

SERMON CLX.

IT now follows *that we take an Account,*
of the more special Duties, that belong to
this kind of Worship. And here we must warily
distinguish, between the Duties of Natural
Worship, and those which are Instituted. And
that more peculiarly for two Reasons. Partly
because Natural Worship, in all the Parts of
it is to be performed by all Christians; and
there are none that can live in the neglect of
them, without Sin, since the very light of
Nature tells Men, that they are due to God
from the Reasonable Creature, as was ordain-
ed under the first Command: Whereas, divers
of God's Institutions, do not only appoint
Positive Duties of Worship, but also confine
the discharge of them to such Offices, as are
therein ordained of God; and if others should
undertake them, they would be guilty of
Usurpation. Such were the Priest's Office of
old. Hence they so treated him, 2 Chron 26.
18. *And they withstood Uzziah the king, & said*
* K k k xiii



unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed, neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God. Partly, because the Duties of natural Worship, are fixed and unalterable, and remain to the World's End, whereas Institutions are alterable, though not by Men, yet by God who ordains them; and though they are of equal Force with the other, while they have the Seal of God's Authority upon them, yet when repealed, they cease to bind the Conscience, yea, they become rude and beggarly Elements, as Paul calls them, Gal. 4. 8. which hath also been manifested, under the Consideration of the Nature, Reason, and Bounds of Instituted Worship.

WE are here also to remember, that there are Duties of Natural Worship, required to be performed, in the Exercise of instituted Worship. Though these are distinguished in Doctrine, yet they are joined together in Practice; for we observed, that this is appointed to help us in exercising of that. But still, it is not left to Man's Arbitrement, nor may every one at pleasure undertake the Performance of these, in the way of an Ordinance, under the pretence, that it is natural Worship. For so would the distinct Offices, which Christ hath appointed in his Church, be confounded, Rom. 10. 15. *And how shall they preach, except they be sent?*

Again, WE are to distinguish between an Institution it self, and the Circumstances of it. There are some natural Circumstances, necessarily required to all Actions, whether civil or religious; thus, every Ordinance must be performed, in some Time, and in some Place, because Man's Nature requires it. Now if God hath fixed these, as he did of old, with respect to diverse Services, this belongs to the Institution, and binds the Conscience to the Observation of it: But if there be no particular Precept for it, it belongs to the Prudentials of Christians, and the Light of Nature is to direct, yea, and the Providence of God may vary it. There are also civil Circumstances, such as Garb and Gesture, in which Modesty and Gravity are requisite; but these are not in themselves, any part of instituted Worship, nor hath God appointed any limited Ordinance about them; and how far the Practice of the Apostles amounted to an Institution, in these and those Particulars, is matter of Dispute. There were some things they did extraordinarily; and suited to their Apostolical Function, and those Gifts which are now ceased, the doing whereof is to cease with them. Other things they did occasionally, and according to the Rules of Prudence, which cannot be the Rule of a fixed Ordinance, in the Church of God.

In sum, WE have observed, that an Institution in Worship is, whatsoever God requires to be performed by his People in way of Worship, by a Positive Precept. And that

we may be more particular in this, let us observe, That the Divine Institutions may be considered, according to the Times of the Church of God. These were such as were given to Man in Innocency, or such as were appointed to Man since the Apostasy. God gave to Man in Integrity, the Tree of Life and Knowledge, for a Sacramental Use to him, by a Positive Law, which were added as Seals to the Sanctions of the moral Law. Since the Fall we may divide the Times into two Parts, viz. From Adam to Christ, and from Christ to the End of the World. From Adam to Christ, Christ treated with the World under a new Covenant, of which, there were more obscure Dispensations, till Christ himself appeared to be the Light of the World. Hence he gave them diverse Ordinances, for the help of their Faith, and directing of them in their Religious worshipping of him. These were fewer at the beginning, and grew more numerous in process of Time, according to God's Pleasure, and the suitableness of them, to the State of the Church then being. Before the Flood, the principal that we have intimation of, were Sacrifices, which are not without some reason supposed, to have been offered immediately upon the Fall, and our first Parents clothed with the Skins of them, but expressed to have been offered by Cain and Abel, Gen. 4. begin. And the distinction of Beasts, into Clean and Unclean, which difference therefore was observed, in Noah's sorting of them in the Ark, and after the Flood offering only of these, Gen. 7. 2. And 8. 20. *And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar.* And the assembling of themselves for publick Worship, Gen. 4. ult. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.* After the Flood, God added the Prohibition of eating Blood, by a Positive Law, there being no reason in the Law of Nature, why that should not as well be eaten, as any other part of the Creature, Gen. 9. 4. And from thence till Abraham, we have no notice of any thing added to instituted Worship. But to him he gave Circumcision, Gen. 17. 10. And thus they continued till Moses, by whom God gave to the Children of Israel, a System of Institutions, too numerous here to be related. The Passover appointed, with all the particular Ordinances of it, upon their coming out of Egypt, Exod. 12. But the rest were given to Moses in the Wilderness, upon Mount Sinai, upon the tenor whereof, God renewed Covenant with that People, and took them to be his People. Hitherto belonged the Tabernacle, and all the Utensils of it. The giving the Priesthood to Aaron, and his Posterity. The putting Holiness upon Times, and Places, and Things. All the Ceremonies of the ceremonial Law, which were very numerous; which things were to stand in Force, till the Times of Reformation, Heb. 9. 10. i. e. till Christ should come and make a Change, in the whole

whole frame of instituted Worship. Now, as Christ upon his coming, and accomplishing the things that did prefigure him under the Law, did put an End to the Mosical Pedagogy, and thereupon those former Appointments now ceased to be Ordinances, & became beggarly Elements, as the Apostle asserts and proves in the Epistles to the *Galatians* and *Hebrews*: So he ordained new Institutions in the Gospel Church, to be observed by them, who profess themselves Christians; and ratified them, by the same Authority. On which Account we are told, Heb. 3. 2. *Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.* And these are they which we are concerned withal. And hitherto more peculiarly do belong.

1. **THE Appointment of Gospel Churches for the Publick Worship of God.** The Light of Nature indeed tells us, that as Man was made for God's Service, and consequently owes a Worship to him, and being made a sociable Creature, ought as there is Opportunity, to serve him in a social Way. Nevertheless, the Appointment of the several Societies of Christians, for the upholding and carrying on of this Worship, is Positive, and God hath used his sovereign Wisdom in the prescribing and ordering of such Societies, so as they may best obtain the End of their Ordination. It would here be endless to enquire into all the Disputes, that have been managed about the Nature and Constitution of Gospel Churches, but that there are such instituted by Christ, is evident in the New Testament, which mentions Churches in the Plural, and tells us of the several Places, wherein they were planted, the Appointment and Regulation whereof, belongs to Christ's supream Authority, who is the King of his Church, from whom they are to receive their Injunctions, Mat. 28. 18, 19, 20. *All power is given unto me in heaven and earth, Go ye therefore &c.* Whose entire frame, is manifestly diverse from that of the Jewish Church State, being suited to the Service of Christ, already come in the Flesh, and exalted on his Throne.

2. **THE Appointment of the stated Ordinances, which are to be administered in these Churches.** The Usefulness of these Churches, was for the convenient performing of these Ordinances. Now it is notorious, that the Ordinances of the Jewish Church, were vastly diverse from those of the Gospel Church; they are called carnal Ordinances, and these Spiritual; not from the End of them, for therein they agree, but for the Nature of them. Now these Ordinances principally are,

1. **PUBLICK Prayer.** For though Prayer itself is a part of natural Worship, yet the appointing of it in Church Assemblies, is an Ordinance. 1 Tim. 2. 8. *I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.* But of this there will

be further occasion, under the Consideration of the Helps to Obedience, whereof this is one Principal.

2. **PREACHING of the Word.** That the Word of God is given us, for our help and direction in the Service of God, is certain, and the Law of Nature tells us, that if God afford his Word to us, we ought to acquaint ourselves with it, and use suitable means to that End. But this particular way of preaching it, in the Congregations of God's People, which he hath appointed to be a *Mediocris*, for the Conversion and Edification of his Chosen, is Positive, 1 Cor. 1. 21. *For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* This therefore is solemnly pressed on *Timothy*, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing, and his kingdom: Preach the word.*

3. **BAPTISM and the Lord's Supper.** That these Sacraments are to be used in the Gospel Church, is certain, because there is a Precept for it. That they are no part of natural Worship, but purely Positive, is no less evident, and for that Reason they are acknowledged by all the Orthodox, to be sacred Ceremonies; and that they are arbitrary and alterable is evident, because they are brought into the Gospel Worship, in the room of Circumcision and the Passover, which are thereupon removed and cease. The former being more suited to represent Christ to come, and these to commemorate the great Benefits, that he hath introduced by his coming. The Appointment of these we have the Account of, and the standing of them for use in the Gospel Church, till Ordinances will be of no further use. Of the former in, Mat. 28. 19, 20. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world. Amen.* The latter, Luk. 22. 18. *For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.* Compared with, 1 Cor. 11. 26. *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

4. **THE Discipline, by which the Government of Christ in his Church, is to be upheld.** Every Church is a Society of such, as are under Ordinances adapted to the preservation of such a Body, in due Order. And because it consists of sinful Men, it is necessary for the preservation of it, that there be a due Discipline exercised in it, for the reclaiming of the Scandalous, encouraging of the Penitent, and Warning of all. This the light of Nature teacheth: But the determining of the particular Rules of this in the Church, is Positive. And this is quite of another Nature from that of Civil Bodies, whose Weapons are Carnal

nal, and applied only to the outward Man : whereas these are Spiritual, and concern the Conscience, 2 Cor. 10. 13, &c. Hitherto belong Church Censures, of Admonition, and when need requires, Excommunication, in case of Contumacy ; and the restoring of such as are Penitent : which are called by the general terms of *binding and loosing*, Mat. 18. 18. *remitting and retaining*, Job. 20. 23.

5. **RELIGIOUS Fasting.** Fasting it self, as it is an outward abstinence from the use of the Creature, is no part of Worship at all, and consequently not of Natural Worship. That God hath appointed it, as a Duty to be practised in his Church, as well as by particular Persons, on Occasions, for Solemn Humiliation and Prayer, is abundantly confirmed in the times of the Law. Hence that, in Joel. 2. 15, 16. *Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the people, &c.* And that it also belongs to Gospel-times in the Worship of God, Act. 13. 2, 3. *As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted &c.* Of which Nature also are Days of Thanksgiving.

3. **THE Appointing of the Offices in the Church, for the dispensation of the Gospel Ordinances.** These Ordinances are to be dispensed in Christ's Name, and by his Authority. And hence there must be some Authorized by him for it, without which Commission, none ought to take this Province upon him. It is said of the High Priest of Old, Heb. 5. 4. *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* And it is of like force in all the Offices in the Church. The Offices in the Gospel Church, are not the same, under the New-Testament, which they were under the Old, which infer their being Positive. We are told what they are, and that they were Christ's Ascension-Gifts, Eph. 4. 10, 11. *He that descended, is the same also that ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some Apostles : and some, Prophets : and some, Evangelists : and some, pastors and teachers.* And Christ himself grounds their Commission, upon the Authority he had to give it, Mat. 28. 18. Hence that, Rom. 10. 15. *And how shall they preach, except they be sent ?* And these only have the promise of Christ's Presence with them as such, ver. 20.

4. **THE Maintenance of the Ministry.** For tho' the light of Nature saith in general, that such as serve the Publick, ought to have a Publick Support : Yet, as the Ministry are an Ordinance, so their Maintenance is appointed by Christ, 1 Cor. 9. 14. *Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel.* Gal. 6. 6. *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.* Nor hath Christ left it, at Men's liberty, whether they will or no. Though possibly the way and manner of it under the Gospel may be a Prudential ; yet

doubtless, every Hearer, hath a tie of Conscience, to observe a suitable proportion, according as God blesteth his Labours. And this may suffice for the subject-matter, about which our Obedience to this Command, is to be employed. Which was the first thing we observed in the Answer. It follows to Consider,

II. **THE Things wherein this Worship is to be performed :** Which are *Three, viz. the receiving, observing, and keeping pure & entire* these Ordinances. Which may briefly be spoken to.

1. **WE are to Receive these Ordinances.** Deut. 23. 3. *And thy fate down at thy feet : every one shall receive of thy words.* And this is the first step to, as well as part of our Obedience, to the Second Commandment. Which receiving contains in it,

v. **AN Acknowledgment of the Divine Authority, in giving us these Institutions.** These Commands are Arbitrary, and we cannot always discern the particular Reason of them ; but then it ought to suffice us, that the Authority by which they are enjoined, is indisputable. God in nothing more asserts his Sovereignty in his special Government, than in the Second Command ; and therefore he gives that for the binding reason, *I am the Lord.* And this must satisfy us, and silence all our Cavillings. If he Commands, our business is to obey him, Deut. 12. 32. *What thing soever I command you, observe to do it : thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*

2. **A thorough Approbation of them in our Minds.** We then only receive God's Word aright, when we approve of it, and account it to be every way excellent, when we can put that encomium upon it, Psal. 19. 7, &c. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul : the testimony of the Lord is pure, enlightning the eyes.* And profess as he, Psal. 119. 24. *Thy testimonies also are my delight, and my counsellers.* And this produceth in us, a love to the Ordinances of God, and a desire after them ; and we take content in them. For it is by these closing Affections, that we embrace the ways of God, upon the free Election that our Will hath made of them, which proceeds from the preciousness of them discovered to our Minds. And hereupon we do not entertain them as hard Injunctions, and grievous, but as an easy Yoke.

3. **An intire and cordial Subjection of our selves unto them.** A Law is then properly received, when they to whom it is given, subject themselves to it, and resolve to conform themselves accordingly. They take it for their Rule, and acknowledge themselves to be under the Obligation of Obedience, and willingly engage themselves. They bind themselves to it, with a full purpose of adhering to the directions of it. Thus we find that David did, Psal. 119. 106. *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.* And this must be, without any reserve, either as to any particular Precepts of the Command, or as to any outward Circumstances,

Itances attending of our Obedience. This Subjection, must be full & absolute, *Psal.* 119. 6.

2. *WE are not only to receive them, but also to Observe them.* And this is the end of the former, and that wherein alone it can be serviceable to our Obedience. And this Observation is to terminate in Practice, *Deut.* 11. 32. *And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.* Now to a right Observation of these Statutes of Worship, there are these things requisite,

1. *A studious Endeavour to get a thorough Acquaintance with them.* Knowledge is necessary to Practice. We can never do the Duty, as it ought to be, unless we know it. And it is not here enough, that we know this or that to be a Divine Ordinance, but we must seek to know it, in the Parts & Circumstances of it; for a mistake in any of them, may render us guilty, and provoke God. As that about the Ark did them, on which *David* makes that remark, *1 Chron.* 15. 12. *The Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.* For this reason God enjoined his People of Old, to be very much in meditation on his Law, that they might have a very distinct knowledge of it. And herein *David* testified his respect to it, *Psal.* 119. 97. Hence that, *Ezek.* 43. 10, 11. — *And write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.*

2. *A careful and constant Attendance upon them.* Tho' the Promise supposeth Knowledge, yet it terminates on doing. *Job* 13. 17. We are not to satisfy our selves with the acts of Natural Worship, but we must faithfully comply with all God's Institutions. As we are not to add, so neither to diminish, *Deut.* 12. 12. We are not to content our selves with private and secret Worship, but we are to wait upon publick Ordinances, and delight in them. To be able to say as he. *Psal.* 26. 8. *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.* Hence we have that Precept, *Heb.* 10. 25. *Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.* We ought to be diligent in our coming to the House of God, and not for trifling Excuses to absent our selves from it. Nor are we to rest content in the Preaching of the Word, but we must seek after an orderly enjoying Baptism, and the Table of the Lord; since the Precepts for these are instamped with the same Authority, which the other is. This therefore is given as the Character of those worthy Persons, *Luk* 1. 6. *And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.*

3. *A Conscientious care to conform & confine our selves to the Prescriptions of them.* The Gospel doth not only tell us, what are these Ordinances in general, but it hath told us how they are to be performed; and we are to rest satisfied, in the Wisdom and Pleasure of

Christ about them, and be able to warrant all our Actions, in the discharge of the Duties of them, by the Command of Christ. That therefore is a Precept ever to be attended; *Isai.* 8. 20. *To the law and to the testimony.* We are not therefore to say, this or that looks as if it were suitable, in such an Ordinance; but terminate all in this, whether Christ hath commanded it, *Mat.* 28. 20.

4. *A Cordial Devoting of our selves to God; in all this.* It is a great mistake to think, that the Second Command only requireth External Worship. Christ hath assured us otherwise; *Job* 4. 24. And that is an universal Precept, *Prov.* 23. 26. *My son, give me thine heart.* The great design of all Ordinances is to promote Communion with God. We are to draw near unto him in all. There is therefore the exercise of all our Graces required in this Observance. And that Complainer had a reference to God's Institutions, *Isai.* 29. 13. *This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.*

3. *WE are to keep them Pure and Entire.* Which as it hath a respect to the former, so it includes in it these Things,

1. *THE Preserving them as God hath left them, without any mixture of our own Intentions.* One principal respect in which a thing is said to be pure, is when it is without any mixture of another matter, than what belongs to it. And more peculiarly, when it is not compounded, with any thing, that is more base than that is. Thus Metals are pure, when they are free from any dross, or baser Metal. Now the mixing of any thing of our own with the Ordinances of God, is to put Dross to Silver. This therefore we are to avoid. To do all things according to the Pattern. Nor introduce any thing for an Ordinance, which hath not the Stamp of Divine Authority upon it. Of which God may demand of us, as of them; *Isai.* 1. 12. *Who hath required this at your hand?*

2. *THAT we apply these Ordinances to the proper Subjects of them.* God hath not only told us, what are the Ordinances, which he hath sanctified for the Use of his Church, but also who are the Subjects who are to partake in these and these; and the Misapplication of them, is reckoned to be a defiling of them. It was therefore a blame which God laid upon them of old, for which he threatened them, *Ezek.* 22. 26. *Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they steered difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.* And it is an Advice given by our Saviour, *Mat.* 7. 6. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you.* And that the Lord's Table is a guarded Ordinance is acknowledged by all Sober Christians;

Christians, and warranted by the Discipline which he hath established in the Gospel.

3. *THAT we lay aside no Ordinance as usefess, nor arrogate any under the pretence of the greater Perfection.* That it is our Duty to take heed to our selves in both of these respects, we have already observ'd; and by thus doing we keep them entire. That therefore is the Seal of the Gospel, as it was once of the Law, *Rev.* 22, 18, 19. None are to be let drop, as if the Church could do as well without them; nor any to be taken up, as though it could not be safe without the addition of them. We must therefore renounce our own Wisdom, and wholly take up with the Wisdom of God in this respect.

U S E. I. LEARN hence their Sin, who cast off the Ordinances, under a pretence of Spiritual Worship. Such there are, and have been in the World; who have condemned all Institutions for Carnal, and thought themselves gotten above them, and thrown all the Contempt they could upon them, and despised those that Conscientiously attended them. But those that are gotten above Ordinances, are fallen beneath Christians, and take away

the Second Command from the Decalogue: And that Text may well be applied to them, *Prov.* 30. 12. *There is a generation that are pure in there own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filibiness.*

U S E. II. THIS also shews their folly, who live in the Neglect of Ordinances. And indeed there is nothing in which God's Authority is more despised. This indeed, is directly to set themselves to withstand the Authority of God to Command them. And for such as bear the Name of Christians upon them, it is to violate their Allegiance to him, which, by the Gospel-Covenant, whereof they are the Partakers, they are obliged unto. And indeed it is to neglect the Means in which they are pointed the way to obtain Salvation. Let us then thank God for his Institutions, and be faithful in our observing of them, and take that encouragement so to do, which he gave to his People of old. *Deut.* 32. 47. *For it is not a vain thing for you: because it is your life; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.*

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S E R M O N CLXI.