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A Banner displayed because of the  
Truth, Matter of Praise to all the  
Wellwishers thereof.

A

S E R M O N

Preached at the Opening of

The ASSOCIATE SYNOD, -

At *Edinburgh*, *August* 19. 1755.

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The Author was prevailed with, at the earnest and repeated Desire of some of his Brethren, and a great many of the Hearers, to consent to the Publication of the following Sermon.

## A BANNER DISPLAYED, &c.

P S A L. lx. 4.

*Thou hast given a Banner to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed because of the Truth. Selah.*

**T**HE Title of this Psalm points out to us the Penman and Occasion thereof. It was penned by David King of Israel, after he was settled upon the Throne; upon Occasion of an illustrious Victory obtained over the Syrians and Edomites, by his Forces, under the Command of Joab, eighteen thousand being left dead upon the Field of Battle.

From the Beginning of the Psalm, he calls to Remembrance the low Case they had been in for a long Time before this. What was the Cause of all, we have in the 1st Verse: They had provoked the Lord so by their Sins, that *he being justly displeased had cast them off*; which he had manifested in his *scattering them abroad*. The Dishonours done the Lord, and his righteous Displeasure upon account thereof, cannot but go very near the Heart of one that desires to fear his Name. In the Close of the Verse we have a Prayer for his gracious Return, *O turn thyself to us again*, as that which he in the Name of the Church earnestly desires; being indeed persuaded that it is this would mend Matters with them. As it is his being provoked

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to depart, that is at the Bottom of all the Scatterings that take place; so it is his Return that would put another Face upon Affairs, and bring them into Order again, uniting us to him, and to one another in him.

He proceeds in a Back-look to their former sad and low Case, *ψ 2. 3. The Lord had made the Earth to tremble; had broken it: had shewed his People hard Things; and made them to drink the Wine of Astonishment.* This may perhaps have a Reference to the Confusions during the Reign of Saul, and the Struggle between David and him; not excluding the many Onsets they met with from the Philistines, and others their evil Neighbours; which were too often attended with renting Divisions among themselves, *which caused sad Thoughts of Heart*, Judg. v. 15. In the Close of *ψ 2.* we have a Prayer in a Suitableness to this Lamentation, for the *healing of their Breaches*; pointing out, that there were still melancholy Things among them, and that any begun Deliverance needed to be further carried on. Under all our scattered and broken Cases, we had need to have our Eyes only to the Lord as the great Healer. And when he is pleased to answer his People's Prayers, and grant any Deliverance, it is very proper Exercise then to call to Remembrance the former sad Situation we were in before he interposed: For hereby we may see more clearly the Lord's Goodness, in seasonably relieving us; and it is a Mean, by the Lord's Blessing, to prevent our turning secure, lest we should be again put into the Furnace.

In this Verse, after the mournful Lamentation,



tion, a thankful Acknowledgment is made of the Lord's Goodness unto them, in what he had wrought: *Thou hast given a Banner to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed because of the Truth.* In which Words we have several Things observable.

1<sup>st</sup>, A certain Class of People are characterized, in these Words, *them that fear thee.* This is the Character of the Church and People of God, who are the only Fearers of his Name; they are the People *that are of a contrite and humble Spirit, who tremble at his Word.* They are so denominated, not from an unbelieving slavish Fear of God; but from that filial reverential Fear of him, that is *put in their Hearts, that they may not depart from him.* This Character, in a strict Sense, is only applicable to the true invisible Church, that have had the Experience of the Day of Christ's Power: But in a more large Sense, it may point out the visible Church as contradistinguished from the World; who, adhering to the Doctrines contained in the Lord's Word, and as to their outward Conversation walking according to the Rule therein laid down, do profess to fear his Name. But we intend not to insist upon this at present.

2<sup>dly</sup>, We have a certain Privilege conferred upon the People thus characterized; a Banner is given them: *Thou hast given a Banner to them that fear thee.* Some by the Banner understand David's Government, according to God's Promise of giving him the Throne; which was indeed a strong Encouragement to them that feared the Lord, and a Token for Good of his doing great Things. And if we should consider

the Words as having literally a Respect to this; we must view David in his Government as only a Type of Christ the Son of David, *upon whose Shoulders the Government is laid*; of whom it is said, *he shall stand for an Ensign of the People*, Is. xi. 10. In the Doctrine of the Gospel does Christ stand as an Ensign to the People; in him, as the Centre of their Unity, are all Believers, the Army of the Lamb, gathered together into one; to him they do seek, and in him they glory. But as at this Time the Lord had spirited a Number in Israel to appear against the Syrians and Edomites, these Enemies of his Work and People; and had blessed them with Success, and thus given a Breathing to his People, enabling them to improve the Opportunity by appearing for him and his Cause; we know not but this may be understood by the Banner given. The Lord, notwithstanding of awful Things threatened, and in righteous Judgment inflicted upon a People, sometimes puts a *Banner* of a Testimony for his Cause into the Hands of a Remnant, as his Witnesses that he is God; and not only in his Providence gives them an Opportunity, but by his Grace enables them to improve the same, in a way of displaying it because of the Truth.

3dly, We may notice by whom this Privilege is bestowed: *Thou hast given a Banner; thou that cast us off, and scattered us; thou that madest the Earth to tremble, that hast broken it; thou that hast shewed thy People hard Things, and caused them to drink Wine of Astonishment; thou hast given a Banner.* When the Enemy comes in like a Flood, it is the Spirit of the Lord that



*that lifts up a Standard against him, Is. lix. 19.* The Lord had in some measure maintained his Cause all along among Israel; and now when the Enemy comes in like an Inundation, he spirited them to appear for him, to fight his Battles wherein his Truth was so much concerned, and made their Attempts successful, giving them Occasion of Triumph; and thus he gave them *a Banner to be displayed because of the Truth.* So are his little Army still enabled, under the Influence of his Spirit, to oppose their Enemies; and by his Blessing made successful, in a Way of *displaying their Banners.*

4thly, The End of the Banner's being given is declared: It is *that it may be displayed.* It is put into their Hands, and Opportunity is given them, that they may display it, and not sit still, indifferent and inactive, neutral and secure; but may bestir themselves like Men valiant for the Truth upon the Earth.

5thly, The Reason of the Banner's being given and displayed is adduced: *Because of the Truth.* Which may either have a Respect to the *giving* of the Banner, and then it is because of the Truth of God's Promise; or to the *displaying* of it, and then it points out that we are to display the Banner in behalf of the Truth, viz. the whole of the Lord's Cause, which his Witnesses and Soldiers are to bear Testimony unto and fight for, all those Truths revealed in his Word; *for we can do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth, 2 Cor. xiii. 8.*

6thly, This is here brought in as Matter of Praise, after the mournful Commemoration of their former low Case; when the Lord seemed to

to have cast them off, and had shewed them hard Things, that yet he had given them a Banner, to be displayed because of the Truth. The Verse is concluded with *Selah*; which, according to many, points out a Pause in singing: But as it is generally placed at some remarkable Passage, it may denote, that what is recorded is worthy of our special Attention and Remembrance.

The doctrinal Proposition we lay down from the Words, to be considered a little, is this following, *viz.*

*That a Banner given to be displayed because of the Truth, is Matter of Praise to all the Well-wishers of Truth.—Thou hast given a Banner to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed because of the Truth.* On this Account the Church of Christ does join in a Song.

In discoursing this Proposition a little, we would essay the Prosecution of the following Method, *viz.*

1. To consider the *Banner* given.
2. The *displaying* of this Banner.
3. The *Reason* of its being given and displayed, *because of the Truth.*
4. To confirm the Doctrine; or shew, that a Banner given to be displayed because of the Truth, is Ground and Matter of Praise.
5. To deduce some Inferences for Application. All as the Lord shall be pleased to direct and assist.

We return then, through divine Assistance, to the first Thing proposed.

H E A D

## H E A D I.

I. *To consider the Banner given, to be displayed because of the Truth.*

A Banner is a warlike Ensign; and the giving it to the Church, speaks forth her being here in a militant Condition. She has many Enemies to oppose, Sin, Satan, and the World. And how do the Church's Enemies oppose her? It is in a Way of setting themselves against the Truths, the Cause of Christ, against *the Word of their Testimony*. But whatever Opposition be thus made, it is not without Contradiction from them, in a Way of making a Stand for Truth; for there is a Banner of a Testimony given them, put into their Hands, that it may be displayed because of the Truth. Concerning which it may be observed, that,

1<sup>st</sup>, A Banner is of use for Unity among the Soldiers; it is to this they gather, and are as one Body under one Standard or Banner. So we read of a gathering to the Ensign, *Is. xi. 12. He shall set up an Ensign for the Nations, and shall assemble the Outcasts of Israel, and gather together the Dispersed of Judah, from the four Corners of the Earth.* The Lamb's Army are gathered together about Christ the great Standard-bearer, and enlisted under his one Banner; and thus are united among themselves. Some indeed talk, as if the lifting up of the Standard and displaying the Banner were the Way to mar Unity in the Church: But such mistake the Nature of that Unity that is required in the Church, among the Army of the Captain of Salvation. The Unity that is to take place in the Church, is  
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the *Unity of the Spirit*: Eph. iv. 3. *Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit*. But this cannot be, but in a Way of endeavouring to display the Banner because of the Truth; for the Spirit is *the Spirit of Truth*. It is an Unity that bears some Resemblance to that essential Union between the Father and the Son, *John xvii. 21. 22. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us;—that they may be one, even as we are one*: Which therefore must be a holy Union, an Unity in the Truth; as God is the God of *Truth*, and his eternal Son is not only *the Way*, but also *the Truth*. The Unity the Apostle exhorts the Philippians to, *Phil. i. 27. is to stand fast in one Spirit, being of one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel*: Not of one Mind at any rate, though it should be at the Expence of Truth; but of one Mind in *striving*, that is, in *contending earnestly for the Faith of the Gospel*. All which shew, that true Unity in the Church is founded upon the Truth. God, in revealing an *Abundance of Truth* to his Church, reveals also an *Abundance of Peace*: And the Way to maintain this Unity, is to be faithful in displaying the Banner because of the Truth. It was a Saying of Luther, —Rather than any thing should fall of the Kingdom of Christ and his Glory, let not only Peace go, but let Heaven and Earth go too.

2dly, A Banner is of use for animating the Soldiers: It is heartless in the Battle, when the Standard falls. *Is. x. 18.* the Lord represents the Dispiritedness of the Assyrians, when he would rise to plead with them, by this, *It shall be*



be as when a Standard-bearer fainteth. This dispirits the whole Army, and puts all into Confusion. But it is encouraging while they see the Banner standing, to fight lest it should fall into the Enemies Hands, and give them Occasion of Triumph. So a Banner given to be displayed because of the Truth, tends to animate and encourage the Soldiers of the Lamb: *They shall fear the Name of the Lord from the West, and his Glory from the rising of the Sun: When the Enemy shall come in like a Flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a Standard against him,* Is. lix. 19. When they see the Standard lifted up, they will be encouraged to join under it, and to appear boldly in defence of it. How heartless are Christ's Soldiers, when his Standard in their Apprehension is like to fall; when *his Strength is delivered into Captivity, and his Glory left in the Hand of the proud Enemy?* But when the Lord appears, giving them a Banner to be displayed because of the Truth, how does this encourage them? and then, in a Dependence upon his Grace, they are bold, saying, *In the Name of the Lord will we display our Banners,* Psal. xx. 5.

3dly, A Banner is of use for striking the Adversaries with Terror. It is a fearful Sight to the Enemy, to see their Opponents regularly displaying their Banners. *Is. xxxi. 9.* it is said of the Assyrian, — *And he shall pass over to his strong Hold for Fear, and his Princes shall be afraid of the Ensign, saith the Lord, whose Fire is in Zion, and his Furnace in Jerusalem.* When the Church looks forth fair as the moon, and clear as the Sun, she is terrible as an Army

*my with Banners*, Cant. vi. 10. When the Lord makes any Appearance for his People's Deliverance, as was the Case at this Time in Israel, and enables them to improve it by appearing for his Cause, this is indeed a fearful Sight to their Opponents; so that it may be said of them, *They saw it, and so they marvelled, they were troubled, and hasted away; Fear took hold upon them there, and Pain, as of a Woman in Travail*, Psal. xlviii. 5. 6. When the Church overcomes, it is *by the Word of their Testimony*, Rev. xii. 11. And if they would appear formidable to their Enemies, and expect to gain Ground against them; they must hold it fast, in a Dependence upon the Grace that is in Christ Jesus, the Captain of our Salvation. In a Word,

4<sup>thly</sup>, A Banner is of use for letting the Soldiers know their Side. It readily has the King's Arms upon it, and some Motto or Inscription declarative of that Cause for which it is displayed. So is this Banner given to them that fear him: It is the Standard of Truth; it has all the Truths of Christ inscribed upon it. If you would know the Lamb's Side, then look to the Banners displayed: And that Banner upon which Truth is inscribed, is the Banner of Zion's King; it is the Standard that he is the great Bearer and Supporter of, who is the *Ensign to the People*, and the *faithful Witness*: And that Banner you are called in your Stations to display. Where you see a Banner with Error inscribed upon it, in what Hands soever it is, it is the Enemy's Side; and you had need to keep back from it: It is the contrary Side from Christ's;



Christ's; for there *the Banner is displayed because of the Truth*. Or where you see a Banner, which, though it has some of the Truths of Christ inscribed upon it, yet wants many of them, many of them that are presently denied and run down; leaving them as Matters of Indifferency, not worthy to be fought for, to be earnestly contended for; that is the Enemy's Side also: For, says Christ, *He that is not with me, is against me*, Luke xi. 23. Matth. xxviii. 20. *Teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you*. But you may know Christ's Side, by the Banner there displayed, its having all the Truths of Christ inscribed upon it; and particularly *the present Truth, the Word of his Patience*, Rev. iii. 10. And where-ever you see that, as the Lord is making a Proclamation,—*Who is on the Lord's Side?* thither you should gather without Delay; no longer sitting still among his Opposers, lest you share in their Judgments. The Lord's Call is, *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean Thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*, 2 Cor. vi. 17. 18. And the Echo back to his Call, from all the Wellwishers to the Truth,—to the Cause of Christ, will be, *Let us go forth therefore unto him without the Camp, bearing his Reproach*, Heb. xiii. 13. I go on, through divine Assistance,

## H E A D II.

II. *To consider the displaying of this Banner. It is given, that it may be displayed.*

It is to be remembered, that it is to be displayed by every one in their Stations. Private Christians, as well as others, are *with the Lamb*, as his Soldiers, to fight his Battles, *Rev. xvii. 14.* They, as well as others, are his *Witnesses that he is God*, *Is. xliii. 12.* But the Banner is in a special manner to be displayed by Church-officers; this is particularly committed to their Trust. And here it may be observed, that,

1<sup>st</sup>, The Banner is to be displayed *doctrinally*, by every Minister of the Gospel; according to our Saviour's Direction, *Matth. xxviii. 19. 20. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, —teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you.*—Every Truth is to be preached; so as Ministers may have it to say, *We have not shunned to declare unto you the whole Counsel of God.* They are not to keep back any Part of the Truth, to please Men; but faithfully to bear witness to the whole of it, particularly the present Truth, without regarding their Feud or Favour: *For do we now persuade Men, or God? or do we seek to please Men? for if we yet pleased Men, we should not be the Servants of Christ*, *Gal. i. 10.* Ministers are set *as Watchmen to the House of Israel*, and are to hear the Word at the great Watchman's Mouth, and give them Warning from him, *Ezek. iii. 17.* And that Minister who is enabled to Faithfulness in thus displaying the Banner for Truth, is most likely to do Good by his Ministry: *1 Tim. iv. 16. Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy Doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* And he

is most likely not to be confounded, when called to give his Account. Therefore should we *study to shew ourselves approved unto God*, (whose Judgment is according to Truth, little regarding whether Men approve of us or not), *workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*, 2 Tim. ii. 15.

2dly, The Banner is to be displayed *judicially*, by the Judicatures of the Church. The Church Representative is the *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, 1 Tim. iii. 15.; which no way imports, that the Truth, or our Faith of it, is established upon the Authority of the Church; this depends only upon the Authority of God, the Author of it. But as Pillars or Stays are of use for underpropping or holding up another Thing,—so the Church is the Pillar, the Basis, or Seat of Truth, (as the original Word imports); as by it the Truths of God are published, supported, and defended, and in it they are only to be found as in their proper Seat or Place. And as Pillars were of use in old Times, to fasten upon them any public Edict which Princes wanted to have exposed to the View of all; so in the Church of Christ are the Truths of God declared, and exposed to open View, that all may know them. It is said, *Psal. cxxii. 4. 5. concerning Jerusalem, Whither the Tribes go up, the Tribes of the Lord, unto the Testimony of Israel.—For there are set Thrones of Judgment.* There were there, it would seem, not only the civil, but also the ecclesiastical Sanhedrim, whose Business it was to defend and support *Israel's Testimony*. So in the Jerusalem of the Gospel-church, there are *Thrones of Judgment*

ment set, even the Judicatures of the Lord Christ's Appointment; to whom it belongs to display the Banner because of the Truth, and who are thus to lay themselves out for the Maintenance of the *Testimony of Israel*. Especially when Truth is opposed, and a Banner displayed against it,—then it belongs to Church-judicatures, having such a Trust as divine Truth, to display the Banner because of the Truth: Which they are to do, by judicially condemning Error, and judicially asserting Truth, in Terms opposite to those in which it is opposed, thus *giving a certain Sound*; and by faithfully censuring them that oppose the Truth, either by venting of, or adhering to erroneous Doctrines, or by walking contrary to the Truth in their Lives and Conversations. We find the Churches of Pergamos and Thyatira reprov'd, *Rev. ii.* for *suffering the Erroneous to seduce the Lord's Servants*, and for *having them* among them; they having been lax in the Exercise of Discipline, not cutting off these Troublers by the spiritual Sword. There are some that hurt God's Witnesses, to whom he *gives Power to prophesy, clothed in Sackcloth*; and how do they hurt them? it is by opposing the *Word of their Testimony*, that Truth which they display the Banner for. But what is to become of such, you see, *Rev. xi. 5.* *And if any Man will hurt them, Fire proceedeth out of their Mouth, and devoureth their Enemies; and if any Man will hurt them, he must in this Manner be killed*: As they have the Power not only of the Key of Doctrine, whereby the Ministers of Christ doctrinally denounce Judgments upon the

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the Opposers of the Truth; but also the Key of Discipline and Government, whereby they *shut Heaven, bind, and retain Sins*, in a Way of inflicting Censures upon such Opposers, as the Lord Christ, the great Standard-bearer, has directed them; as well as they *open Heaven, loose, and remit Sins*, by taking off these Censures upon Repentance. In this respect does the Lord make, in the Gospel-days, *the Governors of Judah like a Hearth of Fire among the Wood, and like a Torch of Fire in a Sheaf; that they may devour all the People round about, on the right hand and on the left; that Jerusalem may be inhabited in her own Place, even in Jerusalem*; as is promised, *Zech. xii. 6.* So the Banner is to be displayed, both doctrinally and judicially.

We go on, through the Lord's Assistance, to the next Thing proposed in the Method, *viz.*

### H E A D III.

III. *To consider the Reason of the Banner's being given and displayed:—Because of the Truth.*

As was hinted in the Explication of the Words, this may be considered as having a respect either to God, or to us; to the *giving of displaying* of this Banner.

1<sup>st</sup>, It may be considered as having a respect to God's *giving* of this Banner: *Thou hast given a Banner because of the Truth*; and then we must view it as respecting the Truth of his Promise unto his Son,—wherein he has engaged that he shall have a Church, a Number of Witnesses to appear for him and his Cause, a Com-  
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pany of Soldiers to fight under his Banner, in all Ages, and that in spite of all that Hell and Earth can do to the contrary: *Psal. xxii. 30. 31. A Seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a Generation: They shall come, and shall declare his Righteousness to a People that shall be born, that he hath done this.* They will not only betake themselves by Faith to his *Righteousness*, and declare it to God as the Ground of their Confidence; but also declare it to others, even the People that shall be born: *Psal. xlv. 17. I will make thy Name to be remembered in all Generations: Therefore shall the People praise thee for ever and ever.* They will remember it believingly; and praise him, in a Way of putting in their Mite for having the Remembrance of it kept up in the Ages to come: *Psal. lxxii. 17. His Name shall endure for ever; his Name shall be continued as long as the Sun: And Men shall be blessed in him; all Nations shall call him blessed.* Other Names will rot, will be forgotten: But this Name, says *JEHOVAH*, shall endure for ever; it shall be favoury among his Retinue, his Army; and from one Generation to another it will be spoken of with Honour, and a Banner be displayed in defence of the glorious Prerogatives that belong to him, whose Name shall last like the Sun. So *Is. lix. 21. the Father says to his eternal Son, As for me, this is my Covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my Words which I have put in thy Mouth, shall not depart out of thy Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed's Seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.*



*ever.* Where he pawns his Faithfulness that there shall be a Succession of Christ's Seed; in all Generations he shall have an Army at his Command, and they shall have the same Spirit with their everlasting Father, the Captain of their Salvation; and the Effect of this will be, that his Words shall be in their Mouth, that they may speak for him, and for his Truths, in spite of all the Malice of Hell, by which the utmost Endeavours are used to get their Mouths stopped. So that the Faithfulness of God is engaged for Christ's having an Army in all Ages to fight under his Banner; and as the Accomplishment of his Promises to Christ, in the Church's darkest Nights *the Lamb may be seen upon Mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand,* his little Army, *having his Father's Name written upon their Foreheads,* Rev. xiv. 1. And his Faithfulness is also engaged for the Success of that Army, and their Victory over their Enemies: For *the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings; and they that are with him,* (who share in his Victory), *are called, and chosen, and faithful,* Rev. xvii. 14. And so a Banner is given to be displayed because of the Truth.

2dly, This may be considered as respecting the *displaying* of this Banner by us in our Stations; and then the Truth here is to be understood of that System of Truths revealed in the Word of God, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; which are the Word of Truth, and the Touchstone by which all Doctrines and Practices are to be tried, and to be received and

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approved, or rejected and disapproved, according as they agree thereto or disagree therefrom: *Is. viii. 20. To the Law and to the Testimony: If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.* This Word is the only Rule of Faith and Manners; and the Truth that we are to display the Banner for, is to be found there,—either in express Terms, or by plain and necessary Consequences from the express Words of Scripture; which is the same Thing: So we find our Saviour proves the Resurrection against the Sadducees, as a Consequence from what the Lord said to Moses at the Bush,—*I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,* Mark xii. 26. And as we would discourse a little more particularly upon this Part of the Text in this View, we would observe,—That the Banner is to be displayed for *all* Truth; and, That it is in a particular Manner to be displayed for the *present* Truth.

1. The Banner is to be displayed for *all* Truth. There is no Truth little, though some have distinguished between great and little Truths. Every Truth is a Beam and Ray from the Sun of Righteousness; it is as a Line meeting in Christ, the Centre of all divine Truth; and so there can be no denying of the Truth, but what he looks upon as a denying of him. Thus the *holding fast his Name, and not denying his Faith*, are the same Thing, Rev. ii. 13. And again, *the keeping his Word, and not denying his Name*, Chap. iii. 8. We deny not but there are Truths that lie nearer the Foundation than others, and so are of a greater Degree of Importance;

Importance; but none can be let go, without spoiling the Superstructure. There is a beautiful Chain of Truth in the Word; and if we deny one Truth, we take away one Link, and so break the Chain, and are ready to be led on to the quitting of this and the other Truth that stands so nearly connected with it. And as there is, on the other hand, a Chain of Error; when we embrace one, we are ready to be led into a Maze of Error and Absurdity ere we are aware. We therefore had need to take the Apostle's Advice,—*Hold fast the Form of sound Words, which thou hast heard of me, in Faith and Love which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. i. 13. Some, to palliate their undervaluing of Truth, have distinguished the Truths of God into Essentials and Circumstantials; and under this Head of Circumstantials, rank up a Number of God's valuable Truths, that they look upon as not worthy of making a Noise about and contending for. But there is no Truth circumstantial. Though we do not say, that the Belief and Persuasion of every Truth revealed is essential to Salvation; yet there is no known Truth but is essential to the declarative Glory of God, and is of more Worth than the Lives of all that ever breathed in God's Air; and therefore is well worth the contending for, though in a *Way of resisting even unto Blood*: And our appearing for what others may look upon as a little, a circumstantial Truth only, especially when it is called in question,—is necessary in order to our glorifying God upon the Earth. Christ was a valiant Witness for the Truth, and confirmed his Testimony with his Blood, as well as thereby made

Atonement for our Sins: And it is the Honour of his Disciples, to follow the Footsteps of their Lord and Master, the great Standard-bearer, boldly confessing the Truth, and every Part of it; and, as called thereto, sealing it with their Blood. So the Banner is to be displayed for *all* Truth.—But if it be inquired, more particularly, what are those Truths we are to display the Banner for? we answer, There are Truths respecting the *Doctrines* to be believed; Truths respecting the *Worship* to be received and observed; Truths respecting the *Government* and *Discipline* to be exercised in the Church;—and, Truths respecting *Christian Practice*, or the *Duties* to be performed by Church-members: For all which the Banner is to be displayed. We cannot enlarge upon these, without inroaching upon your Time; only a few Hints to each.

(1.) There are Truths respecting the *Doctrines* to be believed, for which the Banner is to be displayed; for these doctrinal Truths, among many others, *viz.* That God made Man upright, after his Image: Gen. i. 26. *And God said, Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeness. y 27. So God created Man in his own Image, in the Image of God created he him.* Eccl. vii. 29. *Lo, this have I found, that God hath made Man upright.*—That there was a proper Covenant entered into by God with Adam; in which he stood not as a private Person, but as a public Head, representing all his Posterity descending from him by ordinary Generation; according to Gen. ii. 16. 17. *And the Lord God commanded the Man, saying, Of every Tree of the Garden thou mayst freely eat: But*  
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*of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. Compared with Rom. v. 12. Wherefore, as by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned. 1 Cor. xv. 22. For in Adam all die.* Which plainly point out a federal Representation of all Mankind by the first Adam.

The Banner is to be displayed for the Truth concerning Man's Fall by the Breach of the Covenant of Works; and concerning original Sin, both imputed and inherent, with which all Adam's Posterity are chargeable, which is the Root and Fountain of all actual Transgressions: *Gen. iii. 6. And when the Woman saw that the Tree was good for Food, and that it was pleasant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the Fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her Husband with her; and he did eat. Chap. v. 3. Adam begat a Son in his own Likeness, after his Image. Rom. v. 12. By one Man Sin entered into the World;—Death hath passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned. Psal. li. 5. Behold, I was shapen in Iniquity; and in Sin did my Mother conceive me.—* The Truth concerning Man's utter Inability to help himself out of that Estate of Sin and Misery: *Hos. xiii. 9. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself. Rom. v. 6. When we were yet without Strength, in due Time Christ died for the Ungodly.—* The Doctrine concerning the making of the Covenant of Grace, between God the Father as the Party-contractor upon Heaven's Side,—and God the Son as the Party-contractor upon Man's Side,  
from

from all Eternity, for the Recovery of a certain Company of Adam's ruined Family: Psal. lxxxix. 3. *I have made a Covenant with my Chosen, I have sworn unto David my Servant.* Prov. viii. 23. says Christ, *I was set up from Everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was.*—This Truth, That God elected a certain Company of Adam's Family from all Eternity, out of his mere good Pleasure, and gave them to Christ to be redeemed by him; and that he represented them, and them only, in this Covenant-transaction: John xvii. 6. *I have manifested thy Name unto the Men which thou gavest me out of the World; thine they were, and thou gavest them me.* Eph. i. 4. 5. *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy, and without Blame before him in Love: Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will.*—The Truth concerning the Divinity of the Person of Christ, the Mediator between God and Man; being, though a distinct Person from the Father, yet the same God with the Father, the true and supreme JEHOVAH: John i. 1. *The Word was God.* I John v. 20. *His Son Jesus Christ; this is the true God and eternal Life.* Jer. xxiii. 6. *This is the Name whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*—The Truth concerning his actual Incarnation, that he might fulfil the Condition of the Covenant: Gal. iv. 4. *But when the Fulness of the Time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law: Assuming our Nature into a personal*



sonal Union with his divine Nature, that he might satisfy God in the same Nature that sinned; in whose Person these Natures are most strictly united, without any Mixture or Confusion, he being still *Immanuel, God with us*.—The Doctrine concerning his fulfilling the Condition of the Covenant, in fulfilling all Righteousness as the Surety of the better Testament; by the Holiness of his Nature, the Righteousness of his Life, and the Satisfaction and Atonement he made for Sin in his Death and Sufferings: According to what was prophesied of him, Dan. ix. 24. *Seventy Weeks are determined—to finish the Transgression, and to make an End of Sins, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness*. And what is recorded concerning his Birth, Life, and Death, by the Evangelists.

The Banner is to be displayed for the Truth concerning the objective *Extent* of the Death and Satisfaction of Christ, in its extending as far as, and no further than God's eternal Decree of Election, John xvii. 6. 19. *The Men which thou gavest me out of the World;—for their sakes I sanctify myself*. Extending as far, and no further, in its Destination as to its Objects, than those to whom it shall in due Time be certainly applied, Is. liii. 8. *For the Transgression of my People was he stricken*; compared with Psal. cx. 3. *Thy People* (which are the same with the People mentioned in the former Scripture) *shall be willing in the Day of thy Power*. Is. liii. 11. *He shall see of the Travel of his Soul, and shall be satisfied: By his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many*;  
for

for he shall bear their Iniquities. Where it is evident, that it was *their* Iniquities he bore who are *justified by his Knowledge*; that is, by the Knowledge of him, or Faith in him; and that there is a certain infallible Connection between Christ's sustaining the Persons of any in bearing their Iniquities, and the Justification of their Persons through his perfect Righteousness. Though in some Scriptures there are very universal Terms used, with respect to the Objects of Christ's Death; yet these must be viewed according to the Connection in which they stand, and compared with other Scriptures relative to the same Subject; from which it will evidently appear, that it is the Universality of the Elect of that World of which they speak. As there are universal Expressions in Scripture, with respect to the Atonement in Christ's Death, and the Purchase of Redemption thereby; so there are as universal Expressions respecting its Application; as when it is said, *And I, if I be lifted up from the Earth, will draw all Men unto me*, John xii. 32. *By the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life*, Rom. v. 18. *In Christ shall all be made alive*, 1 Cor. xv. 22. And if there be a Necessity of understanding the universal Expressions with respect to the former, of all Mankind,—there is the same Necessity with respect to the latter; and so we shall not only have an *universal Redemption*, but an *universal Salvation*, which they that stand up for universal Redemption themselves will not maintain. And indeed, unless it could be maintained, that Christ died for all Men so as to save them,—  
that

that Doctrine of universal Redemption, or of Christ's having died in some Sense for all, is but a heartless Doctrine, bearing nothing of Comfort in it to perishing Sinners. And besides, it must land us in the grossest Absurdities; while it must lead us either to a *frustrated* Redemption, and to say that Christ shed his Blood in vain and to no Purpose, as to the most Part for whom he laid down his Life,—who are to be eternally satisfying Justice in Hell for their Sins, notwithstanding of Christ's having satisfied for them: Or it must lead us to a *conditional* Redemption; and so the whole *Arminian* Doctrine of Man's Free-will, so opposite to the Doctrine of God's free Grace, must be introduced. Or if both these should be denied, then we must, according to this Scheme, inevitably land in alledging that Christ died intentionally to bring the most Part of those he died for under a greater Condemnation, and that in this he sees *the Travel of his Soul*; and so make his Death, as to the greatest Part of its Objects, to flow from the greatest *Hatred* instead of the greatest *Love*. Than which nothing is more contrary to the Word of God: *For God sent not his Son into the World to condemn the World; but that the World through him might be saved*, John iii. 17. It was because *Christ loved the Church, that he gave himself for it*, Eph. v. 25. And the *Travel of his Soul* is seen, not in the Condemnation of any, but in the *Justification of many by his Knowledge*, Is. liii. 11.

The Banner is to be displayed for the Truth respecting the Administration of the Covenant to Sinners of Mankind, in the everlasting Go-

spel; wherein Christ is set forth as a sufficient Saviour, suitable to the Case and Necessities of lost Sinners,—as clothed with all saving Offices, being the Prophet, Priest, and King of God's anointing and appointing,—and as such is offered to Mankind-sinners without Exception, to every one that hears the joyful Sound: John iii. 16. *For God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* Is. xlv. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the Ends of the Earth; for I am God, and there is none else.* Chap. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no Money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without Price.* Rev. xxii. 17. *Whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.* And here the Warrant to Mankind-sinners to believe, is founded. It is not founded upon the Destination of the Death of Christ for any in God's Decree, nor upon any Intention of his as to the Objects thereof in giving this Satisfaction; but upon the infinite Value of the Price paid by a divine Person in the human Nature, in which respect he stands equally related to the Family of Mankind, being God in their Nature; and upon the Exhibition of this Saviour and his Salvation to Mankind-sinners as such in the Gospel, as sufficient for them, and suitable to their Case; with the divine Authority in the Command, obliging them to receive him and believe on him for their Salvation; together with absolute Promises of Life and Salvation through Christ to Mankind-sinners



sinners as such,—the Possession of which Blessedness is to be obtained in the Way of believing. Thus it was that Peter's Hearers founded their Faith, Acts ii. while they were not told of any Destination of Christ's Death for them, but that this sufficient Saviour and his Righteousness was exhibited to them in the Word of Grace and Promise, *ψ* 38. 39. 41. *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ:—For the Promise is unto you, and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.—Then they that gladly received his Word, were baptized.* Thus the Apostle founded his Faith, 1 Tim. i. 15. *This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, of whom I am chief.* It is God's revealed, not his secret Will, that founds the Warrant for our Faith. But as to the Objects of God's electing Love, or those for whom Christ died, which is the same Thing, that belongs to his secret Will; and *secret Things belong unto the Lord our God, but those Things which are revealed belong unto us*, Deut. xxix. 29. As a Traveller's Warrant to make use of the Provision brought to his Hand, is not founded upon its being destined for him, and prepared with a View to him, and his knowing so much; but upon this, that Provision of an exact Suitableness to his Need is set before him, and he is invited to make use thereof: So neither is our Warrant to improve Christ and his Righteousness, founded upon this Righteousness being wrought out in our room and stead; but upon this, that *unto us a Son is given, whose Name*

is THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; that in the Gospel he *brings near this Righteousness*, that we may by the Hand of Faith take hold of it, and put it on, *Is. xlvi. 13.*

The Banner is to be displayed for the Doctrine concerning the Necessity of Faith for closing with Christ, and so becoming interested in him, and the Blessings purchased by his Death: For *we are saved through Faith*, *Eph. ii. 8.*; and *without Faith it is impossible to please God*, *Heb. xi. 6.* It is Faith that lays hold upon the Person of Christ, that matches with the Heir of Heaven; and so it is in the Way of believing we are interested in that Inheritance of which Christ is the prime Heir as God's First-born. The Fruits of Christ's Death cannot be intermeddled with, but by Faith. As it is by Faith only we are inflated in the Covenant of Grace, so thereby only can we receive Blessings as coming through the Channel of that Covenant; but the Fruits of Christ's Death can be conveyed in no other Channel but the Channel of this well-ordered Covenant.—All Mankind are under one of the two Covenants. They that are Strangers to Christ are under the Covenant of Works; and so even the good Things they enjoy come to them with the Curse of that broken Covenant: *Job xxiv. 18.* the wicked Man's *Portion* is said to be *curst in the Earth*. But nothing that Christ hath purchased, can be conveyed with the Curse upon it: So that none out of Christ can partake of the Fruits of Christ's Death; nor can ever any possess them, but in the Way of believing, and of enjoying Christ himself;



himself; for Christ and his Purchase can never be divided.

The Banner is to be displayed for the Truth concerning the Necessity of a Day of Power in order to work Faith in us, and thereby unite us to Christ: John vi. 44. *No Man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.*—The Truth concerning our Justification by Faith in the Righteousness of Christ, without the Works of the Law, Rom. v. 1. Gal. ii. 16. *Knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ.* Acts xiii. 39. *By him all that believe are justified from all Things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses.*—The Truth concerning our Sanctification by the Operation of the Spirit of Christ; the Beginning and Progress of which is the sure and infallible Evidence of the Person's Justification: 1 Cor. vi. 11. *Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* Rom. viii. 1. *they to whom there is no Condemnation, that is, are justified, being in Christ Jesus,*—do evidence it by *walking not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.*—The Truth concerning the Influence that the Doctrine of the Grace of God in Christ believed, has upon the Soul for its Sanctification: *For the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men; teaching us, that denying Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World,* Tit. ii. 11. 12.—The Doctrine concerning the Necessity of Holiness in Heart and Life, *without which no Man shall see the Lord,* Heb. xii. 14. Its Necessity,  
not

not as a Condition, or any meritorious Cause of our Salvation; but as an Evidence of our Gratitude unto God, and as a great Part of that Salvation obtained by his Grace: and so, the Necessity of experiencing the Power of the Doctrine of the Gospel, as indeed *a Doctrine according to Godliness*.

But we cannot insist upon the various Doctrines to be believed, for which the Banner is to be displayed. All the Doctrines revealed in the Word, are Truths for which the Banner is to be displayed; all the Doctrines concerning the Nature, Perfections, and Works of God; concerning the great Ruin by Sin, and the great Relief by Christ; concerning the Contrivance, Purchase, Application, and Consummation of Redemption, through our Lord Jesus.

(2.) There are Truths respecting the *Worship* to be received and observed in the Church, for which the Banner is to be displayed. For the Truths respecting the *Matter* of our Worship: That God is to be worshipped by the Ordinances of his own Institution in the Word; such as Prayer, Praise, reading, preaching, and hearing the Word; dispensing and receiving the Sacraments of his Appointment; religious Swearing, and the like; none having Power to appoint Ordinances or Means of Worship, but the Lord himself,—who alone *is our Judge, our Lawgiver, our King, and will save us*, Is. xxxiii. 22.—And not only for the Truths respecting the *Matter*, but the *Manner* of our Worship also: That he is to be worshipped with Grace in the Heart, by a Mediator, in such a Manner as he himself has appointed for going  
about

about the Duties of his Worship; rejecting all the Inventions of Men, either as to the Matter or Manner of our Worship, as being nothing but Will-worship: *In vain they do worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, Matth. xv. 9. To admit what they call significant Ceremonies of Mens Invention into the Worship of God, is to deny that Christ has dealt prudently in the Ordinances he has instituted, and the Directions he has given as to our Worship, as the great Lawgiver of the Church. It is observable, that, in the Reasons annexed to the second Commandment, God declares the Breakers of this Commandment *such as hate him*, which Expression we find not in any other of the Commandments; while yet they pretend the greatest Love to God, and Regard for his Honour; alledging, their inventing and proposing the Observance of such and such Things in our Worship, is for the greater Decency, Reverence, or the like. But as the Banner is to be displayed for the Purity of Doctrine, so also for the Purity of Worship.

(3.) There are Truths respecting the *Government* and *Discipline* to be exercised in the Church, for which the Banner is to be displayed. For this Truth, that Christ is the alone King and Head of his Church: *Is. ix. 6. Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder. Psal. ii. 6. Yet have I set my King upon my holy Hill of Zion. Eph. i. 22. And gave him to be the Head over all Things to the Church.* And therefore he is the alone Fountain of all Church Power and Authority; from him alone it is derived: *As my Father hath sent me,*

me, even so send I you, John xx. 21.——For this Truth, that Christ, as King and Head of his Church, has appointed Office-bearers in his House: 1 Cor. xii. 28. *And God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that Miracles, then Gifts of Healings, Helps, Governments, Diversities of Tongues.* Eph. iv. 11. *And he gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers.* The extraordinary Officers are ceased; but there are ordinary Officers, who are to continue in Succession in the Church till the End of the World, and who may expect his Presence in the Discharge of their Offices in all Ages: Matth. xxviii. 20. *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World. Amen.* And these are Pastors or Teachers, (there being no standing Office superior to that in the Church of Christ's Institution); and also Ruling Elders, and Deacons; as appears from the Scriptures above cited, compared with 1 Tim. v. 17. where there is an *Elder* spoken of, as an Officer in the Church distinct from the Pastor or Elder *that labours in Word and Doctrine*; and Acts vi. where we see the Deacon's Office also is of divine Institution, and a standing Office in the Church.——For this Truth, that Christ hath given to Church-officers the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: Matth. xvi. 19. and xviii. 18. *And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.* And that this was not spoken to Peter only,



only, but also to the rest of the Apostles equally with him, appears from the other Place cited, *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.* There is no Word of giving this Trust to the Civil Magistrate; but it is given to Church-officers, the Apostles and their Successors in Office to the End of the World, even the ordinary Office-bearers in the Church. Nor is it given to the Community of the Faithful; for then all were Rulers, and where were the Ruled? but to certain Officers of the Lord's Appointment, to bear Rule over them. There is the Key of Doctrine, which every Pastor has the Power of; having Authority to preach the Word, to dispense the Sacraments, and jointly to determine Matters of Faith: *Matth. xxviii. 20. Go teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* *1 Cor. xi. 23.*—And there is the Key of Government and Discipline, to be exercised by the Officers of the Church *in collegio*, Ministers and Elders met together in Christ's Name: *Matth. xviii. 17. 18. 20. If he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven:— For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.* So the Apostle speaks of a Power given to us for Edification, *2 Cor. x. 8.*—And so for this Truth, that there are Courts of Judgment appointed by Christ to meet in his Name, for ordering the Affairs of his House, particularly for the Exercise of Government and Discipline; as Sessions, Presbyteries, and Synods provincial,

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national,



national, or œcumenical, in a due Subordination: Which may be gathered from the Consideration of the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, &c. where different Congregations, which had their own Office-bearers, were under one Presbytery; and *Acts* xv. we find the Officers of different Churches meet in one Synod.—For this Truth, that these Judicatures have Power to inflict Censures upon them that are guilty of Error, either in Principle or Practice; as Admonitions, Rebukes, Suspension from the Sacraments, and Excommunication: And with respect to Church-officers, besides those Censures just now mentioned that affect them as Christians; to proceed against them by Suspension from the Exercise of their Office, and Deposition or Deprivation of the Office; as appears from *Tit.* iii. 10. *1 Tim.* v. 20. *Matth.* xviii. 17. 18. All which have been cleared by eminent Divines; and may be found laid down and proved from the Lord's Word, in the Form of Presbyterial Church-government agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and received by this Church as a Part of her Standards.—The Truth respecting the Government of Christ's House, is not to be looked upon as light and trivial; it nearly concerns the declarative Glory of God, and the Honour of Christ the King and Head of the Church. Christ himself particularly bore witness to his own kingly Office, when Pilate asked him, *Art thou a King?* *Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. To this End was I born, and for this Cause came I into the World, that I should bear witness unto the Truth,* *John* xviii. 37. And so he is said to have

have *witnessed a good Confession before Pontius Pilate*, 1 Tim. vi. 13. And for this many of his Servants and People, particularly in this Land, have *not loved their Lives to the Death*; but have boldly sealed a Testimony to the Truth concerning Christ's kingly Authority and royal Prerogatives, concerning the Government of his House, with their Blood.

(4.) There are Truths respecting Christian *Practice*, or the *Duties* to be performed by Church-members, for which the Banner is to be displayed: All which Duties are contained in the Precepts of the moral Law, which is a perfect Rule, and of perpetual Obligation. Our Saviour sums up the whole Law in two Commandments: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind: This is the first and great Commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*, Matth. xxii. 37.—40. The Law points out both our Duty to God, and to our Neighbour; and the Banner is to be displayed for Truth, in a Way of pointing out to Church-members those Duties required of them. And particularly it is to be displayed for these Truths upon this Head.—That the leading Duty required is Faith in the Son of God, which can never miss of Influence upon both Heart and Conversation: *This is the Work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent*, John vi. 29. *This is his Commandment, that we believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*, 1 John iii. 23. It is the leading good Work, without which we

can do no Work that is good and acceptable in the Sight of God. Faith unites to Christ, from whom our Fruit is found; Faith matches with this one Husband, *that we may bring forth Fruit unto God*, Rom. vii. 4.—For this Truth, that our Works and Duties must spring from a new Nature; for if the Tree is not good, neither are the Fruits: And so from a Principle of Faith in Christ, and Love to God,—and not from the Principle of Self-love; for while our Duties spring from this, we are but *empty Vines, bringing forth Fruit to ourselves*, Hos. x. 1.—For this Truth, that they must be directed to the Glory of God as their End,—seeking to have him exalted, and his declarative Glory advanced; for if *the Eye is not single*, however strict the Profession be, and however moral and blameless the Conversation, *the whole Body is but full of Darkneſs*. Though a Work be materially good, and commanded in the Law; yet it is not properly a good Work, unless it spring from a right Principle, and be directed to a right End. An unrenewed Man's Duties are but so many splendid Sins: *The Prayer of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord*, and so are all his *sacrifices*, Prov. xxi. 27. and xxviii. 9.—For this Truth,—that in going about the Duties which the Lord requires of us, either in the first or second Table of the Law, either toward God or toward our Neighbour, we must depend upon the Grace of Christ for our Assistance,—and upon the Righteousness of Christ as the alone Ground of the Acceptance, both of our Person and Performances, even the best of them, *Pſal. lxxi. 16. Eph. i. 6.*—The Church, particular

ly Church-officers, are to be concerned to have sound Doctrines maintained, a pure Worship observed, and a strict Discipline exercised in the Church; and to lay themselves out for having Holiness promoted among Church-members: faithfully displaying the Banner because of all the Truths respecting each of these, both doctrinally and judicially; and being ready to censure such as deviate from them in Principle or Practice, according as the great Lawgiver hath appointed; *having in a Readiness to revenge all Disobedience, when their Obedience is fulfilled*, 2 Cor. x. 6.—So the Banner is to be displayed for *all* Truth. But it was further observed, that,

2. The Banner is to be displayed, particularly for the *present Truth*. We read of the *present Truth*, 2 Pet. i. 12. and of the *Word of Christ's Patience*, Rev. iii. 10. That Truth which is presently opposed and run down, is the *present Truth*; which we are called, in a particular Manner, presently to assert, maintain, and defend, to display the Banner for. That is the *Word of his Patience*; as those who adhere to it are exposed to such Trials, that they need much Patience for suitably bearing them. Whatever is the present Truth, that should the Church especially display the Banner for: Be it Christ's being the true Messiah, as in the Days of his Flesh; be it his supreme Deity, as was the Case when the Arian Heresy prevailed, and as was the Case in this Land of late,—when it was impugned and denied; be it Christ's alone Headship over his Church, and the Government of his House,—as was the Case in the late persecuting



secuting Times in this Land, (and is much the Case at this Day; as Christ's alone Headship is denied, and the Government of his House run down); be it the People's Right to chuse their own Office-bearers; be it the objective Extent of Christ's Death, as at present: Whatever Truth it be that is presently controverted and opposed, that should we be especially established in; and that should be especially contended for. The Banner is most vigorously to be displayed, and there the Army are to take most special Care to stand their Ground, where the Opposition is hottest from the Enemy; lest they should prevail. When Truth is opposed, what are the Opposers doing? They are essaying with all their Might to have the Church robbed of her Treasure, of her Jewels, the Truths of Christ; but then especially are they to hold fast what they have,—and to evidence that this Character belongs unto them, *the Nation that keepeth the Truth*, Is. xxvi. 2. I go on,

#### H E A D IV.

IV. *To confirm the Doctrine; or, to shew, that a Banner given to be displayed because of the Truth,—is Matter of Praise to all the Well-wishers of Truth.* And that it is so, and that they will improve it as such, may appear from these following Considerations, *viz.*

1<sup>st</sup>, Considering, that it is an Evidence of the Lord's being among a People, being yet in a Land, where a Banner is given to be displayed because of the Truth. The Lord has taken up



up his Dwelling in his Church; he has said of Zion,—*This is my Rest, here will I stay, for I have desired it*: And how shall we know where his Church is? it is where the Banner is displayed for Truth. Though the *Enemy come in like a Flood*, yet when he meets with Opposition and Contradiction, the *Standard of a Testimony being lifted up*, it is a Sign that the Lord is there by his Spirit; for it is *the Spirit of the Lord that shall lift up a Standard against him*, Is. lix. 19. When a Church departs from Truth, that provokes the Lord to depart from them: Is. lix. 2. *Your Iniquities have separated between you and your God*; and among others of their Iniquities that had provoked him to leave them, this is one, *ψ 14. Truth is fallen in the Street, and Equity cannot enter*. But where Truth is maintained, where *the Faith once delivered to the Saints is earnestly contended for*, that is a Sign that the Name of that City, that Place, is *ЈЕХОВАН-ШАММАН*, *The Lord is there*; he is there, pleading the Cause that is his own. And what Ground of Praise is this, when there is any Evidence given that the Lord is yet in the midst of Israel; and that *Judah hath not been forsaken of her God, the Lord of Hosts, though their Land was filled with Sin against the holy One of Israel*?

2dly, Considering, that this is for the Glory of God, that the Banner be displayed because of Truth. It is for the Glory of the Father, for he is the God of Truth, and his *Eyes are upon the Truth*, Jer. v. 3. and upon all Professors, to see how they stand affected to, and how they lay themselves out for the Advance-  
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ment of Truth. It is for the Honour of Christ, his eternal Son, who is *the Truth*; every Truth being as a Line drawn from himself the Centre of divine Truth,—that, as has been hinted, we cannot let go the Faith without denying his Name. It is for the Glory of God the Holy Ghost, who is *the Spirit of Truth*, and is sent into the Church to *lead her into all Truth*. So that the Glory of the Three-one God is concerned in this. All the Wellwishers of Truth have the Glory of God much at Heart; it is the Thing they chiefly desire, to have the Burden of his Praise lifted up; they must surely then look upon it as Matter of Praise, and improve it as such, when a Banner is given to be displayed because of the Truth.

3dly, Considering the inestimable Value of divine Truth. How precious, how valuable the Truth is, cannot be told; it is so valuable, that we should buy it at any Rate, and sell it at no Rate, *Prov. xxiii. 23*. And so we are commanded *to contend earnestly for the Faith*, *Jude*  $\gamma$  3.; to contend as one in an Agony, striving for that which is of the utmost Value, the Loss of which would inevitably impoverish him. The Truth is the greatest Treasure that can be in a Land, among a People; so that it is the worst Thing that can fall out in a Land, to let Truth go: It is the worst Bargain a People can make, to sell it; whatever Riches, Honours, and pretended Peace they should get in exchange for it. But it is indeed a happy Thing, when there are found to take it by the Hand; when in a Land there is to be found a *Nation which keepeth the Truth*, among whom

a Banner is to be found displayed for Truth. And this cannot but be viewed as Ground of Thanksgiving, by all that love the Truth, and Zion's righteous Cause.

4thly, Considering, that hereby there is a faithful Testimony for Christ's Cause transmitted to Posterity. It is the Duty of the present Generation to have the rising Generation, the succeeding Race, upon their Heart; and to be laying out themselves for handing down to them the Truths of God: Psal. lxxviii. 5. 6. 7. 8. *For he established a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which he commanded our Fathers, that they should make them known to their Children: That the Generation to come might know them, even the Children which should be born; who should arise, and declare them to their Children: That they might set their Hope in God, and not forget the Works of God; but keep his Commandments: And might not be as their Fathers, a stubborn and rebellious Generation; a Generation that set not their Heart aright, and whose Spirit was not stedfast with God.* So the Command is, Psal. xlviii. 12. 13. *Walk about Zion, and go round about her: Tell the Towers thereof. Mark ye well her Bulwarks, consider her Palaces: And wherefore all this Diligence? That ye may tell it to the Generation following.* And the Promise is, Psal. xxii. 31. *They shall declare his Righteousness, to a People that shall be born.* They are not Friends to Posterity, that are Enemies to the Cause of Christ, and the displaying a Banner because of the Truth; as they are denying them the Means of the Knowledge

of Christ's Cause, and doing what they can, that they may be brought up in Ignorance of the Truth, and of what great Things the Lord hath done for us. But surely it is Ground of Praise, when the Lord enables his Remnant so to act,—as they may tell Posterity about his Works, his Cause; so as they may tell them, that *this God is our God for ever and ever*; that, by the Lord's blessing the Means, a Race may be raised up to praise him when we are gone. And however many should consent, for their Part, that the succeeding Generation be kept ignorant of these Things; yet we have Ground to rejoice, that the Lord will have them informed, will have the Testimony transmitted: And no fear he want Instruments; the Promise shall be accomplished, *This shall be written, or upon Record, for the Generation to come; and the People which shall be created, shall praise the Lord*, Psal. cii. 18.

5<sup>th</sup>y, Considering, that a Banner given to be displayed because of the Truth in a Land,—is not only an Evidence that the Lord is in that Land, but a Token for Good that he will not leave it. It is true, famous Churches have had their Houses left unto them desolate; and we dare not be too positive, but the Lord may yet unchurch us, as he has done others. But yet are there not some *Tokens for Good*; some Encouragements to hope, that however the Lord may shake us in these Lands, and dash us one against another, because of our Sins,—that he will not utterly cast us off for all that? While we consider the early Grant made to Christ, even from of old, from everlasting, of *the Hea-*  
*then*



then for his Inheritance, and the utmost Ends of the Earth for his Possession, Psal. ii. 8.; and his early taking Infeftment and Possession of them, in so soon enlightening them with the glorious Gospel, and early bringing them into Covenant with himself: When we consider his maintaining his Cause in them amidst the darkest Times, that there were still some Vestiges of his Work among us, something of a Standard lifted up, a Banner displayed, something of Contradiction to the Burial of his Cause; which he has been pleased to revive Time after Time, when brought very low,—many Time delivering us. And add to all this, the fervent Prayers of his Saints, of his Wrestlers in these Lands, that he would not utterly reject us and cast us off: *For he will regard the Prayer of the Destitute; he will not despise their Prayer,* Psal. cii. 17. And seeing it is such a Token for Good, surely the Wellwishers of Truth will look upon it as Matter of Praise, when a Banner is given to be displayed because of the Truth. I proceed,

## H E A D V.

V. To make some Application of the Subject, and that in a few Inferences.

From this Doctrine, we may see,

1<sup>st</sup>, That true Israelites are of a public Spirit: They are not only taken up about themselves and their own Salvation, but also about God's declarative Glory, about the Cause of Truth. Indeed true Religion begins at home, with a *What shall I do to be saved?* But where Grace is really implanted and led forth into Exercise,



that Person will not be neutral and indifferent about the public Cause: *No to them that are at ease in Zion,—that are not grieved for the Afflictions of Joseph*, Amos vi. 1. 6. Rightly-exercised Christians will indeed be grieved, when Truth suffers,—and when they that are minting to appear for it in a Way of displaying their Banners, are suffering: *They are sorrowful for the solemn Assembly, to them the Reproach thereof is a Burden*, Zeph. iii. 18. And they rejoice when Truth keeps the Field, when the Banner is supported and maintained; essaying to cast in their Mite for lifting up the Burden of his Praise, *In the Name of the Lord we will set up our Banners*, Psal. xx. 5.

2dly, We may hence infer, that the Lord will see to his own Work. *Thou hast given a Banner*; it is the Lord that gives it, that supports it, that gathers his Army about it, and enables to display it. The Work is not left in the Hands of Instruments, or it would soon cease; how easily would they be let and hindered in it, by the Opposition and Contradiction they meet with? But *I will work*, (says JEHOVAH), *and who shall let it?* Is. xliii. 13. He defies the Devil and all his Agents, however formidable they may appear, however many Banners they may display,—to let and hinder his Work: The Hand of JEHOVAH holds up the Standard. A Trinity of Persons are with the Church, to carry on the good Work there: Hag. ii. 4. 5. *Be strong and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts: According to the Word which I covenanted with you, when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: Fear ye*

ye not. These Words, according to, in the Beginning of *ψ* 5. are a Supplement; and without them it reads, *I am with you saith the Lord, the Word which I covenanted with you,* (which may point out Christ, often called the Word in Scripture), *so my Spirit remaineth among you.* The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is in the Church; for the Name of the City is, *The Lord is there.* Christ the Head of the Church is there; for *Zion's King is in her, her Counsellor is not perished;* he is there, the *Standard-bearer among ten thousand;* there to work,—*for my Father worketh hitherto, and I work,* John v. 17. And the Spirit is there; for, says Christ, *The Spirit of Truth, he shall abide with you for ever.* And seeing the Lord is in the Church, no doubt but he will maintain the Banner given, to the Terror of his Adversaries; making his Army victorious, while their Enemies shall faint and fall before him: Is. x. 17. *And the Light of Israel shall be for a Fire, and his holy One for a Flame: And it shall burn and devour his Thorns and his Briers in one Day.* And, *ψ* 18. *They shall be as when a Standard-bearer fainteth.* As the Pillar of Cloud, when it removed behind Israel, and so was between them and the Egyptians, was a Light to Israel, and Darkness to their Enemies the Egyptians; so when the Lord is a *Light* to his Israel, to his Army, to direct them and comfort them in his Work,—he will be as a *Fire and Flame* to burn up their Enemies, who are to him as *Briers and Thorns* before a devouring Fire. And the Work will be all his, and appear to be so; that it shall from that  
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Time be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought?

3dly, Hence see the Duty of the Watchmen upon Mount Ephraim, of Office-bearers in the House of God. They in a special Manner are to display a Banner because of the Truth, to defend it, to contend for it. And particularly, when any Truth is opposed, and that not only when gross Error in opposition thereto is plainly vented, but when in a more deceitful Way it may be secretly thrust at; then it becomes the Watchmen to give Warning from their glorious Captain, unto the Army of the Lamb, of their Danger,—and to set about a vigorous *displaying of the Banner because of the Truth* presently struck at and opposed. Heresies ordinarily *creep in unawares*, and under plausible Pretences too; as if the admitting this and the other Notion would tend more to solve this and the other Difficulty: And the Truth is, Error cannot well set up its Head without assuming some Dress of this Nature, because it cannot, like God's Truth, abide the Light. But when it is introduced under such Shams, and timely Notice is not taken by the Watchmen, and timely Warning given; the Lamb's Army are ready to be broke in upon, and many are ready to fall a Prey to Devourers. And seeing this is our Duty, as Office-bearers in the Lord's House, to display the Banner for Truth; there are several Things we had need to seek Acquaintance with, in order to our being fitted for the Performance of this our Duty.

1. We had need to seek the Knowledge of the Truth, as it is in Jesus; and for this End to be about Christ's Hand for his own teaching: *If so be*

*be* (says the Apostle) *that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the Truth is in Jesus*, Eph. iv. 21.; and, says Christ, John viii. 32. *Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.* We cannot suitably testify for what we do not know. And in order to this, our main Study should be the Truth, as it is contained in the Volume of God's Book, the Scriptures of Truth; daily searching them, and *trying the Spirits by them*: And withal seeking such a Knowledge of the Truth, as will have Influence upon our Hearts and Conversations.

2. We had need to seek the Faith of the Truth, without which we cannot well appear for it. There is a *receiving of the Truth that we may be saved*, which we had need to be acquainted with. If we have the Faith of the Truth, we will see its Glory and Excellency; such a Value and Preciousness of the Truth, as we will be ready to lose all rather than let it go. Mens light Thoughts of the Truth, flow from their Want of Faith.

3. We had need of Love to the Truth: There is to be a *receiving the Love of the Truth*, 2 Theff. ii. 10. Love to Christ is very necessary in his Ministers, and to the *Truth as it is in Jesus*. We are exhorted to *love the Truth and the Peace*, Zech. viii. 19. We are to love God's Truth, and cleave unto it at all Hazards; to love Jerusalem's Peace, and pursue it, in such a Way as may evidence our Love to the Truth.

4. We had need of Zeal for the Truth: And according to our Measure of Faith of and Love to the Truth, will be the Measure of our Zeal for it. Our Lord exhorts a coldrife lukewarm Church,



Church, Rev. iii. 19. *Be zealous therefore, and repent.* The Want of Zeal is complained of in the People of old, *They are not valiant for the Truth upon the Earth,* Jer. ix. 3. The Apostle tells us, *it is good to be zealously affected in a good Cause;* and a better Cause never can be than the Cause of Truth. But in order to all this,

5. We had need to seek the Spirit of Truth. Need we the Knowledge of the Truth? Then *he is the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, in the Knowledge of Christ,* Eph. i. 17.; and it is promised of him, *he shall teach you all Things.* Need we the Faith of the Truth? Then he is the Spirit of Faith, 2 Cor. iv. 13. *We having received the—Spirit of Faith, have believed, and therefore spoken.* Need we Love to the Truth? Then he is the *Spirit of Love, and of a sound Mind,* 2 Tim. i. 7.; he kindles the Fire of Love in the Soul to Christ and his Truth. Need we Zeal for the Truth? Then he that kindles the Fire of Love in the Heart, makes it flame in a holy Zeal. He is the *Spirit of Power,* as in the forecited Scripture, 2 Tim. i. 7.; and Magnanimity, to enable us to make a zealous and bold Appearance for Christ's borne-down Cause: And as we may lay our Account with Trials in a Way of cleaving to the Truth, we need the Spirit as a Comforter to support and carry through, in a Way of rejoicing in Tribulation. Well, as we need the Spirit, it is Ground of Encouragement that he is promised, and the Accomplishment of the Promise may be expected: John xiv. 16. 17. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may*



may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth.—He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. Chap. xv. 26. 27. When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness. Chap. xvi. 7. 13. If I depart, I will send him unto you. When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth.

4thly, Hence see the Warrantableness of the Contendings of a Remnant at this Day for Truth. When the Cause of Christ was buried in the Land, and Grave-stones of Acts of Parliament and of Assemblies were rolled to the Door of the Sepulchre, and all Means for reforming them proved abortive; what a sad Situation had we been in, had not the Lord led out a Remnant in his Providence, *without the Camp, bearing his Reproach*, to take Truth by the Hand; and *given them a Banner*, enabling them to make some Mints at *displaying the same because of the Truth*? And the Lord has been leading them on to appear for Truth, from Time to Time, when opposed upon different hands; for the Doctrine, the Worship, the Discipline and Government of the Lord's House,—to the Maintenance of which these Lands are solemnly sworn, however they have *broken the Bands, and cast away the Cords*. And the Lord's thus maintaining a Testimony for him, while it is the Butt of the Malice of the Generation, and Christ and his Cause espoused by a Remnant,—is a *Sign that is spoken against*; this is a Sign that the Lord is loath to give us up, and a Token for

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good that he will keep by the Land, that he *will turn again, and have Compassion upon us,—though notwithstanding the Land should be laid desolate for the Fruit of our Doings.*

5thly, Hence see Ground for Exhortation, both to them that are destitute of the Truth, and to the Wellwishers of Truth.

1. As to the first,—we exhort such to seek Acquaintance with Christ, who is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*; for if ye have not Acquaintance with him, you but live in Error, and must go down *to the Grave with a Lye in your right Hand.* We exhort you to believe the Truth of the Threatenings of the Law, wherein God is speaking awfully to you; so as to fly into Christ, in whom you will see the Truth of these Threatenings evidently manifested, in their having been executed upon him, as the Surety of the Covenant,—to the full. Believe the Truth of God's Words of Grace and Promise in the everlasting Gospel, which are published to you as a Ground for your Faith and Hope. By rejecting the Grace of God, and misbelieving his Record, his Words of Promise, which are *to you and to your Children*, you will come to know to your sad Experience the Truth of his awful Threatenings; as you must lie under the Curse of a broken Covenant eternally: *He that believeth not, shall be damned.* O then believe this Truth, that *thou hast destroyed thyself*; that thou canst not help thyself, that all the Creation of God cannot help thee. Believe this Truth, that God hath given *his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life*; that he hath given to you  
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in the Word of Salvation *eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.* Mint, in a Dependence upon the Grace that is in the Promise, at receiving an offered Christ; and resting upon him alone for Salvation, as he is fully and freely offered to you in the Gospel.

2. As to them that are Wellwishers to Truth, we would exhort such, (1.) Seek to know more and more of the Power of divine Truth believed, for the cleansing and purifying of your Hearts and Conversations. Many *detain the Truth in Unrighteousness*; they have the Truth in their Understandings by a Head-knowledge of it,—but it is incarcerated there, it is *held and detained* there as in a Prison, incompassed with a Guard of corrupt Affections,—that it has not Entrance into the Heart, and so has no Influence for changing the Heart and Conversation. The Truth received into the Heart, will have a purifying, a sanctifying Efficacy thereupon: *Sanctify them through thy Truth; thy Word is Truth*, John xvii. 17. And this will appear in the Life, by a *walking in the Truth*; and so commending Religion to others, bringing up a good Report of Christ and his Cause to your Neighbours about you: *Let your Light so shine before Men, as others seeing your good Works may glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* (2.) We exhort you to be valiant in your Stations for the Truth. You are called to assemble about the Standard of Zion's King, to appear for Christ and his Cause; putting in your Mite for keeping up his Remembrance, and transmitting to Posterity a Testimony for the Truths of Christ: *Stand fast in the Faith, quit you like*

*Men, be strong*, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. (3.) Keep your Eye upon the great Standard-bearer, the Lord Christ, the *Captain of the Lord's Hosts*; who appears *with his Sword drawn in his Hand*; who is possessed of infinite Wisdom to direct his Army, and of infinite Power to protect them, and will undoubtedly bring them off the Field victorious, yea more than Conquerors, over their inward Enemies,—the Corruptions of their Hearts, and all their outward Opposers, when once their *Warfare is accomplished*. Many err, in looking more to them that are about the Standard, than to the Standard itself, and the glorious Standard-bearer; but let your Eyes be directed this Way, and thus will you be animated and encouraged to appear for his Cause.— And let it be your Concern, to be found with Christ and about his Standard, though all were to forsake him but yourselves. (4.) Pray for the Advancement of Christ's Interests, for the supporting of the Banner given to be displayed because of the Truth: *Prayer shall be made for him*, Psal. lxxii. 15. Pray for them that are called, in an eminent Manner, to display the Banner: *Brethren, pray for us. Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*. Pray for a witnessing Synod, that the Lord may *reveal to them the Abundance of Peace and Truth*, and may unite them to one another in the Truth; that the Promise may be accomplished,—*Thy Watchmen shall lift up the Voice, with the Voice together shall they sing; for they shall see Eye to Eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion*, Is. lii. 8. (5.) Sing both of Mercy and Judgment. We have Ground to sing of Judgment, in respect of what

what the Lord has been justly provoked to. We may join with the Church in the Context here, *Thou hast cast us off; thou hast scattered us; thou hast been displeased: Thou hast made the Earth to tremble; thou hast broken it. Thou hast shewed thy People hard Things; thou hast made us to drink the Wine of Astonishment.* But at the same time, we are to bless God for undeserved Mercy in the midst of deserved Wrath, in still maintaining his Cause; and so to sing of Mercy as well as Judgment, in a Way of acknowledging to his Praise,—*Thou hast given a Banner to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed because of the Truth. Selah,*

F I N I S.



*Speedily will be published,*

The PROCEEDINGS of the ASSOCIATE SYNOD, at *Edinburgh*, in *March* and *August* 1755, concerning the Reverend Mr *Thomas Mair* Minister of the Gospel at *Orwell*; in the Case of his dissenting from the Act of Synod, April 18. 1754, containing an Assertion of some Gospel-truths, in opposition to *Arminian* Errors upon the Head of *Universal Redemption*.

With an INTRODUCTION and APPENDIX.

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