangelic Preaching.

Acts XXVIII. 31.

Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence; no man forbidding him.

The inspired Evangelist closes his entertaining Narrative of the Acts of the Apostles with this remarkable and instructive passage in the Story of the great Doctor of the Gentiles: who, from a Destroyer of the Faith and Persecutor of Christ, had long since, by the Grace of God bestowed upon him, become an Apostle of Christ, and Preacher of the Faith, even a Sufferer for the Gospel; and was now evangelizing the famous City of Rome.
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It had been foretold him in a Vision, that as he had testified of Christ at Jerusalem, he should bear Witness at Rome also. He had himself promis'd, and once and again purpos'd a Visit to the Romans; longing to have some Fruit among them, even as among other Gentiles. But being oblig'd to delay for a while, it seems as if some had tax'd him of using Lightness, in promising and not performing; or we may suppose they might (like some at Corinth) be puffed up, as though he would not come to them, either for Fear or Shame. Therefore he takes Occasion in his Epistle to the Romans (written while yet unknown by Face unto them) to make those solemn Protestations: I am a Debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the Wise and to the Unwise; so, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also: for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.---From Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have FULLY preached the Gospel of Christ. And I am sure, that when I come unto you, I shall come in the Fulness of the Blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

Agreeably the Apostle was no sooner arrived among them, altho' under some uncomfortable Restraints and manifest Disadvantages, but he enters with Alacrity into this new Scene of Labours in the Word, shewing himself (as he had wrote) not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but ready to preach it even at Rome; neither regarding the Envy of any jealousie falseBrethren of his own Conjunction there, nor the Malice of the unbelieving Jews; neither fearing the Power of pagan Idolaters, nor all the Sophistry of the Disputers of this World. Flesh and Blood indeed, had he consulted that, might have prompted him to Silence, as a prudent Caution, and the best Security, in his present critical Situation; being under a judicial Prosecution by his own Countrymen, condemned by the Jewish Priests as violating their Law and the Customs of their Fathers, and upon his Appeal to Cesar confin'd over into the Hands of the Romans.---But our christian Hero, at all Hazards, quickly begins his Testimony in Rome; and ceased not daily to teach and preach Jesus Christ. He had too
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wide Door, and effectual, was here open'd to him, to send abroad the Sound of the Gospel: he quickly filled Rome with this Doctrine, and it reach'd even Caesar's Household. Some of all Stations, Characters, and Circumstances (it seems) crowded to his Ministry, as the Doves flock to their Windows: and 'tis said here, like his Divine Master, he receiv'd all that came to him; whether Jew or Gentile, whether Male or Female, Old or Young, Bond or Free, Wife or Unwife: he regard'd no Man's Person; he receiv'd all indifferently, without partial Respects or Disregards, for their Nation, Condition, Rank, or Figure in the World. And how did he receiv'e them? Was it only to good Fellowship, to pass away the Time together in empty Chat and trifling Amusements? No.— Or was it to doubtful Disputations, to scholastic Babblings, and Oppositions of Science, falsely so call'd? No. — Or was it to mercenary and selfish Ends, hoping for Money, or for Favour from 'em? No, nor this. But it was in pure Love, from a generous and disinterested Zeal for their Good; hoping to win their Souls to Christ, and bring them to God. With this noble View he receiv'd them all. All that had Ears to hear, He receiv'd, to preach to them, and to teach them, as Jesus (it's said) receiv'd the People, and spake to them of the Kingdom of God. And this he did with great Fidelity, Freedom and Assurance; not afraid of his Doctrine, nor balking the Truth; not sparing Vice, Error, or any Thing contrary to sound Doctrine; neither flattering the Vanity of the Great or Learned, nor despising the humble Condition of the Poor, or illiterate. That's the Character of this Divine Apostle, in our Text; Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those Things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all Confidence.

We may more particularly observe here,

1. The Matter of his Preaching and Teaching, viz.,

The Kingdom of God, and the Things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ.— Not the Wisdom of this World, not the Philosophy of the Greeks; not yet the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, — Not the Rituals of Moses, or Traditions of the Fathers, to humour his
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his Jewish Brethren: --- Not human Politicks, to please the Court; --- Not liberal Arts and Sciences, to tickle the Scholars itching Ears; --- Not mere Ethics, or natural Religion, to gratify the heathen Moralists; No, but the important Truths and Precepts of the Gospel- Revelation, The Kingdom of God, and the Things concerning Jesus Christ. These momentous and sublime Subjects were the reigning Themes of his publick Ministry and private Conversations. On these two Arguments hang all the Law and the Prophets, the Gospel and the Apostles. Here's the Centre of Revelation: Here's the Sum of Christianity: And here's an inexhaustible Fund of the most useful Preaching and Conversation. These are Things that Angels are Students in, but not able fully to comprehend.

Observe,

2. The Manner of his Preaching and Teaching, viz.
   with all Confidence.

A Door was now open'd to him of the Lord; a Door of Opportunity, and a Door of Utterance: and he spake boldly the Mysteries of God. Sometimes he remarks it to the Churches, that he had been with them in Weakness, and in Fear, and in much Trembling: tho' never to that Degree as to hinder him from declaring to them the Testimony of God, and triumphing in Christ. It seems, even inspir'd Apostles had not the Presence of the Comforter with them always in an exact Proportion. But in some Places, and on some Occasions, they had the Joy of the Holy Ghost in signal Measures, so that at such times they remarkably sang high; and never perhaps was Paul more thoroughly made manifest, than among the Romans. His Speech and his Preaching was now very eminently in Deoperation of the Spirit, and of Power. His Faith seems now triumphant, and to spread all its Glories upon him. He needed a peculiar Presence of God, to support him under the Weight of that uncommon Service (private, as well as publick) which he must have upon his Hands in so great and populous a City, while all Comers at all Seasons had free Access to him. Here too he had some of the most noble and powerful Adversaries, to conflict with; Here he had his Martyrdom in the nearest Prospect; and here one of the bitterest Trials was to befall him,
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him, the Deapplication of Friends: on all which Accounts, as he remarkably needed his Lord to stand by him, and strengthen him, so he had now a very remarkable Experience of the gracious Presence of Christ, which gave him Utterance and a Fortitude extraordinary. So that even in learned proud and imperious Rome he was bold in his God, to make known the Mysteries of the Gospel; and preach'd Christianity with much Power, with a victorious Faith, and intrepid Assurance. He preach'd the Kingdom of God, tho' amidst Idol-Temples, and near the Palace of Caesar, as jealous as he was for the Dignity of his Crown, or the Priests and Populace for the Honour of their Idols. The Apostle, while he was for allowing to Caesar the Things that were Caesar's, yet boldly claim'd for God the Things that are God's, and for Christ the Things that are Christ's, in Opposition to the Works of the Devil, and the Usurpations of Men. He dare'd preach the Kingdom of God in the Imperial City, the Mistress of the World, and the Mother of Abominations. And here he triumph'd in Christ, tho' despised of Men. He glory'd in the Cross of Christ, though to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. They might pour Contempt on the Doctrine of a crucify'd Saviour, and a Kingdom not of this World; but he saw a Divine Glory in the Gospel, and counting all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Jesus, he preach'd the Things concerning Christ, and the Kingdom of God, with all Confidence, with the full Assurance of Faith, and the Rejoycing of Hope firm to the End, free from all anxious Diffidence, Reluctance, Fear, or Shame, and surmounting all Discouragements.

Perhaps (by the Way) this his heroic Confidence might be one Occasion of that happy Circumstance, No Man forbidding him: for they might as well attempt to stay the Sun in the Heavens from its Course, as go about to forbid the Progress of this bold and zealous Preacher in his Work, who like the Sun was a burning and shining Light, and in the daily Revolutions of his Ministry went forth in the Strength of the Lord, rejoicing as a strong Man to run a Race. But the good Hand of his God upon him, is principally to be ey'd in this remarkable Con-
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Concurrence of Events; the Boldness of the Apostle, and the Tameless of his Adversaries. The God that shut the Mouths of raving Lions, in the Case of Daniel, made all Iniquity to stop his Mouth, in the Case of this Apostle, and delivered him out of the Mouth of the Lion. So it was that God, who maketh Man's Mouth; even He, who put forth his Hand, and touched Jeremiah's Mouth; He, who sent one of the Seraphim, with a live-Coal from off the Alter, to touch Isaiah's Lips, and made his Mouth like a sharp Sword; 'twas the same Hand of God, that open'd the Mouth of this Apostle, and gave him that good Treasure he had within, of Knowledge, Grace and Comfort, so that out of the Abundance of his Heart, his Mouth spake, of the Kingdom of God, and the Things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all Confidence.

Having held you thus long in reflecting on the Context, and descanting on the Words, I shall wave all other Observations that might be made from them, and single out this one for the Theme of our further Meditations.

DOCTRINE.

That Ministers of the Word are to preach the Kingdom of God, and the Things concerning Christ, revealed in the Gospel, with all holy Confidence.

The special Occasion, which has led my Tho'ts to this Subject, you are all aware of; and will expect no other Apology.---In discoursing upon this Doctrine, I shall take the following Method: Premising, that the Gospel reveals to us the Kingdom of God, and those Things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ; then shewing, that Ministers of the Gospel are to preach and teach these Things; and this with all holy Confidence. --- To each in their Order, as briefly as will well consist with doing any Justice to Points of such Importance.

† This long Introduction has sundry Passages in it, which I have taken the Liberty to insert here, though for Bounty omitted in the preceeding. --- I have done the like in some of the following Pages.
PROP. I. The Gospel reveals to us the Kingdom of God and these Things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ. Here it may be said distinctly,

1. The Gospel reveals to us the Kingdom of God.

And if it be inquired, What Kingdom? I answer, (1.) It reveals to us a Kingdom of Providence, which extends thro' the universal Creation.

It tells us, that God hath prepared his Throne in the Heaven, and his Kingdom ruleth over all; reaches thro' all Worlds, Heaven, Earth, and Hell. The Doctrine of a Divine Providence is the Dictate of Reason, as well as Revelation: tho' the Glories of this Providential Dominion are veil'd to the Eye of natural Reason. It appears but a Hafe Kingdom, without the Gospel to shew us the Mysteries of it.--- Nor can we by the Light of Nature learn the Manner of the Kingdom, as administered by Jesus, the Mediator; to whom all Power in Heaven and Earth is committed, and who hath the Keys of Hell and of Death. This is one of the Peculiar of Revelation: a Doctrine of christianity, full of Mystery and Glory, and big with Lessons of Duty.--- But it is not the Kingdom of Nature, the Dominion of Providence, in any View of it, that our Text has so direct a Reference to.

(2.) The Gospel reveals to us a Kingdom of Grace, which extends only to the Church and peculiar People of God in the Earth.

The Kingdom of God, spoken of in our Text, and which is so celebrated a Subject in Revelation, means in general the Dispensation of Redemption by Christ; and particularly that mediatory Dominion of Grace, which concerns Souls in this World, and which our Lord Redeemer exercises over them by his Word and Spirit.

The Metaphor of a Kingdom is chosen to shadow out the Excellencies of this Dispensation of Grace; and particularly to represent the glorious Reconciliation, the beautiful and blessed State of Things in a renewed Soul. It imports a Throne erected, a Divine Authority exercised, and a Divine Power exerted; a Law written, Allegiance sworn, and Homage paid; a comely Order and Harmony restored; a Pardon dispens'd, and Peace spoken; Privileges granted.
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Leges and Honours confer'd; great and precious Promises apply'd: a vital Union to Christ, the Head of his Body, the Church; and I may add, an Union of Hearts among all the Subjects of this Kingdom; and, what crowns all, the Stability of this Dominion and Happiness. For the Foundation of God standeth sure: The Lord knoweth them that are His. The Throne of Christ in his People's Hearts shall endure for ever; and the Gates of Hell shall not be able to prevail against it. This Kingdom of Grace in the Soul, is a Kingdom that cannot be destroyed: molested it may be, but not dissolved.

This is sometimes called the Kingdom, by way of Eminence; because it is incomparable for true Glory, Happiness, and Duration; and because this was that Kingdom, the diffusive Spread and flourishing State whereof the Old Testament Prophecies spake of, upon which the Jews founded their Expectation of the Kingdom's being restored to Israel, tho' their Notion of the Thing was all carnal and worldly.

'Tis sometimes call'd the Heavenly Kingdom; because in its Nature it partakes of Heaven, and prepares us for it, tends to it, and ends in it.

'Tis call'd in our Text, and elsewhere, the Kingdom of God; because it is of a divine Nature, and of a divine Original, resulting from the Purpose of Divine Grace from everlasting, contriv'd by Divine Wisdom, effected by Divine Power, and exhibiting the Image of Divine Holiness; because the Divine Sovereignty is here display'd in its bright light Glory; because a Submission to God is the great Law of this Kingdom, and the Fruit of God is the great Reward of its Subjects; because the Righteousness, which is of God by Faith, is the grand Basis of this Kingdom; the Word of God, the Charter of its Privileges; the Christ of God, the Purchaser, and the Spirit of God, the Befower of them: in fine, because this Kingdom stands in direct Opposition to the Kingdom of Satan, the god of this World; is above the Reach of human Usurpation, and infinitely excels all the Kingdoms of the Sons of Men.

The Kingdom spoken of in our Text, is primarily of a moral spiritual Kind, an inward Thing, in the hidden Man of the Heart. It's a Kingdom not of this World,
as our Saviour affirms us; not of an earthly and temporal Reference; not lying in Civils, and mere Externals; not having Men's natural Lives, Liberties, and Properties in this World, for the immediate Object of his Dominion: No, but it is a Kingdom within Men, a Kingdom in the Soul, a Rule over the Understanding and Will, the Heart and Conscience; rectifying and conducing the Powers of the inner Man; a Kingdom of heavenly Light and Love, and filial Liberty within; a Kingdom that confides (as the Apostle expresses it) in Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. — It is a Kingdom set up in Honour of God; our Saviour; that the Son of God may manifest his Glory, in destroying the Prince of this World, and that Men may with their Heart, as well as Lips, honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.

'Tis to be observ'd, that the Kingdom of Grace may be consider'd as in some Respects under an outward and visible, as well as an inward and invisible Administration. By the Kingdom of God, sometimes in Scripture seems to be meant the visible Kingdom of Christ, or the external Administration of his Spiritual Government in the Church, mediately by his Word and Ordinances; as where we read of the Kingdom's being taken away; the Children of the Kingdom, their being cast out, &c. — The Laws and Orders of this outward Polity are exhibited to us in the sacred Scriptures: The Subjects of it are visible Saints: One eminent Sign or Badge of it is the holy Sabbath: An Oath of Allegiance to the King of Zion is administered in Baptism, and a Recollection of the Vows of God upon us solemnly made at the Lord's Table: Societies for Communion in Worship, Church-Order, and Discipline, are instituted: and Officers appointed, with a subordinate ministerial Power, to lead and preside in the House of the Kingdom &c. — Now the Kingdom of God, in this Notion of it, we must take

* Having multiply'd Scripture-Quotations in this Discourse, I have for Brevity often omitted citing Book, Chapter and Verfe.

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Here I am not to reject, or slight; but to acknowledge Christ's kingly Authority in his visible Church and outward Ordinances, by a professed Submission to the Gospel, and by a Care to walk in all his Commandments and Institutions, blameless. We must make it our Concern and Study, to hold fast the Form of sound Words, and to keep the Ordinances as they have been delivered to us; confessing Christ before Men, and honouring him by all due Acknowledgments in external Practice. — It is usual to say, There's the visible Kingdom of God among a People so doing.

We may note here, The Kingdom of God, as to its external Appearance, Form, or Mode, has past'd under a Variety of Dispensations, Revolutions and Degrees of Advancement, since its original Foundation. The Kingdom has ever been substantially one; but administer'd at sundry Times in divers Manners. The last, and present, which is commonly nam'd the Gospel-Dispensation, the Kingdom of Jesus, the Son of God incarnate, is the most perfect of all. This was long lookt for by the Jews; tho' they had wrong Ideas of its Nature and Design. We read of devout Men among them, who waited for the Kingdom of God. And the Pharisees inquir'd the Time, when the Kingdom of God should come; meaning, when the Messiah would inherit the Throne of his Father David, and introduce his expected Reign.

It's thought by some, this visible Dispensation of the Gospel is only intended, where Christ says to the unbelieving Pharisees, No Doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you; and concerning the little Children brother to him, Of such is the Kingdom of God. So where the Christian Hebrews are said to have received a Kingdom which cannot be moved; and the Colossians to be delivered from the Power of Darkness, and translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. — But I can't help thinking, altho' that Sense be comprehended, yet there's a richer and more exalted Sense, which is by no means to be excluded, in the most (if not all) of these, and other such Passages.

If we would speak of the Glory of God's Kingdom, and talk of his Power, we must turn our Eye to the inward and vital Dispensation. The Kingdom of God, considered subjectively, is in its general Notion the same with what
is elsewhere denominat'd the New Creature, the Image of God, &c. It means that System of heavenly Grace, inwrought in the Soul by the Power of God, in Conversion. And how great is its Beauty and Worth, its Importance and Necessity! The Externals of the Kingdom are, in their Order and Place, truly excellent and highly amiable. His Foundation is in the holy Mountains: The Lord loveth the Gates of Zion, more than all the Dwelling of Jacob: Glorious Things are spoken of thee, O City of God. But among all its Glories, this is the most remarkable, Of Zion it shall be said, This and that Man was Born in her.--- What are all the visible Beauties and Benefits of the outward Dispensation, to those of the secret invisible Empire of God, set up in a Soul, in the new Birth! The King's Daughter is all glorious within. As for the Glory of external Advantages, it lies in their being Divine Appointments, and wisely adapted Means, own'd and sanctify'd of God, to subserve the holy Purposes of his Grace, in regard to the internal Dispensation. They are a noble Apparatus & Attendant to this; but separate from this, the external Frame of Christianity finds its genuine Use and End; and in that Regard hath Glory, however splendid an Appearance it may make. The visible Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, without the invisible Work of Grace in the Heart; the mere Form of Godliness, tho' brighten'd with the fair Shew of all homiletical Virtues, giving Persons or Societies a Name that they live; This is certainly but the Shadow, not the Substance and Reality of the Kingdom of God.--- Reining Hypocrisy (which is consistent with the Height of external Zeal in Offices of Devotion and Duties of moral Practice) determines Men real Selves to the Prince of Darkness: and we have Reason to fear, many a Church on Earth, that calls it self a Church of Christ, is indeed little else but a Synagogue of Satan. However highly they may make their Boast in God and his Kingdom, little more can be said, than that the Kingdom of God is come nigh them.--- We may, in regard of Conversions and Reformation, be not far from the Kingdom of God's; and yet in Fact not receive it. Nevertheless, where there's a truly prosperous State of Externall Religion,
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Religion, it's to be hop'd, there is usually the secret Work of Grace carrying on, and so the Kingdom of God in Reality.

Receiving the Kingdom of God, means a vital Application and active Assumption; most aptly expressing the Nature and Operation of Faith, which is a receptive and accepting Grace; whose Seat is in the Heart or Spirit, and whose Office is to receive Christ's Spirit the Lord, our Righteousness. --- The Soul of Man is the prime Object of the whole Administration of this Kingdom; and it is in its whole Genus & Frame spiritual, suited to our immortal Part. --- The Law of this Kingdom is spiritual: I mean the royal Law of Liberty, the Law written, not with肉, nor in Tables of Stone, but in His holy Tables of the Heart; reaching to the inward recesses of the Soul, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ. --- The Service of the Kingdom is in its Nature, its Principles and Motives, spiritual: 'Tis a worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth, a serving Him with our Spirit in the Gospel of His Son. --- The Privileges of this Kingdom are spiritual Blessings and heavenly Things in Christ Jesus. 'Tis a Kingdom in this World, but not of it, not derivative from it, nor terminating in it, nor participating of it, nor dependent upon it. --- Its Properties, its Effects, and Ends, are all sublime and spiritual. --- The distinguishing Character of such as have received this Kingdom is, They that be spiritual, spiritually minded, walking in the Spirit, etc. --- Which leads me to observe, The grand Operator, in setting up and advancing this Kingdom, is the blessed Spirit of Grace: He is the immediate Agent, and (strictly speaking) the sole Efficient. Indeed the Apostle sometimes intimates Ministers Fellow-workers to the Kingdom of God: But this is to be understood of their Employment in the external Administration. For they have not, by any Act of their own, an Access to the Hearts of Men; nor Power, as of themselves, to produce the Kingdom of God within Men. In respect of this, the same Apostle confesses himself Nothing: but glories in his Inferiorities, that the Power of Christ might rest upon him. We have this Treasure (as it is in external Vessels, that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of Man. And when
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when it pleases God to send forth the Spirit of his Son into our Hearts, exerting his Divine Influences in Concurrence with the Ministry of the Word, it is seen that the King of God is not in Word, but in Power. The holy Ghost with unerring Wisdom & Skill conducts the Affairs of this spiritual Kingdom; and with uncontrouable Liberty, with an Energy invincible, and overpowering all Opposition, he prosecutes the glorious Designs of it: sets it up in Regeneration, and carries it on in progressive Sanification. --- But in the whole He acts in Subordination to the Son of God, who is represented as the supreme Trustee of Divine Power, and prime Head of Influences, whom the Father hath set King on his holy Hill of Zion. Unto the Son be faith, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever: Sit thou at my right Hand, until I make thine Enemies thy Footstool: Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power.

Let it be subjoin'd here; This is a Kingdom that is daily carrying on among Men, and shall be commenurate in Duration with Earth and Time, yea with Heaven and Eternity. Indeed when the World ends, and the whole Scene of Temporals is shut up, the present Manner of administering this spiritual Dominion will cease: the Manner of Exercise will be alter'd, but the Dominion it self shall have no End, and its Effects never cease. This Kingdom is call'd the Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He will doubtless be for ever, in some Sense, Head of his own Body, the Church; 'twas the Reward of his meritorious Passion and Obedience. Yet it's the Opinion of Divines, that the Mediatorial Form of administering the Government will utterly expire; which they ground on that Text, Then shall the Son deliver up the Kingdom to the Father. Though, this may only mean Christ's presenting to the Father his spiritual Subjects, his peculiar People + (who are describ'd a Royal Priesthood, a Kingdom of Priests) the Church, that he loved, and gave himself for; the same, it's said, He will present to

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† In familiar Language, Kingdom is taken objectively, for the govern'd Community; as well as formally, for the governing Power and Constitution. Himselt
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Himself a glorious Church. --- Then most evidently and emphatically God shall be all in all. The whole World of the Redeemed shall be filled with all the communicable Fulness of the Godhead. So the Kingdom of God shall be perfect; arrive'd at its absolute Completion in Glory, a Glory that will never pass away.

This brings me to say,

(3.) The Gospel reveals to us a Kingdom of Glory, in the future and eternal World.

This Kingdom is administered in Heaven, the Seat of God's glorious Presence, and most beatific Influx. The Gospel acquaints us, that it was prepared from the Foundation of the World; declares it the Purchase of the Cross of Christ; makes the Promise of it to them that are in Christ; pronounces Jesus the Forerunner, who is for us entered into it, and set down with his Father in his Throne; proclaims Jesus the final Judge, the Resurrection, and the Life; in a Word, reveals the incarnate Son of God, as together with the Father, and the Spirit (One God over all, blessed for ever) the eternal Object of Worship and Happiness to the Saints in Light. Hence these are represented as standing before the Throne of God and the Lamb, reigning with Him Kings and Priests for ever.

But what is the Manner of the Kingdom above, what its peculiar Laws and Methods of Administration (whether in the present State of separate Souls, or the future Resurrection-State) and what its admirable Immunities, divine Treasures, exalted Honours, Delights, & verily Eyes hath not seen, neither Ear heard, nor of these Things is the Heart of Man, in this our degenerate and feeble Condition, capable of forming or admitting any exact and adequate Ideas. --- Only the Gospel reveals to us so much as sufficiently affords us, in the general, it is a Kingdom of infinite Glory, immense Riches, and everlasting Pleasures without End. --- Enough this, in the Sense of enlighten'd Reason, to draw our Attention, to attract our Desire, and warm our Affections, to excite our Hopes, and engage us in the Pursuit of this Kingdom of God: Enough, to nourish the Saints Faith and Love and all spiritual Life, to refresh us in our Pilgrim-State, to ease our Griefs, and silence our Complaints, while under many Burdens, and through
through mighty Oppositions, we are walking in the narrow Way, which leads to the Kingdom. — Thus much concerning it we have reveal'd to us, with infallible Certainty; and nothing further was really needful for us at present to know. What of the Glory remains to be revealed, we shall know hereafter.

Let it be observ'd now, Tho' this State of Glory in Heaven be ultimately reflected in our Text; yet it's the State of Grace here on Earth, that is more immediately in View. The Kingdom, tho' a heavenly Kingdom, the state of this World (neither establisht on a worldly Design, nor having its Issue in the present World) yet has its Existence and Operation here. — This spiritual Kingdom has been erected and supported among Mankind from the Beginning: taking the Date of its Projection from the Days of Eternity, but of its actual Rise from the Days of our first Parents, commencing with that primitive and fundamental Promise made upon their Fall, That the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head. — All along thro' the Patriarchal and Jewish Ages, there was in one Degree or another the Kingdom of God among Men. Yet the most illustrious Dispensation of it was set for'd to be the Distinction of the Church's last Age. Says our Lord, From the Days of John Baptist the Kingdom of God is preached, and every Man presseth into it. But in the Days of the Apostles, after Christ's Ascension, this was eminently the Case. Then was that Saying of our Lord fulfilled, I tell you there be some standing here, which shall not taste of Death, until they have seen the Kingdom of God come with Power. Truly, then was there an extraordinary Display of the Power of God, in a quick Progress of his spiritual Kingdom, in its wide Extent, and in the transcendent Degree of its Prosperity and Glory, as to the Internals, as well as Externals of it. Then Conversions were numerous; Thousands at a Time added to the Lord; Nations born in a Day. And the Converts of Zion, in that happy Season, appear to have had the Spirit in eminent Measures. Not to mention their miraculous Gifts; it seems, their heavenly Graces were in general very signally in a flourishing State; having a Vitality, a sensible Growth & Evidence, beyond what's common. — O when shall
shall we see the Return of such triumphant Days of the Sun of Man! By the Grace of God we have a Prospect of another blessed Period, that will even exceed in Glory: when the everlasting Gospel shall fly like Lightning, with refreshing Power and astonishing Success; I shall again be preach'd with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven in a remarkable Manner, and the Kingdom of God be everywhere diffus'd and establish'd thro' all the Earth; when the Kingdom and the Greatness of the Kingdom shall be given to the People of the Saints of the Most High. We should pray for the hastening of those glorious Times of Reformation.

In the mean time we have it to acknowledge unto the Prince of a foreign God, that there is now a Remnant according to the Election of Grace, and a promising Appearance of the Increase of their Number, who have received the Kingdom of God, in lower Measures. For this heavenly Kingdom as it now exists and appears in Believers, especially in its Beginnings, seems in general comparatively but as a Grain of Mustard-Seed, in regard to its small Figure, and at least oftentimes but as Leaven hid in Meal, with regard to its secret Operation; yet there's the Reality, and a gradual Prevalence. Every one that is born of the Spirit, does actually see the Kingdom of God, in its initial Dispensation. To such it's given to know vitally and experimentally the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. For it must be noted, that (properly speaking) the Kingdom of Grace and the Kingdom of Glory are not two Kingdoms, specifically or essentially distinct; but only differing gradually, and in respect of their various Modes of Administration: Otherwise, they are for Substance one and the same, and go under the common Name of the Kingdom of Heaven. The State of Grace, and the State of Glory, are not only connected inviolably in the Purpose and Covenant of God, but also nearly related, and united in their general Nature. Heaven comes down into the Soul in Regeneration; this is the actual Commencement of heavenly Bliss. The Kingdom of Grace is the Kingdom of Glory in its inchoate and imperfect Estate. And what's the Kingdom of Glory, but the Kingdom Grace in its Consummation, its triumphant State, and full display under a varying Form of Admini-
I shall now close this Point with suggesting a few practical Reflections.

By this we see the forlorn and wretched State of Souls unregenerate, in that they are Strangers to the Kingdom of God in this World; and continuing so, must necessarily be excluded the Kingdom of God in the next.---By this we see how happy is the Day of a Sinner’s Conversion, and the Occasion there is for Joy at every spiritual Birth, when a Soul is initiated into the Kingdom of God.---We see the Reason of believing Parents to anxiously waiting for their Children while in a State of Nature, and travelling in Birth again, until Christ be formed in them, the Kingdom of God set up in their Souls. --- What honourable Sentiments should we have of the Saints, tho’ poor in this World, yet rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom! --- And what mutual Endearment ought there ever to subsist between all these! These, who are Companions in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ here, and will hereafter be Companions for ever in the Kingdom and Joy of their Lord.---Let it be added; while we reflect with Grief and Shame on our Apostacy and Fall in Adam (by whom came Sin into the World, and by this the Kingdom of the Devil, that wicked Spirit which rules in the Children of Disobedience ever since) we shou’d admire and magnify the Inexpedient Wisdom and Grace of God in raising up a second Adam, to repair the suffering Honour of his violated Law, to dethrone the Enemy of our Souls, and restore the Kingdom to Israel.---And shou’d we not with equal Wonder and Praise celebrate the infinite Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! who hath restored that which he took not away, and has done this at the Expense of his own precious Blood; by the Merit of which he purchased the Kingdom of God, and in Virtue of which he receiv’d Power, in his risen State, to dispense the heavenly Blessing to whom he will; even to as many as the Father hath given him for a peculiar People to himself, The Kingdom is the Lord’s; his Property, and at his Disposal. Hence that of Christ to his Disciples, I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed to me a Kingdom. And we read, Him hath God exalted with his right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance unto Israel; and
and Remission of Sins: which two Redemption-Blessings are the leading Benefits of the Kingdom of God, the first royal Donatives of our Prince and Saviour. O what Reasons are there to Adoration and Thanksgiving to Christ for these Reflections present to us! Shall we not all join in the Cry of the Multitude that followed him at his triumphant Entrance into Jerusalem, saying, Hallelujah! Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord: Blessed be the Kingdom of our Father David, that cometh in the Name of the Lord; Hallelujah, Hallelujah in the highest!

But in many of these Hints I have been insensibly anticipating the proper Thoughts on the other Article before us: which therefore I shall be the briefer upon.

2. The Gospel reveals to us the Things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ.

By the Light of Reason we have some Notions of the Being and Perfections of God, and his Kingdom of Providence: but the Kingdom of God, intended in our Text, and the Things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ (which do abundantly improve and add to rational Light in the Things of Nature and Providence) are discoverable only by the supernatural Light of Revelation. The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of Grace, constituted and administered according to the Counsel of his own Will: And hence Divine Revelation was necessary to the Knowledge of that. So the Things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, are Matters of pure Revelation: such as the natural Reason of Man could never have brought to Light. 'Tis the appropriate Glory of the Gospel, to reveal these Things to the Sons of Men.

And what a rich Variety of Things, great and glorious Things concerning Christ, are discovered to us in the Gospel of his Grace! The Kingdom of God is a comprehensive Article among those Things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ; and sometimes they seem all to be fum'd up in that. But the Apostle here adds a more extensive Phrase, in order to include all other Things not so evidently couch'd in the Idea of the Kingdom of God. The whole Revelation in sacred Writ, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, is relative to Christ, in some Manner and Degree: But our Text eminently points us to those Things which have a