

state of Nature, or in a state of Grace.

2. NATURAL Men are to be considered, either as being without the Gospel, or under the Dispensation of it.

3. MAN in a state of Grace is to be considered, either as in the Way to, or as arrived at the Kingdom of Glory. Add to these,

4. THE Moral Law, under which Man is, may be considered, either as a Rule only, or as a Covenant also.

AND now we may take up the Resolution of this Case under every of these Considerations. And here observe,

1. ALL Men in a State of Nature are under the Law as a Covenant, as well as a Rule. By a State of Nature we are to understand, that Condition which they were put into by the Apostasy of the first Adam, in which State all Men abide, till they are delivered out of it, by being planted in the second Adam, and that is done in effectual Vocation. And this is true concerning all such, whatever other Advantages they are under, whether in the Darkeness of Pagan Ignorance, or under the outward Revelation of Gospel-Light. And that these are under the Law, not only as a Rule, but as a Covenant too is evident, because they are yet in their Unbelief; concerning whom it is said, Mark 16. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* Yea, John 3. 18. *He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.* Which is interpreted, ver. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him.* This therefore is declared to be the common Condition both of the Jew and the Gentile, Rom. 3. 9, 22.

2. AS for natural Men that are without the Gospel, the Law is serviceable to them on such Accounts as these.

(1.) TO keep them in awe, & prompt them unto Duty. That there are the remains of the Law in the Hearts of such, is certain. The Apostle proves it, Rom. 2. 14. And this, not only as they have in them rational Convictors of Right and Wrong, Duty and Sin, but also as they suggest to Men the Danger of sinning, and the Wrath which they expose themselves to thereby, whence they either accuse or excuse them, ver. 15. And these are proper Motives to put Men upon avoiding the one and pursuing the other; and doubtless by this Means God curbs in Men's exorbitant Lusts, which would else break all Bounds, as sometimes they do, in Men deserted by God.

(2.) FOR the maintenance & preservation of civil Societies from Ruin. Man is made a sociable Creature, and this End cannot be obtained but by a civil Order, and the upholding of Righteousness. Man's Life, Chastity, Estate, good Name and Property must be preserved, and how is this done, but by imprinting

SERMON CXLIX.

4. **T**O what use the moral Law is still serviceable to fallen Man?

Ans. THAT we may take this up aright, we may look upon fallen Man under diverse Considerations: in every of which there is an answerable Usefulness of the moral Law.

1. MAN is to be considered, either as in a



ing on Men's Hearts the apprehension of these Rules of Justice and Equity, making them approve them, and holding a Curb on their Consciences? And in this way God upholds his Government of the World, and raiseth Men among Heathen, who subserve him in it; but for which, the Wickedness of Men had long e're this reduced the World to a Chaos.

(3.) *TO direct in the ordering of the civil Government of Mankind.* Without civil Government, there would be nothing but Confusion, as, Judges 21. 25. *In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.* Men cannot live as Men without Laws, nor well with them, unless they be righteous, it mends no Man's Condition, to be oppress'd by a Law; but there have been Governments among meer Pagans, which have had many excellent Laws, in respect of Righteousness toward Men, under which they have greatly flourished, and been a shame to such as had the Word of God: See, *Acts 25. 16.* And whence had they this but from the Benefits of the Law of God in them, and the common Gifts of the Spirit enabling Men to improve the remaining Light in them to high measures.

(4.) *TO dispose them to entertain the Gospel, when it should be offered to them.* God had a Purpose to extend his Salvation to the Gentiles, in the fulness of time, by sending the Offers of a Christ to them, inviting them to embrace him, which was accomplished after our Saviour's Resurrection. Now, that they might have something in them to work upon as reasonable Creatures, and that by which they might be persuaded of their Need, God left these Principles in them. And for this reason we find that the Apostles when they preach'd to them built their Doctrines on these Principles, as will particularly appear in *Acts 5. 14. Rom. 1. 2.*

3. *WITH respect to natural Men that are under the Gospel Dispensations.* Besides what they have in common with others in the forecited Benefits, the Law is made serviceable to prepare them to receive Christ, and embrace the Terms of the new Covenant; and this seems to have been the design of the giving the Law at Mount Sinai, as is intimated in, *Gal. 3. 23, 24. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed, Where the law was our School master, to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* It is certain that it was given for gracious Purposes, *ver. 19.* And therefore in the hand of a Mediator; and in this way only could it serve to promote the Gospel Design. And here it serves,

(1.) *TO convince Men of Sin;* which is the first step to Conversion. For though the Grace of the Spirit is infused by him immediately, yet the drawing it forth is mediate; and not only so, but the Preparation for it is so; for Man repents and believes as he is a reasonable Creature, upon Persuasion, though

the efficacy of it, be by powerful Operation: Here therefore the Spirit begins with Men, *Joh. 16. 8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* And this he doth by the Application of the Law to the Conscience: for, *Rom. 3. 20. By the law is the knowledge of sin.* And good reason, for, *Chap. 4. 14. Because the Law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.* And this is by setting the Law before him as a Rule, and shewing it to him; he tells him, that the Law saith, this thou shalt do, and that thou shalt not do, but thus halt thou done, and these things hast thou omitted, and by this he knows it to be Sin. For, *1 John 3. 4. Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*

(2.) *TO discover to them their woful Misery by Sin.* And without this, the former will little avail; for fallen Man is so in love with Sin, that nothing but fear of Wrath will deter him from it; the Spirit therefore by the Law, shews the Man what is like to be the issue of these Sins, and that is nothing less than Damnation; and this he doth by representing it as a Covenant; he tells him that the Law saith, *Ezek. 18. 4. The soul that sinneth it shall die. Rom. 6. 23. For the wages of sin is death.* That all the Curses written in the Book of God are out against Sinners for their Sin. And hereby he makes them afraid of the Wrath of God; as, *Isa. 33. 14.*

(3.) *TO slay them as to expectation of Help by any Righteousness or Strength of their own.* The former Convictions do usually put Men upon Endeavours to relieve themselves, by reforming their Lives, in abstaining from their former sinful Courses, and taking up of neglected Duties, and they are apt to rattle there; and comfort themselves therein; and hereby they fortify against the Gospel Offers; for a Man cannot come to Christ, till he forsakes himself; for this also he useth the Law, by giving the Man a deeper insight into the spiritual Nature of it; and now he sees, that it is another manner of Thing to keep the Law, than he before dream'd of; and this shews him his utter impotency, which he till then was ignorant of, which cuts him off from self-sufficiency, and so kills his vain Confidences in himself; so it was with Paul, *Rom. 7. 9. For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

(4.) *TO awaken in them, an Apprehension of their absolute need of Help from abroad.* And this is done, by applying the Law home to their Consciences, under the forecited Considerations. He shews them that the Promise of Life, is limited only to perfect Obedience to the Law, and that the Curse of Death is out against Sinners for the least flaw in their Obedience, *Gal. 3. 10.* He assures them of the rigour of the Law in these respects, & that it will not bare the least in either of them, but exact the full thereof, *Mat. 5. 18.* And herewithal, lets

them see, that they come short in both; that they cannot do the things required in it, but miss it in their best; that they cannot by themselves pay the Arrears, but they will break them forever. And now the result of this is, that except some other Hand afford them succour, to rescue them out of this Distress, they must perish unavoidably and Eternally.

(5.) *TO make the glad tidings of Christ, & Salvation by him welcome.* And this is the genuine reluctance of all the former. No man cares for Christ, as long as he can maintain in himself any hopes that he may do well enough without him. But when once the Man finds himself perishing, now an Hand stretched out from on high to help him, is welcome. And therefore Christ is commended as an helper for such, Psal 72. 12, 13. *For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth: the poor also and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.* And this sense is wrought in the Man by the Law, by which he is made to know himself poor, and in debt, beyond the succour of any created Power.

4. *AS to those that are under Grace, the Law is no more a Covenant of Works to them.* It was so to them before, and as such it was made helpful to bring them over to Christ, and so put them under Grace. But now, it loseth its claim over them as such. And the reason is, because there is an inconsistency between these two. The Covenant of Grace was introduced as a remedial Covenant, to deliver Sinners from the Law in regard of the Curse, which it held them under as a Covenant. And for this end, Christ, who opened the Way of this Covenant, engaged in, and accomplished the Redemption which he undertook. As Gal. 3. 13. 4. 4, 5. So that now, neither is the Promise of that Covenant our Encouragement to Obedience, for that was only to that which was perfect, which our best is not; nor are the Threatnings of that Covenant our Terrors from Sinning, because we are discharged from them, and those Terrors belonged to the Spirit of Bondage, which Believers do not receive again; tho' not at present utterly free from the remorse of, Rom. 8. 15. Though still there are the Promises & Threatnings of the New Covenant, in the Evangelical Dispensation of it, which are suited to the present state of the Children of God: But that is true, Rom. 6. 14. *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

5. *THAT those who are in the New Covenant, and as yet, but in the way to the Kingdom, are under the Law, as a Rule of their Life.* Though it is not a Covenant of Life to them, having Life secured to their personal Obedience, yet it is a Rule according to which God expects that they should order their Life and Conversation. This is denied by some, practically abused by others, and not rightly understood by many. And may therefore be made clear and evident in the following Conclusions,

1. *THAT God's People have a Life & Conversion to lead in this World.* Man is a living, and consequently an active Being: And he is of a rational Nature, and hath thereupon a Power in him of consulting and choosing his way. Men have something to do in this Life, and they cannot sit still, but will be some way engaged. Every Man hath some End in his eye, and will contrive and pursue some Means for his obtaining of it, to which he will direct the course of his Life: Yea, the powers of Action were put into the Creature for their being exerted in it. So that every man, will certainly be some way employed.

2. *THAT it is not at the Liberty of God's People to live as they list, nor ought they to live as other Men.* Man was put under the special Government of God at first, nor can he fall out of it, so as not to be under the lawful Command of it, but God must therein lose his Glory so far, which he will not. Hence the Gospel Liberty doth not open to them a door of Licentiousness, or give them leave to follow their own Suggestions. For tho' Grace in them, inclines them to love and serve God, yet they have Corruption which withstands the Will of God, and draws after the sinful gratifying of the Lusts of the Flesh, & often leads them captive, Rom. 7. 23. And what then would it do, were they left at their unlimited Liberty? And God forbids them to run in the same Courses which others, viz. Ungenerate Men do, Eph. 4. 17, 18. *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart.* And Chap. 5. 7, 8, 11. Hence that advice, 1 Pet. 4. 3, 4. *For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, wherein ye walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.*

3. *THERE must therefore be a Rule for their Direction in leading such a Life.* Where Men are not left at Liberty, there is a Limitation, and therefore there must be something to set the Bounds to them, that may tell them, this you ought to do, and this you ought not to do; and this must be contained in that Covenant, which is contrived to be a Medium of bringing sinful Men to Salvation. The Gospel therefore contains, not only the glad Tidings of Peace, but also the Way of that Peace. For it there be a Way, it must belong unto that oeconomy in which Man's well being is laid out. Hence that is express as one Advantage of it, Luke 1. 79. *To guide our feet in the way of peace.*

4. *THE Children of God are therefore sanctified, that they may be fitted for Compliance with this Rule.* There is the Sanctification of the Spirit, which is one of the Benefits of the new

new Covenant, to which all God's Elect are appointed, 2 Theſ. 2. 13. *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the ſpirit, and belief of the truth.* And what elſe is this Sanctification, but the renewing of the Image of God in Man, which is proper Furniture to fit him for the Service of God, according to his revealed Will? Now the uſefulneſs of all Powers, whether natural or ſupernatural in the Creature, is in the applying of them to the Deſign of them, and that is by their acting regularly. So that the end of Sanctification would be loſt, if there were not a Rule to direct it in its exerciſes.

5. *THOUGH Sanctification diſpoſe them to comply with it, yet it is not itſelf the Rule.* They err who confound the Principle and the Rule, and make them the ſame, whereas they are two diſtinct things. It is one thing to be fitted for Work, and another to be directed in the Proſecution of it. They therefore who ſay, that there is no need of a Law or Rule to be given to a Believer, becauſe his Grace itſelf will be a ſufficient Rule to him, do greatly err. *David* was of another mind, elſe he would not have prayed, as, *Pſal.* 119. 18, 23, &c.

6. *THIS Rule is not made known to every one, by immediate Inſpiration, but is laid down in the Goſpel.* It is true the Spirit of God, acting in and with the means, giveth Illumination, by which we diſcern the ſpiritual Mind of this Rule. For, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him: neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* But the Rule itſelf is laid down in the Goſpel, and is there to be ſought. And we are adviſed to ſearch for it, Rom. 12. 2. *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.* And for this are the Scriptures recommended, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. *All ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in rightcouſneſs: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works.*

7. *IT is the moral Law which is reinforced in the Goſpel, as a Rule for the Children of God to order their Lives by.* Not to mention how much this is inculcated in the Old Teſtament, which were ſufficient. He that is converſant in the Writings of the New Teſtament ſhall find it in every Article or Precept thereof, urged and preſſed upon the Children of God, as is manifeſt in the Hortatory parts of the Epistles: Yea, what need had our Saviour to have vindicated the moral Law from the falſe gloſſes and abuſive Interpretation of the Scribes and Pharifees, as he doth, in *Mat.* 5, &c. if it had not been of uſe in Goſpel times as a Rule, and therefore ought to be rightly underſtood?

8. *THE Law is holy, juſt and good, and ſo adapted to regulate their Lives as becomes Men.* Grace doth not make them ceaſe to be Men, and ſo to owe to God a Service as Men, and to this the Law was ſuited at firſt, and continues to be ſo, notwithstanding Man's Sin. Hence that encomium, Rom. 7. 12. *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and juſt, and good.*

(1.) *IT is ſuited to direct Man how to pleaſe God, becauſe it is holy.* It is therefore called *his acceptable Will*, Rom. 12. 2. Holineſs in a Creature, is properly a ſeparation to the Service and Glory of God, and the Law is ſuch, becauſe it tells us how we may live & pleaſe him, 1 Theſ. 4. 1.

(2.) *IT is ſuited to teach us how to carry right towards Man, for it is juſt.* And it is ſaid to be ſo, with reſpect to the Duties of the Second Table, when uſed diſtributively with Holineſs. And there is nothing wherein we can have to do with Men, but it gives order about in the beſt manner, to the very conviction of Men's Reaſon and Conſciences.

(3.) *IT is ſuited to ſhew Men how beſt to profit themſelves, for it is good.* Hence that, *Mic.* 6. 8. It is the beſt Rule to direct Men in their Carriage, ſo as to comply with right Reaſon, as might be inſtanced in particular. And all theſe three are put together, Tit. 2. 12. *Teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs & worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, rightcouſly, & godly in this preſent world.*

9. *HENCE as a Rule, it is every way ſerviceable to the People of God.* As a Covenant they have reaſon to dread it, for they cannot ſtand by it, *Pſal.* 143. 2. But as a Rule, they cannot do without it. And there are theſe things more eſpecially, wherein they have conſtant uſe of it.

(1.) *TO inſtruct them in the way of Sobriety, Rigorousneſs, and Holineſs.* Under theſe is comprehended all moral Duty. And we obſerved but now, that all theſe are the teachings of the Goſpel, in Tit. 2. 11, 12. A Man cannot live as a Chriſtian ought without theſe Rules. And they all belong to the moral Law. And that Heathen have reſentments thereof, is plain from the reliicks of it in them.

(2.) *TO diſcover to them the Wiles of Sin and Satan.* The deceitfulneſs of Sin in us, and the cunning of Satan our grand Adverſary, are always offering to trap us into ſome Sin or other. And we are *not to be ignorant of their cunning*, 2 Cor. 2. 11. Now the way to detect them, and ſo to eſcape the fallacy of them, is to bring them to this Law. So we are directed, *Iſai.* 8. 12. And the *Pſalmiſt* acknowledgeth, *Pſal.* 19. 11. *Moreover by them is thy ſervant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.*

(3.) *TO prove their Actions by, in reſpect of the Matter of them.* As to the gracious and acceptable manner of performing them, the moral Law doth not of it ſelf inform fallen Man about that, but it purely belongs to the Goſpel Revelation, but as to the Matter of Duty

Duty and Sin; this belongs to the Law to make discovery of to us; and that not only to direct us how to chuse our Actions aright, as *Psal.* 119. 105. but also to prove them, and judge of them. And by bringing our selves to that, we may judge on this account: According to the forecited, *Rom.* 3. 20.

(4.) TO convince them of the imperfection and insufficiency of their own Righteousness for their Justification. The Law must justify us, if we be justified, i.e. it must have nothing to charge us withal. We must therefore have a Righteousness to offer, that is commensurate with it. But the Law itself will tell us, that this cannot be our own personal. By this *David* was brought to that acknowledgement, *Psal.* 130. 3. *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities: O Lord, who shall stand?* And the Apostle plumply asserts, in *Rom.* 3. 20. *Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.*

(5.) TO help forward their daily Repentance. Repentance belongs to the exercise of Sanctification, and is to be pursued by Believers, as long as they live. In it we are to mourn for Sin, fly from it, and seek the Pardon of it; and this is to be done every day, *Mat.* 6. 12. Now the ground of this, is from the remaining Sin that molests us. And how shall we find Matter for it, but from the Law, which will ever offer us Ground for it?

(6.) TO help us rightly to carry it under the Judgments of God that we are visited withal. These Judgments are God's Corrections, and they are for Sin, *Psal.* 39. 11. And the Children of God are often under such Chastisements, and it becomes them to be patient under, and receive instruction by them. And how shall they get & maintain such a frame, but by justifying God, and taking blame to themselves. And this must be, by comparing themselves with the holy Law, which will shew them their Transgressions.

(7.) TO make Christ more precious to them. It is a Character of a true Believer, *1 Pet.* 2. 7. *Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious.* And hence that which serveth to enhance his Worth, is to consider and affect our selves with the great Kindness of his to us; and nothing will more discover it to us than the Law, by which we discover what Sin had made us, and what had become of us, but for him. Hence that, *Luk.* 7. 47. *Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*

6. AS to those who are arrived at the Kingdom of Glory, let me only make these three Remarks,

1. THAT this Law, is no longer a Rule of special Government to them. It was adapted as such, for God's People, as long as they are in the Way, and will be made use of in the Great Judgment that is coming, being without doubt one of the Books which is then to be laid open, *Rev.* 20. 12. It is their Probation time now, and by their Obedience to God's

Law, they are to approve their Fidelity to him: But when they go to Heaven, they pass to receive their Rewards, which we are assured will be according as they have carried themselves in this Life, *2 Cor.* 5. 10.

2. IT will be a Rule for them to judge of their Perfection by. Such is the State of the Glorified. Hence that, *Heb.* 12. 28. *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved; let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.* Now a State of Perfection referring to Man consists in his compleat conformity to the Rule of Perfection which was given him; a defect wherein, was his Imperfection in this Life. Now therefore shall all Sin be done away, and Holiness compleated, and by knowing the breadth of the Law, and the entire assimilation of all their Powers to it, they will be satisfied.

3. PROBABLY it will influence their Eupraxy, so far as is consistent with their state of Glory. We have but dark apprehensions of that State at present. However, to love God, and love his Neighbour, were suited to Man's Nature, which tho' perfected, yet will not be changed into another: And tho' some Duties will cease, because they will then be like the Angels; yet their Love will be perfected, and that will be in the perfection of the Grace which was here begun, and shall act upon the same Objects, tho' in another and more glorious manner.

USE. LET these Considerations serve to stimulate us to love, prize, study, and practice the Law of God. Let every one that would approve himself to be a Christian indeed, endeavour to be able to say with *David*, *Psal.* 119. 97. *O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.* Let our Love make us delight to be always conversant with and contemplating of it. And let our Contemplation lead us to more constant endeavours to conform our Life and Conversation to the Precepts of it, and avoiding of whatsoever is contrary to it. Only that our Obedience may be acceptable to God, and profitable for us, let us renounce Reliance on our own strength & worthiness, and seek all our Help from Christ by Faith in him; and resolve all our Hope into him, both to have our Imperfections covered, and Sincerity rewarded: So shall we have great Peace in keeping the Law.

[JANUARY 14. 1700.]

SERMON CL.

III. THAT by giving him this Rule, God did reveal to Man what was his Duty. For the clearing of this two Inquiries may be made, viz. 1. *After what Manner God revealed this Law to Man at first?* 2. *How far this Law comprized in it Man's Duty, or the whole Rule of his Obedience?*

1. AFTER