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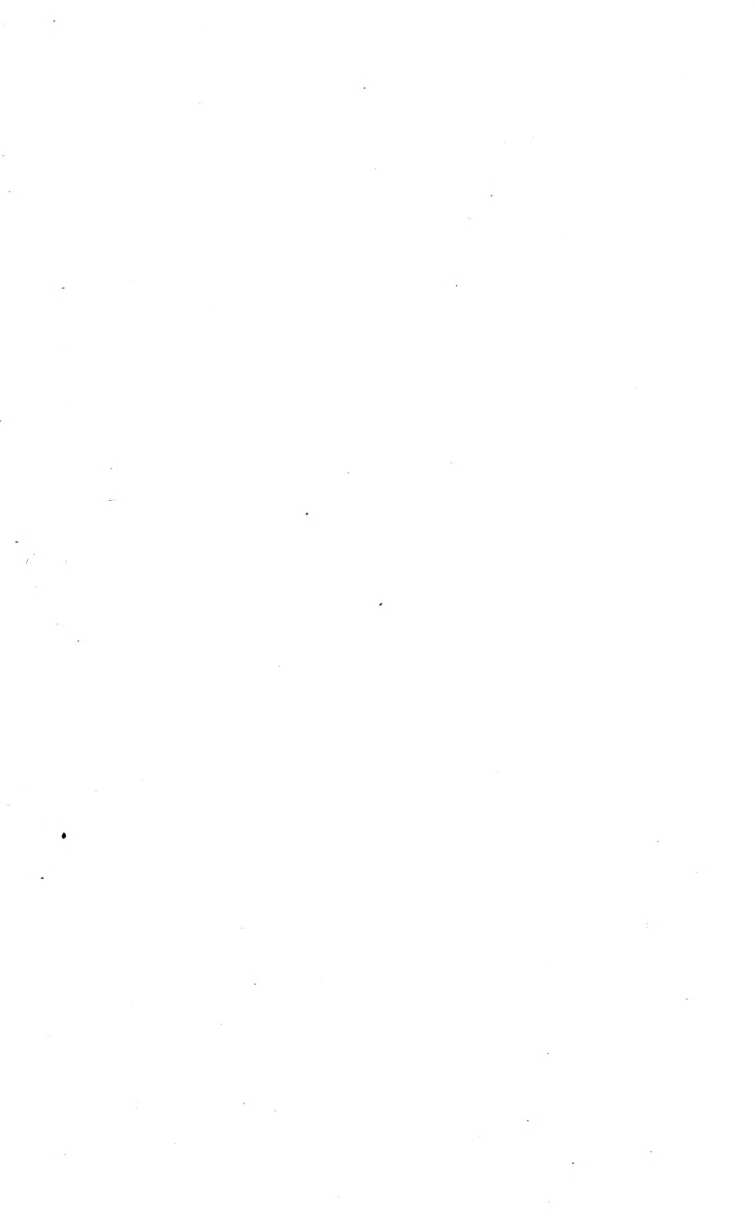


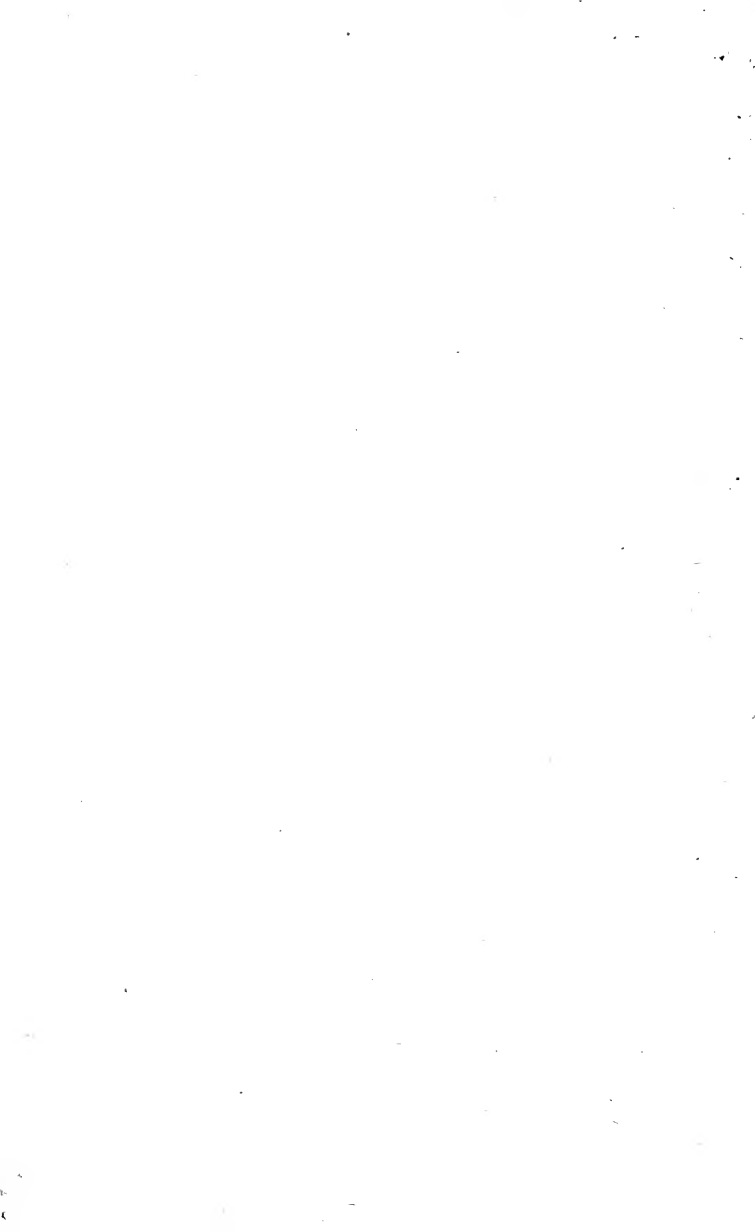
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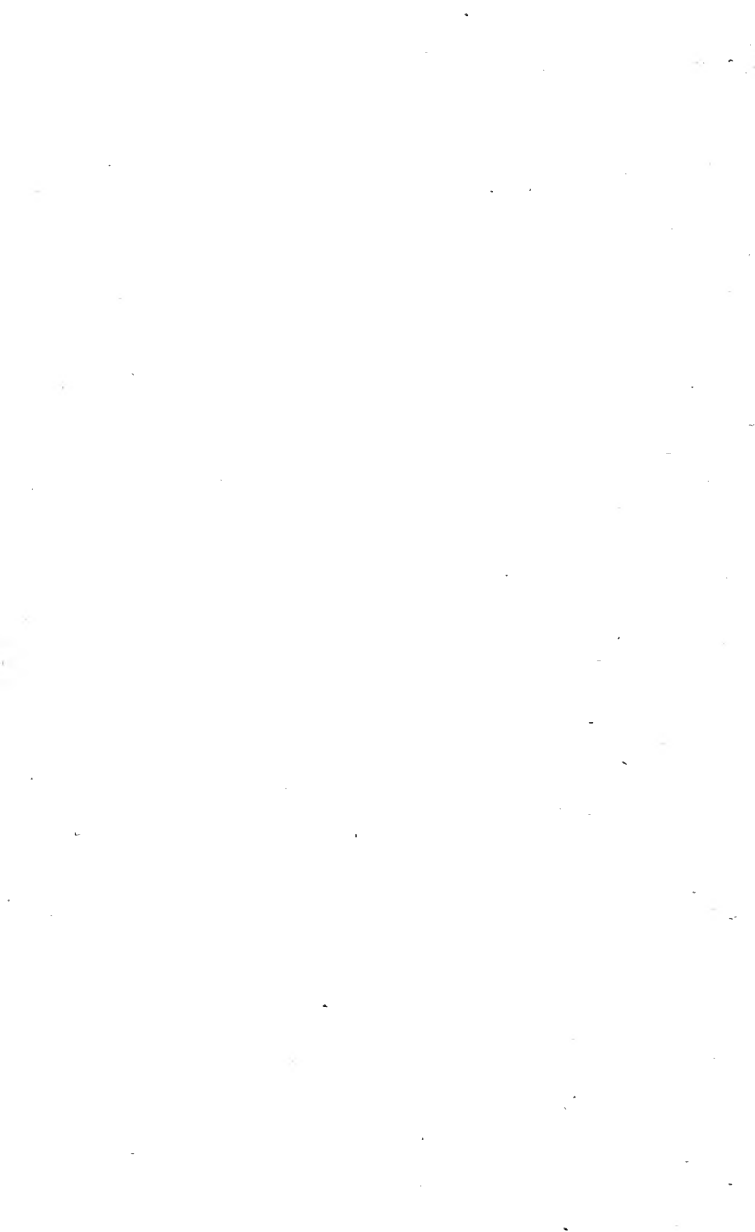
ADAMS

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A
C O L L E C T I O N
O F
THEOLOGICAL TRACTS,
IN SIX VOLUMES.
By RICHARD WATSON, D.D. F. R. S.
LORD BISHOP *of* LANDAFF,
AND
REGIUS PROFESSOR *of* DIVINITY *in the* UNIVERSITY *of*
CAMBRIDGE.

V O L. VI.

C A M B R I D G E,
Printed by J. ARCHDEACON Printer to the UNIVERSITY;
for J. & J. MERRILL, Cambridge; T. EVANS, London;
and J. & J. FLETCHER, Oxford.

M. DCC. LXXXV.

THE

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N. 6.

C O N T E N T S.

Eight Charges delivered to the Clergy of the Dioceses of Oxford and Canterbury. To which are added, Instructions to Candidates for Orders. By THOMAS SECKER, LL.D. late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury. *Lond.* 1769. p. 1.

The Visitation Charges which have been published, at different times, by the Bishops of the Church of England, relative to the pastoral duties of the Clergy, are many and good; and these by Archbishop Secker deserve as much attention as the best of them. *Herbert's Country Parson; Burnet's Pastoral Care; Ostervald's Lectures on the Exercise of the Sacred Ministry*; not to speak of *Chrysostom* and the other Ancients, who have written on the subject, may be very usefully read by serious minded men.

A Treatise concerning the Causes of the present Corruption of Christians, and the Remedies thereof. By J.F. OSTERVOLD. Translated into English by C. MUTEL. 2d Ed. 1702. P. 115.

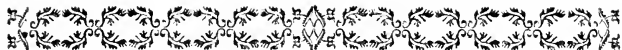
This book was highly esteemed by Bp. Burnet; and indeed all the writings of Mr. Ostervald have been very favourably received in the world in general.

The Design of Christianity: or, a plain Demonstration and Improvement of this Proposition, viz. That the enduing Men with inward real Righteousness, or true Holiness, was the ultimate End of our Saviour's coming into the World, and is the great Intendment of his blessed Gospel. By ED. FOWLER, D.D. Bishop of Gloucester. 3d Ed. *Lond.* 1699. P. 314.

This work was first published in 1676, there have been several editions of it since; but not so many, as, from the worth of it, might have been expected. *Lucas' Practical Christianity; Scott's Christian Life; The whole Duty of Man; Holy Living and Dying*; and *Thomas a Kempis, of the Imitation of Christ*, are works of a similar tendency. Bp. Burnet, in speaking of such kind of books, very truly says, "by the frequent reading of these books, by the relish that one has in them, by the delight they give, and the effects they produce, a man will plainly perceive, whether his soul is made for divine matters or not; what suitableness there is between him and them; and whether he is yet touched with such a sense of religion, as to be capable of dedicating himself to it."

Appendix.

The first of these is the fact that the
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T H E
C H A R G E
O F
T H O M A S Lord Bishop of OXFORD,
T O T H E
C L E R G Y of his D I O C E S E,
I N
H i s P R I M A R Y V I S I T A T I O N 1738.



Reverend Brethren,

I AM very sensible, that you cannot meet together on this occasion, without making deep reflexions on the loss, which you have suffered, for the publick good, by the removal of a pastor, whom the experience of so many years hath taught you to esteem and honour so highly. It is your farther unhappiness, that he is succeeded by a person, very unequal to the care of this conspicuous and important diocese. But your humanity and your piety will, I doubt not, incline you, both to accept and to assist the endeavours of one, who can assure you, with very great truth, that he is earnestly desirous of being as useful to you all, as he can; and seriously concerned for the interests of religion, and of this church. Would to God there were less need of expressing a concern for them, than there is at present!

Men have always complained of their own times: and always with too

much reason. But though it is natural to think those evils the greatest, which we feel ourselves; and therefore mistakes are easily made, in comparing one age with another: yet in this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age; that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation; is daily spreading through every part of it; and, bad in itself as any can be, must of necessity bring in most others after it. Indeed it hath already brought in such dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crimes, in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. And God knows, far from stopping, it receives, through the ill designs of some persons, and the inconsiderateness of others, a continual increase. Christianity is now ridiculed and railed at, with very little reserve: and the teachers of it, without any at all. Indeed, with respect to us, the rule, which most of our adversaries appear to have set themselves is, to be, at all adventures, as bitter as they can: and they follow it, not only beyond truth, but beyond probability: asserting the very worst things of us without foundation, and exaggerating every thing without mercy: imputing the faults, and sometimes imaginary faults, of particular persons to the whole order; and then declaiming against us all promiscuously, with such wild vehemence, as, in any case but ours, they themselves would think, in the highest degree, unjust and cruel. Or if sometimes a few exceptions are made, they are usually made only to divide us amongst ourselves: to deceive one part of us, and throw a greater odium upon the other. Still, were these invectives only to affect us personally, dear as our reputations are and ought to be to us, the mischief would be small, in comparison of what it is. But the consequence hath been, as it naturally must, that disregard to us hath greatly increased the disregard to public worship and instruction: that many are grown prejudiced against religion; many more, indifferent about it and unacquainted with it. And the emissaries of the *Romish* church, taking the members of ours at this unhappy disadvantage, have begun to reap great harvests in the field, which hath thus been prepared for them by the labours of those, who would be thought their most irreconcilable enemies.

Yet, however melancholy the view before us appears, we have no reason to be discouraged: for let us take care of our duty, and God will take care of the event. But we have great reason to think seriously, what our duty on this occasion is; and stir up each other to the performance of it: that where-ever the guilt of these things may fall, it may not fall on our heads. *For it must needs be, that offences come: but wo to that man, by whom the offence cometh* (a). Our grief for the decay of religion might be attended with much comfort in regard to ourselves, could we but truly say, that no faults or infirmities of ours had ever given advantages against it. But though, God be thanked, we are far from being what our adversaries would represent us; whose reproaches perhaps were never less deserved, than now when they are the most violent: yet, it must be owned, we are not by any means, even the best of us,

what

what we ought to be. And the present state of things calls loudly upon us, to correct our mistakes, to supply our deficiencies, and do all we are able for the honour of God, and the happiness of mankind.

If we can be unconcerned now, we have neither piety nor common prudence in us. And if we are concerned in earnest, we shall be very desirous, both to avoid all wrong methods of shewing it, and to make use of all right ones.

Complaining of our superiors for those evils, which perhaps they cannot prevent; or complaining of them with disrespect, for what we may apprehend they could prevent, would both be undutiful and imprudent conduct: would give our adversaries joy, and do our cause harm. Indeed to beg earnestly of God, that he would direct the hearts of those, who preside over the public welfare; and humbly to represent to them, on all fit occasions, the declining state of religion, the importance and the means of preserving it; these things are unquestionable duties. But then we must always approve ourselves, at the same time, conscientiously loyal both in word and deed; reasonable in our expectations; sincerely grateful for the protection, which we are assured of enjoying; and duly sensible, that every thing of value to us, in this world, depends on the support of that government, under which we now live. We cannot be good men, if we are bad subjects: and we are not wise men, if we permit ourselves to be suspected of it.

A second proper caution is, That to speak unfavourably of liberty, religious or civil, instead of carefully distinguishing both from the many abuses of them, which we daily see; or to encourage any other restraints on either, than public utility makes evidently needful; can only serve to increase that jealousy, which being in former ages grounded too well, hath been most industriously heightened, when there never was so little pretence of ground for it; that the claims of the clergy are hurtful to the rights of mankind. It concerns us greatly to remove so dangerous a prejudice against us as this: not by renouncing those powers, which the Gospel hath given us; for we are bound to assert them: but by convincing the world, that they are perfectly innocent; and avoiding all appearance of assuming what we have no right to: by shewing our abhorrence of tyranny, especially over the consciences of men; and satisfying them fully, if possible, that *we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, the Lord; and ourselves, their servants for his sake* (b). Then, with respect to the privileges, that we derive from human authority: as, on the one hand, receding from any of them without cause is only inviting fresh encroachments, and giving needless advantages to such as will be sure to lose none: so, on the other, straining them too far is the likeliest way to destroy them all at once: and both our usefulness and our security depend very much, on our appearing plainly to desire nothing inconsistent with the common good; to have the truest concern for all reasonable liberty, and to be zealous only against licentiousness and confusion.

Thirdly, If we should be tempted to oppose profaneness, by encouraging the opposite extreme of superstition: this also would be unjustifiable in itself; would have bad effects upon as many as we might mis-

lead; and give great opportunities to all that should see them misled, either of accusing religion, or exposing us, as corrupters of religion. Not that we are to give up inconsiderately, whatever some persons are pleased to charge with superstition: for there would be no end of concessions at that rate: but only to avoid encouraging any thing, that can be justly charged with it; and then we shall stand upon sure ground. For nothing can be more unjust, than those imputations of it, which our adversaries are so fond of throwing, some upon Christianity itself, others on the doctrine and worship of that church, of which, through God's merciful Providence, we have the happiness to be members.

Another very pernicious error would be, if we should think to serve our cause by intemperate warmth in it. Christian zeal indeed is a duty, that never was more needful, and never less shewn. But passion will do no good. If expressed against those, who are indifferent about religion, it will turn them into enemies: if against the enemies of religion, it will make them yet more vehement enemies. Besides, the extravagant things, that men say and attempt against us and our profession, are not always designed injuries; but frequently the effects of misrepresentations, and prejudices, that have imperceptibly taken hold on persons, who otherwise mean tolerably well. Now mildness to such as these, is but justice: and to all others, it is prudence. Railing is the province which our adversaries have chosen: and let us leave it to them. For whatever success they may meet with that way, as indeed they excel in it, we shall meet with none: but only make the spirit of Christianity be misunderstood and ill spoken of, by our own want of it. Therefore, how injuriously soever we may be treated, let us return neither injurious nor harsh treatment for it: nor endeavour to mark out those persons for objects of popular hatred, who are ever so unwearied in labouring to make us so. Yet, at the same time we must never court irreligious men by wrong compliances; never contribute to increase their power of doing harm; never desert our duty, either for fear of them, or favour from them. But then let us defend both religion and ourselves, with that fairness and decency, as well as courage, which becomes our function: acknowledge ingenuously whatever can be alledged against us with truth, only claiming equitable allowances; and where charges are untrue, yet use mild expostulations, not reproaches; and try to shame our opposers by the reasonableness of what we say, rather than exasperate them by the vehemence of it. They indeed have little cause either to complain or to triumph, if, under such gross provocations as they give, our temper sometimes fails: but we have great cause to do our utmost, that it fail not.

And if undue severity of speech must be forborn towards professed enemies; much more to those, who may, for aught we know, design themselves for friends. Indeed, when it is evident, that men only put on a pretence of wishing well to Christianity, or the teachers of it; and, whilst they affect to charge us with uncharitableness for questioning their sincerity, would despise us for believing them: there we must be allowed to see what plainly appears; and to speak of them, both as adversaries, and unfair ones. Or when doctrines, whatever the intention of propagating them be, are inconsistent either with the whole or any part of our religion; it is no uncharitableness, but our duty, to lay open the
falseness

falsehood and the danger of them. Nay, supposing only the legal establishment of religion, or some branch of it be attacked; yet the attempt may both be injurious enough to us, and detrimental enough to the public, to deserve a vigorous opposition. But to shew passion and bitterness in any of these cases; to take pleasure in making mens mistakes or designs thought worse than they are; to judge harshly of them with respect to another world, or expose them to ill usage in this; to refuse them due allowances for human infirmity, or be more backward to own their merits, than to see their faults: such behaviour, instead of promoting truth, will prejudice the world against it; will give unbelievers dreadful advantages, and for ever prevent that union amongst Christians, which would procure us, above all things, the esteem of men, and the blessing of God.

From these improper methods of supporting religion, let us now proceed to the proper ones. And they will naturally fall under the general heads of our instructions and our lives.

Giving instruction requires knowledge. And therefore, as a competent degree of it is justly expected of persons, before they enter into holy orders: so, when they enter, the care of making a continual progress in it is solemnly promised by them, and covenanted for with them. What may be a very good beginning, is by no means a sufficient stock to go on with; and even that will lessen, if no pains be taken to increase it. Continued application then is a duty of importance. Persons of lower abilities and attainments are in danger, without it, of being useless and despised: and they, who set out with greater advantages, are bound to endeavour at doing, in proportion, greater services to the church of God. Without exception therefore, all who are engaged in so serious an employment as ours, if they have any regard either to their duty or their character, must take care, not to be more remarkable for their diversions, than their studies; nor indolently to trifle their time away, instead of employing it to good purposes. And though most parts of learning will be useful to us, and all parts ornamental; yet we must be sure to remember, what we have been solemnly admonished of, that no attention to any thing else, ought ever to draw us away from the pursuit of such knowledge, as is properly theological. For to excel in other things, and be deficient in that, cannot but cast a grievous reflection; either on us, for not studying what we profess; or on our profession, as having little in it worth studying. Our principal business therefore must be, to obtain a thorough acquaintance with the Christian faith: first the grounds, then the doctrines of it. And the previous qualifications for attempting this are, a due knowledge of the rules of right reasoning, and of the moral and religious truths which nature teaches; of the state of the world in its earlier ages, and in that when Christianity first appeared. These preparations being made, the great thing requisite in the next place is a diligent search into the holy Scripture. For there it is, that both the authentic system of our belief, and the chief evidence for it, are exhibited to our view. Scripture therefore, above all things, the Infidel endeavours to ridicule; the mistaken Christian, to wrest in support of his errors: and if we desire, either to confute them, or to satisfy ourselves; our only way must be, to understand it well. For

which end it is quite necessary, that we make the original language, at least of the New Testament, familiar to us: and were that of the Old more commonly studied, the advantages would be very considerable.

In order to see clearly, on what ground our belief stands; together with the sacred volumes themselves, the writings of such learned persons, as have proved their authority, and vindicated their accounts of things, must be carefully read; and attentively compared with those objections against them, which have been revived of late, dressed up with so much art, and spread abroad with so much diligence. For in our present circumstances we are always liable to be attacked: and consider, what an unhappy triumph it would afford, should we be found unprovided of a rational defence. It is very true, the general evidence, which we have for our faith, is abundantly sufficient of itself, to overbalance many difficulties concerning it, and ever so many cavils against it. But yet our being unqualified to give more particular answers, where they can be given; as indeed there are few cases, where they cannot; may often prove a great reproach to us, and a great stumbling-block to others.

Next to the grounds of religion, the doctrines of it, especially the more important and disputed ones, ought to be studied, with such diligence and impartiality, as may best discover to us the nature of every opinion, and the force of every argument: that so we may neither load Christianity with what doth not belong to it: nor betray, instead of defending it, by giving up what doth; but faithfully *keep that which is committed to our trust* (c), both entire and unmixed. To secure this great end, we must ever adhere strictly to the word of God, fairly interpreted by the help of all such means as Providence hath given us; and carefully avoid, on the one hand, fondness of novelty: and on the other, overgreat reverence of antiquity, especially such as comes short of the earliest. But against the former of these, it is peculiarly needful to caution the rising generation; whom the rashness of youth, and the petulant spirit of the present age, too often hurries into a strange vehemence for any imagination, which they have happened to take up; and prompts them to fly out against established doctrines, without having always the patience even to understand them. Such therefore should be exhorted to learn a proper degree, both of silence and suspense, till cooler thought, and farther inquiry, make them fitter judges of things. But besides those controversies, to which this caution chiefly relates; that between the Papists and us deserves at present to be well studied, by such of you, as live in the neighbourhood of any. For seldom have they shewn more zeal or more artifice than of late, in their attempts of making proselytes. And therefore it is of great consequence, that we provide ourselves against them, with a sufficient knowledge of their real doctrines, their most specious pleas, and the proper answers to them. Another subject, with which we are concerned to be well acquainted, is what relates to the government and worship, discipline and establishment of our own church. Different parts of our ecclesiastical constitution are frequently censured, by different sorts of persons, with very different views: though indeed the

the most opposite of them have appeared, for some time, unaccountably disposed to unite against us; and believers to join with Infidels in using their Christian brethren ill. It may therefore be of great use, to inform ourselves diligently concerning every thing of this nature, which is spoken of to our prejudice; and be always ready to shew the genuine state of the case, with mildness and fairness. But no controversies, however needful, must be suffered to divert our attention from what is of all things the most needful, the study of practical religion, and of the common duties of life. These are the things, which mankind are most apt to fail in, and most concerned not to fail in: and therefore spending much time upon them, obtaining a thorough insight into them, and having a deep sense of them, is the very foundation of doing good, both to others and to our own souls.

A competent provision of knowledge being supposed, the next thing is communicating it to those who are under our care, in such manner as their circumstances require.

The proofs of religion, both natural and revealed, all men should be taught, and especially at present, in the most intelligible and convincing manner. As for the objections against either: such as it may be supposed they have thought or heard of, should be distinctly answered; but the rest obviated only, as occasion offers. For to enter into them farther, would be mispending time. Next to the truth of religion, they should have its importance laid before them. The necessity of a moral life most men will own in general terms: only what they are pleased to call so, is often a very immoral one, both with respect to their fellow-creatures, and the government of themselves. But regard to piety is strangely lost, even amongst persons, that are otherwise tolerably serious. Many have laid aside all appearances of it: and others, who would seem to keep them up, do it with evident marks of indifference and contempt. It should therefore be industriously shewn and inculcated, that an inward sense of love and duty to God, founded on just conceptions of him, and expressing itself in frequent acts of worship, constant obedience and resignation to him, is in truth *the first and great commandment* (d), the principal and most important of moral obligations. But then, besides those instances of piety, which reason requires of us, there are others, founded on relations equally real, and consequently deserving equal regard, enjoined by revelation. The utmost care therefore ought to be used, considering the present disposition of the world, to convince men of what moment the doctrines and duties of the Gospel are. To make reason sufficient for nothing in religion, is to overturn every thing. But to insist on its insufficiency for many most valuable purposes, which revelation is fully sufficient for, and on the necessity of observing whatever God hath thought fit to command, this is doing but common justice, though a very reasonable piece of justice, to the doctrine of our blessed Saviour, and the authority of our Maker.

When once men are brought to understand the value of Christianity, the next thing is, to give them a proportionable solicitude for it: to make them observe, how visibly the belief and practice of it decay, and how dreadful the consequences must be and are: to shew them, that religion

ligion is not the concern of the clergy merely, but the common concern of all men; the great thing, on which public and private happiness depends in this life, as well as eternal felicity in the next: that therefore, if they have any value for these important interests, they must take the necessary means of securing them: their children, their servants and dependants must be diligently watched over and instructed; private devotion must be practised, family-worship revived, and the service of God in the church regularly and seriously attended upon. For laying aside these things hath almost banished religion from amongst us: and nothing, but restoring them, can bring it back. Piety is indeed seated in the heart: but to give it no vent in outward expression, is to stifle and extinguish it. Neglecting the public exercise of religion, is destroying the public regard to it: and teaching men to despise their own form of religion, is enough very often to make them despise it under any form.

Great pains have been taken by our adversaries to give the world an ill opinion of religious instruction: and we must take equal pains to give them a good one of it; by representing to them, both the natural influence it hath, and the Divine authority that enjoins it. But after all, the only effectual conviction will be that of experience. And therefore the chief point is, to endeavour that men may feel the benefit of our teaching: feel at least, that it is their own fault, not ours, if they do not become the wiser, the better and happier for it. To this end, we must all dwell often and strongly on the great duties, and great failures of duty, in common life: first explaining the obligations of religion so as that they may be practised; then insisting on it, that they must: entering into the particulars of each with such plainness, that every one may clearly see his own faults laid before him; yet with such prudence, that no one may so much as imagine himself personally pointed at: and taking the strictest care, that no part of what we say may seem in the least to proceed from our own passions, or our own interests; but all appear evidently to flow from a true concern for the good of those that hear us. Diligent consideration, what our subject and our several characters will bear us out in, must direct us, when to give our judgment with diffidence, when to lay stress upon it: in what cases to *exhort with all long-suffering* (e); in what, to *rebuke with all authority* (f). But whichever we do, neither our language should be florid, nor our manner theatrical: for these things only raise an useless admiration in weak persons, and produce great contempt in judicious ones. Nor yet on the other hand, should our expressions be mean, or our behaviour lifeless: but both must be suitable to the employment we are upon; both be such as come naturally from the heart of the speaker, and therefore will naturally move that of the hearer.

To this our public teaching it will be a great help, and indeed a valuable part of it, if we perform the several offices of our excellent liturgy devoutly and properly: neither with an irreverent precipitation, nor a tedious slowness; neither in a flat and languid manner, nor yet with an affected liveliness, or a vehemence ill-placed or over-done: but so as
may

(e) 2 Tim. iv. 2.

(f) Tit. ii. 15.

may best express the sense and the importance of what we read ; and, by shewing our own attention to it, engage that of all around us.

Besides our general instructions, it is very needful, that we give the youth under our care, in particular, an early knowledge and love of religion, that may abide with them ; and stand the trials, to which their riper years will of course be exposed. I hope you are all diligent in that most useful work of catechizing : and have done your utmost to prepare for confirmation, those whom you present to me. And I earnestly recommend it to you, that the good impressions, which may well be supposed to have been made upon their minds at this season, be not suffered to wear off again ; but be improved into settled habits of religion and virtue, by still farther exhortations, and leading them, as soon as possible, to the holy communion. But, though all the youth deserve our peculiar attention ; yet if any of them be educated in charity-schools under our inspection, for these we should think ourselves still more nearly concerned, than for the rest ; and, by first taking care, to have them taught whatever is proper, and nothing else, then making known the good management they are under, put an end to those accusations, of their learning idleness and pride, superstition and disloyalty ; which may have been, sometimes one of them, sometimes another, in some degree deserved ; but have been carried with a wicked indolence most shamefully beyond truth, and lessened the credit of this excellent institution, even with many good persons, to the great detriment of Christianity.

Another very useful method of spreading the knowledge of religion, and teaching men a serious regard to it, is by distributing, or procuring to be distributed, such pious books, especially to the poorer sort, as are best suited to their capacities and circumstances. For there is a great variety of them to be had : and at so very low prices, that much good may be done this way to considerable numbers at once, in a most acceptable manner, for a trifling expence.

But nothing will contribute more to make our public instructions effectual, than private conversation, directed with prudence to the same end. The better we are known to persons, the greater influence we may hope to have upon them : and the better we know them, the more distinctly we shall see how to make use of that influence to good purposes. By representing proper truths, at fit times, with a modest freedom, we may very much abate the prejudices of men, who have any fairness remaining, both against religion and ourselves : at least we may prevail on them, for the sake of public order and example, to keep within the bounds of decency ; and so prevent their doing harm, if we cannot make them good. Persons, that err in particular points of doctrine, friendly discourse may shew us what led them into their mistakes, and enable us to lead them out again. Such as dissent from our church-government and worship, talking amicably with them, and behaving in the same manner towards them, if it doth not immediately bring them over, may however bring them nearer to us, both in judgment and affection. Such as are faulty in their moral conduct, serious and affectionate remonstrances, given in private and kept private, and joined with a tenderness to their characters in public, may often do a great deal towards reforming them : and sooner or later, the seed thus sown may spring up in their hearts, and
a produce

produce happy fruits. We should not indeed press upon persons, when there is no other prospect than that of provoking them : but we ought to watch all opportunities, whilst there is any hope left ; and not only make it our endeavour to convert the mistaken and vicious, but stir up the negligent to serious thought, and the good themselves to more eminent goodness. Especially such persons of rank and influence, as we find well disposed, these we must earnestly excite to appear and give countenance to the cause of religion, ever remembering that awful declaration of our blessed Lord : *Whoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels (g)*. We must convince them of the urgent necessity there is, for interposing in behalf of piety and virtue : and suggest to them the means for engaging with success in this excellent employment. Yet must we never spend so much of our attention on the higher part of the world, as to give the least suspicion of neglecting the lower ; whose number is so much larger, whose dispositions are usually so much more favourable to religion, and whose eternal happiness is of equal importance to them, and ought to be of equal concern to us ; but we must prove we are in earnest in our work ; by making it our care, as it was our Master's, that *the poor have the Gospel preached to them (h)*. And one opportunity of preaching it with singular advantage, both to the poor and the rich, is when sickness brings near to them the view of another life. At some times indeed the sick may be incapable of attending to exhortations : at others they may be endangered by them : and at all times great prudence is requisite, to avoid the extremes, of terrifying or indulging them too much. But, provided due caution be used in these respects ; laying before them what they ought to be, and reminding them to consult their own consciences what they have been, is a most likely method of exciting in them such affections and resolutions at that season of recollection and seriousness, as, through the blessing of heaven, may produce the happiest effects.

To these excellent offices therefore we must all of us cheerfully apply ourselves, each in such degree as his station requires. If they do require pains, if they do take up time, if they are inconsistent with agreeable amusements, and even interrupt useful studies of other kinds ; yet this is the business which we have solemnly chosen, and the vows of God are upon us : it is the most important and most honourable, it ought to be the most delightful too, of all employments : and therefore we have every reason not to seek the means of evading our duty, but of fulfilling it ; and each to *take the oversight of the flock of God*, committed to him, *not by constraint, but willingly (i)*. For if we only just do what we can be punished by our superiors for neglecting, we must neither expect success nor reward.

But then to secure either, the chief thing requisite is still behind : that ~~our~~ own tempers and lives be such, as we say those of other persons should. For if we, who teach religion, live, or suffer our families to live, with little or no sense of religion, what can we possibly expect,
but

(g) Mark viii. 38.

(h) Matt. xi. 5.

(i) Pet. v. 2.

but that men will improve so palpable an advantage against us to the utmost: will argue, that we believe not our own doctrine; and therefore it deserves no belief: or, we practise not our own precepts; and therefore they cannot be practised? Thus we shall increase that infidelity and wickedness, which our business is to oppose. Too much of it will be really owing to us: and the whole will be laid upon us. The enemies of religion will have the best pretence in the world to ruin us: and the friends of it will grow unconcerned for us, and ready to give us up to them. But, were these consequences not to follow, still very bad ones must follow. Men, irreligious or vicious themselves, cannot be hearty in opposing irreligion and vice: they cannot do it with boldness, if they were hearty: and could they be ever so bold, it must sit much too ill upon them, to have any good effect. Wrong-minded persons will be furnished with the most plausible excuse imaginable for disregarding them intirely: and the rightest-minded persons that ever were, cannot, if they would, regard them as they ought. This will be the case, even with respect to their public teaching: and as for private admonitions, they will seldom have the face to venture upon them, and never succeed in them: whereas every word, that comes from an exemplary man, hath great weight; and his bare example is most valuable instruction of itself. But, were a bad life not to hinder at all the success of our ministry; yet we must remember, it will absolutely hinder the salvation of our souls: and subject us to that *severer punishment, of which he may well be thought worthy, who, teaching others, teacheth not himself, but through breaking the law dishonoureth God* (k).

Nor is it sufficient by any means for us to be guilty of no vice. This is small praise, for one of our order. We are bound to be patterns of the most diligent practice of virtue, and the strictest regard to religion: and we shall never make others zealous for what we ourselves appear indifferent about. It is very true, that, peculiarly in our case, the generality of the world both expect and find fault, quite beyond reason: and doubtless they are much to blame in doing so. But then surely we are no less to blame, if, when we know the severity, with which our conduct will be examined, we do not watch over it with equal severity ourselves; and take the only way to be looked on as good men, that is, being such undeniably. And whoever hath a due sense of this obligation, will conscientiously *abstain*, not only *from all evil*, but *all appearance* of it too (l). Such a one, for instance, far from ever offending against temperance, will be noted for it: and think the imputation of being *mighty to drink wine* (m) almost as infamous, as that of being overcome by it. Far from being guilty of indecency in his behaviour or discourse, he will keep at a distance from every thing liable to the construction of it. Far from being remarkable for luxury and delicacy in his manner of living or appearing, he will be sure to preserve himself, on all occasions, at least as remote from indulgence, as he is from austerity. And though he will never disgust the persons, with whom he converses, by a gravity affected or ill timed: yet he will be equally careful, never to expose himself,

by

(k) Heb. x. 29. Rom. ii. 21, 23.

(l) 1 Thess. v. 22.

(m) If. v. 22.

by a lightness of carriage unbecoming his function ; nor let any thing be a part of his character, much less a distinguishing part, that can only tend to lower it. For we can never be useful, if we are despised : and we shall be despised, if we will give opportunities for it. Even they, who seem well pleased with us, will think meanly of us inwardly ; and perhaps of the whole order, for our sakes.

Yet at the same time, we shall be greatly mistaken, if we aim to avoid contempt by haughtiness : which will only add hatred to it. Our rule therefore must be, to express, in every thing, condescension to the lower part of the world, without being improperly familiar ; and respect to the upper, without being servile : recommending ourselves at once to the love and esteem of both, by a mild kind of dignity and ingenuous simplicity, kept up through our whole behaviour. Mildness of temper is the duty of every man : but especially required of us (*n*) ; and absolutely necessary, both to our preserving regard, and doing service in the world. Therefore, whatever provocations we meet with from those, amongst whom we live, as indeed we often meet with great ones, it neither belongs to our character, nor will be for our interest, to take offence and express resentment ; but by prudence and patience to *overcome evil with good* (*o*) For we shall often do it this way, and never any other. Instead of being engaged in enmities of our own, it should be our endeavour to compose the differences of other persons : not by intermeddling in their affairs, when we are not called to it ; but by laying hold on every fit opportunity given us, for disposing them to a mutual good opinion, where there is room for it ; or at least, to mutual good-will. Too many occasions indeed for friendly interposition, our unhappy party-disputes furnish us with, had we no other. Entering into these with vehemence, and that injustice which never fails to accompany vehemence, is what all men should avoid : but we, who must caution them against it, should avoid it with uncommon care : should religiously pay that respect to every one, which is their due, especially to our superiors ; think well of mens actions and designs, unless we have evident cause to think otherwise ; judge with modesty, where perhaps we are not qualified to judge ; and whatever our opinion be, preserve our behaviour inoffensive : give the least provocation, that may be, to bad men of any side ; and act in such manner, as may gain us, if possible, the united esteem of good men of all sides. For theirs is the friendship, of which we ought to be ambitious. Familiarities with profane and vicious persons, beyond what necessary civility, or a real prospect of reforming them requires, will, whatever we may promise ourselves from their favour or interest, always discredit and weaken us in general ; and much oftner prove hurtful, than advantageous, to any of us in particular. But to cultivate the good opinion of the wise and virtuous, to recommend ourselves to their protection, and, whatever else they may differ about, engage their common zeal in the common cause of religion ; this will procure us both security and honour, and every way promote the great design of our profession.

Another point, on which our character will not a little depend, is our
being,

(*n*) Matth. x. 16. 1 Tim. iii. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 24.

(*o*) Rom. xii. 21.

being, in a reasonable degree, disinterested. A very large proportion indeed of the clergy have too much cause to endeavour at bettering their circumstances : and it is barbarous treatment, to accuse them for it, instead of pitying them. But over-great solicitude and contrivance for advancing ourselves will always make impressions to our prejudice, let our condition be ever so low : though deservedly much stronger impressions, in proportion as it is higher. We shall be thought to have no attention, but that, of which we discover too much : and the truth is *we cannot serve two masters* (p). Nor will it be sufficient, that we avoid the charge of immoderately desiring more ; unless we avoid also that of selfishness, in the management of what we have already : a matter, in which it is very difficult, and yet very important, to give no offence. We are bound, both to those who belong to us, and those who shall come after us, to take a proper care of our legal dues : and preserve them faithfully from the encroachments of such, as tell us very truly, that we ought not to be worldly-minded ; but forget what is equally true, that they themselves ought not to be so. But then the strongest reasons of all kinds oblige us, never to make unjust or litigious claims ; never to do any thing, either hard or rigorous, or mean and fordid : to shew, that we desire always the most easy and amicable method of ending disputes ; and whatever method we may be forced to take, never to let any thing force us into the least degree of unfairness, passion or ill-will ; but endeavour, by all instances of friendly behaviour, to win, if possible, upon the person we have to do with ; at least to convince every body else, how very far we are from intending wrong to him, or any one.

And nothing will contribute more, to acquit us from the suspicion of being selfish in our dealings with other persons ; than approving ourselves charitable to the poor : a virtue which becomes us so extremely, and is so peculiarly expected from us, and will give us so valuable an influence ; that we should willingly straiten ourselves in almost any thing besides, that, to the full proportion of our abilities, we may abound in giving alms. And together with this, would we but, each in his station, take the best care we can to see justice done them in that provision, which the law hath intended for them, it would generally prove a much more considerable benefaction, than all that we are able to bestow on them of our own.

To the above-mentioned instances of right conduct we must always add, what will render them very engaging, the occasional kind offices of good neighbourhood ; with a decent hospitality also, if our circumstances will permit it : and then, notwithstanding the censures of those, who complain that we are of little use, and endeavour to make us of none, we may surely well hope to do service to God, and be esteemed of men : especially if, together with so exemplary a behaviour towards others, we are friendly and compassionate, candid and equitable amongst ourselves.

Great injustice, I am satisfied, is done us on this head : and many groundless accusations brought confidently against us, by persons, who neither enquire into facts, nor consider circumstances. But there are

few

few things, in which it concerns us more, to clear ourselves where we are innocent, and to amend ourselves where we are faulty. For so long as we are thought in the world, either insolent to our inferiour brethren in general, or void of generosity and pity to such of them as we employ; we must not expect to receive better treatment, than we are understood to give. And if we are believed to be chargeable, beyond other men, with mutual bitterness and vehemence, when any kind of controversy rises amongst us; this too is a character, so very different from that which ought to be ours, that the utmost care should be taken to guard against it. Not that we are obliged, either to speak of or behave to men of bad lives, or bad principles, as if they were good ones, because unhappily they belong to our order. Making no distinction would be on all accounts wrong: and making a proper distinction will be very useful. But then we should never think worse of our brethren, than evidence forces us; never publish our ill opinion, without sufficient reason; nor exceed, when we do publish it, the bounds of moderation: we should be ready to shew them all fitting kindness, even whilst they continue blameable; and receive them back with the most charitable tenderness, when they return to their duty. For there is no manner of need, that we should give either so much advantage or so much pleasure to the adversaries of religion, as to let them see those, who should be the joint-defenders of it, engaged in domestic wars: and bringing such charges, and raising such prejudices, one against another, that it is hard to say, whether believing or disbelieving our mutual accusations will make the world think worse of us. Our blessed Lord therefore, after reminding his Disciples, that *they were the salt of the earth*; were designed, by the purity of their doctrine and example, to keep others from corruption; and after giving them that prophetic warning, which we shall find men zealous to fulfil, that *if the salt have lost its savour, it shall be cast out and trodden under foot* (q); resuming the same figure at another time, concludes his exhortation thus, *Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another* (r).

To these things, Brethren, if we have any concern for the interests of religion or our own, we must always industriously attend; but especially in such times, as by no means admit of negligence or mismanagement. Yet vain will our best endeavours be, unless we constantly add to them our fervent prayers, that God would enable and strengthen, both us, and all that serve him in the Gospel of his Son, to perform our duty with faithfulness and success. For *we are not sufficient to think any thing of ourselves: our sufficiency is of God* (s). What therefore we ought, every one of us, to beg of him at all times, let us all at present jointly address to him for, in the comprehensive and expressive words of our public service.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified; receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all estates of men in thy holy church; that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen (t).

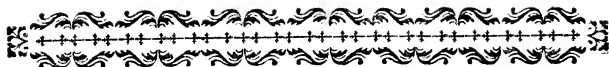
(q) Matth. v. 13.

(s) 2 Cor. iii. 5.

(r) Mark ix. 50.

(t) Second Collect for Good Friday.

A C H A R G E



A
C H A R G E

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY of the DIOCESE

OF

O X F O R D,

In the YEAR 1741.



Reverend Brethren,

WHEN I had first the pleasure of meeting you, being very much
W a stranger, I could only lay before you such general admonitions
as appeared to be seasonable in this unhappy age of irreligion
and libertinism. But having now obtained a fuller acquaintance with
things, chiefly from your Answers to my printed Enquiries, which have
given me many reasons to esteem and respect you; I shall at present de-
scend into some farther particulars: and considering you, not merely as
ministers of the Gospel at large, but as ministers of the several parishes
in which you officiate, remind you of some plain directions for your do-
ing it more successfully: which I shall deliver with less diffidence, and
you

you will receive with greater regard, for their being chiefly such as have been often recommended with good effect on such occasions as this.

I begin with one of the lowest in appearance, but not the least important of ecclesiastical employments: catechizing the children under your care.

The catechism consists of the fundamental articles of Christian faith and practice. Without learning these we know not so much as what it is we profess to be; and there is great danger that unless persons learn them at first, they will never learn them thoroughly: but only pick up from what they hear or read, unconnected and sometimes ill grounded notions, that will never unite into a complete or a consistent form of sound doctrine: as I apprehend we have had too much experience. The Rubric therefore requires, *that every person learn the catechism before his confirmation*: and the 59th Canon, *that every Incumbent shall examine and instruct the young and ignorant of his parish in it for half an hour or more every Sunday*. Every second Sunday had been appointed before: but that I suppose was judged afterwards insufficient. Not that a strict observation of this rule was probably expected, during the winter season, in the generality of country parishes, or where the children being few were more easily taught. But plainly it was intended, that how much time soever was needful to do this work well, should be faithfully employed in it. I thank God, there are very few places in this Diocese, and I hope there will soon be none, where catechizing is omitted. But I observe that in many it is practised only during lent. Now I should apprehend that the summer season would in general be much more convenient both for the minister and the congregation. But at least the space of a few weeks is by no means sufficient to fix the knowledge of their Christian duty so firmly in the minds of young people, but that in the many months which pass from the end of one lent to the beginning of another, a great part of it will be to learn again. Therefore whenever this exercise is begun, it should be continued much longer: and whenever the constant repetition of it is left off, it should be occasionally resumed for a Sunday or two, at proper distances of time.

Another defect in some places is, that barely the words of the catechism are taught without any exposition. Now the very plainest expressions in it will need to be varied into others that are equivalent: else children will too often learn nothing but the sound: and unless this danger, which is a very great one, be guarded against, you will have spent both their pains and your own but to small purpose. Besides, all sciences have their terms, which must be interpreted to beginners: and some of those in the catechism are figurative ones; very prudently used, as they comprehend in a little compass much meaning, and lead to the understanding of the same figures in Scripture; but undoubtedly used on purpose to be explained: without which they are liable to make either no impression or a wrong one. And farther still, a system so short as to be learnt by heart, must have need, were it ever so clear, to be enlarged on; the proofs of its truth, the connections and tendency of its doctrines, the use and extent of its precepts to be shewn: and therefore since the Canon with great reason enjoins, not only that you examine, but instruct the children in their catechism, I hope you will think this a very needful

needful part of that instruction. As to the manner of it, that may be different, not only in different places, but in the same at different times. Sometimes a continued discourse of some length may be requisite: as it will lay before the adult part of your parishioners a methodical summary of Christian doctrine; which they often want very much for themselves, and will thus be enabled to teach something of to their children, after they have heard it together from you.

Sometimes a cursory exposition of the more difficult expressions may deserve the preference. But asking the children questions, relating to each part, and procuring them to learn texts of Scripture confirming each, will be always beneficial. The words of the catechism itself may be very usefully broken into shorter questions and answers: to which others may be added out of any one of the many good expositions that have been made public. Only you should endeavour as soon and as much as you can to make this a trial and improvement of the understanding as well as the memory of young people, by asking such things as they should reply to in words of their own; making that easy to them in every possible way. And indeed, if many of your questions were formed to be answered merely by affirming or denying, it would be a very good method: and there is an exposition drawn up in that manner.

I am sensible that some clergymen are unhappily obliged to serve two churches the same afternoon: who may therefore plead, that they have scarce ever time to hear the children repeat their catechism, much less to explain it to them. And God forbid that any needless addition should ever be made to their burthen. But as I am sure they will be desirous of doing what they are able, in a matter of this importance, so I should hope that in the longer days, at each of their churches alternately, they might hear the catechism repeated one Sunday and expound part of it another, or hear only part of it repeated and expound that, or find some way to prevent the intire omission of so necessary a duty. And if these can do any thing of this kind, there is no doubt but others may easily do more.

But a farther hindrance which I fear you complain of too justly is, that parents and masters are negligent in sending their children and servants; and the latter especially are both unwilling and often ashamed to come. Now the Canon doth indeed make provision for punishing such. But persuading them would be much happier. And surely in so clear a case, well timed and well judged arguments, if persisted in, must do a great deal. The example of their equals or their betters, if you have any under your care that are wise enough to set a good one; or however that of your own families, may help very much: and such little rewards of good books, or other encouragements as you can give or procure for them, it may be hoped, will completely prevail with them. At least such as think they are either too old or too considerable to say the catechism themselves, may be greatly improved by hearing others repeat, and you explain it.

But in some few places it is pleaded, that the children cannot read, and their parents either cannot or will not get them taught, and therefore the foundation for their learning the catechism is wanting. But surely some person might be found, within a moderate distance from

every place, to whom parents might be induced, at least if something were contributed towards it, to send their children to be instructed thus far. Or at the worst, they who cannot read might easily by degrees learn so much as the catechism by heart: especially as the three main parts of it are in every Sunday's prayers. The incapacity of reading was almost general at the time of the reformation: yet even in those days the clergy were able to teach first parents and householders, then by their means children and servants, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments: and afterwards the rest of the catechism. Now since that gross darkness hath been so far enlightened, it cannot be impracticable to dispel the remains of it.

After due instruction follows confirmation: an appointment derived down from Apostolical practice; and of such acknowledged usefulness that in the times of confusion, a hundred years ago, when bishops were rejected, some of their adversaries took upon them to perform this part of their function: and within these few years the church of *Geneva* hath restored it in the best manner their form of church government will admit, and added an office for it to their liturgy. In our own church the ancient esteem of this institution is, generally speaking, so well preserved, that I hope the desire of being confirmed may not a little strengthen that of being instructed, as the only way to it. And yet I must observe, that the numbers from some parishes have been in proportion very small. This may not have arisen from any neglect in the minister: but as it ought to incline me to make the opportunities of confirmation as convenient as I am able; so it ought to incline you, agreeably to the nature of your function, and the express direction of the 61st Canon, to use your best endeavours, that your parishioners may gladly take those opportunities. Yet I must intreat you to endeavour at the same time, that none be brought, but those who, to speak in the language of the Rubric, *are come to years of discretion*, who have learnt, not the words only, but, *in a competent degree*, the meaning of what was promised for them in baptism; who can say with seriousness and truth, (what surely else they ought not to say at all,) that *in the presence of God and the congregation they ratify and confirm the same in their own persons*; and who therefore are likely to have useful and lasting impressions made on them by this solemnity. Undoubtedly some arrive at this capacity sooner than others, and therefore I have mentioned the age of fourteen, not with a design of absolutely tying you down to it; but as being, for the most part, full early enough; and that, where you see it requisite, you may, without giving offence yourselves, oppose my order to the indiscreet forwardness of parents; whom however, I hope, it will make easy, to assure them, as I give you authority, that so long as it pleases God to continue my health and strength, confirmations shall be frequent in every part of this Diocese. I must also desire that you will carefully instruct those whom you do bring, in the whole nature of the institution, and particularly in this, amongst other more important points, that they are never to be confirmed any more than baptized a second time: that you will direct them to make the proper answers audibly through the whole of the office, which many of them seem to have no notion of, though it is so necessary in the nature of the thing, and tends so much both to fix their attention,

tion, and to give the solemnity a decent and edifying appearance. You will caution them likewise not to crowd forward and incommode each other, using this argument for one, that the whole number who come in at the same time, will be dismissed at the same time also: and lastly you will press it strongly upon their minds, that what they promise at their confirmation, they are to remember and keep to their lives end. I have already desired of you, on these occasions, a list of such as you judge qualified; that so the numbers and persons may be known: of this you would do well to keep a copy yourselves, and if it were written alphabetically, both you and I should be able to consult it upon the spot more easily. For the abovementioned Canon, the 61st, plainly directs your attendance along with your parishioners; to take especial care (for so the words run) *that none be presented but such as you know are fit.* And as your being present to approve or disapprove must needs increase your influence and authority amongst your people; it must likewise make the discharge of my duty so very much easier and more useful, that I beg you will never let me be without your assistance in this work, as you shall never be without mine in any thing. And for this purpose when confirmations are on a Sunday, which is the time I shall usually pitch upon, for the convenience of the people, excepting at the places of my visitation, you may omit for that day the morning or the evening prayers as you see occasion. I have not indeed hitherto been able to effect, what would greatly shorten your labour, calling up your several parishes in their order separately. But I shall be very glad to do it, as soon as ever you can introduce this order amongst them, which I earnestly recommend to you: and I hope a continued frequency of confirmations will soon make that feasible without difficulty here, which is now practised constantly in the populous cities of *London* and *Westminster*.

From confirmation persons ought to be led on, if possible, before the impressions of it are much weakened, to the holy sacrament: and it is one material reason why confirmation should not be too early, that with a little farther instruction given soon after it, you may easily bring them, such as they ought to be, to the Lord's table: which may prove a much harder matter, when once they have been a good while out of your hands. The small proportion of communicants which I find there is in most of your congregations, and very small in some, must undoubtedly (as this ordinance is appointed for all Christians, and for a standing means of grace to all) be a subject of very great concern to you. And though it is too true, that the generality of the world, and perhaps the lower sort beyond others, are incredibly obstinate in their prejudices, especially in such as at all favour corrupt nature: yet our complaining of these prejudices is not enough; but labouring to overcome them is our business, and we are not to grow weary of it. Some imagine that the sacrament belongs only to persons of advanced years, or great leisure, or high attainments in religion, and is a very dangerous thing for common persons to venture upon. Some again disregard it stupidly, because others, they say, who do receive are never the better for it; or because their friends before them, or their neighbours about them never received at all, or not till such an age: and why should they? You will therefore represent to them, that whoever receives without benefit, it is his own

fault; and that how many soever omit it either for part of their lives or the whole, not their example but the word of God is the rule for Christians: that far from being a terrible or ensnaring institution, it is in reality a most gracious one: designed to be celebrated with humility indeed, but with comfort and joy: that all the preparation it requires is within the reach of the plainest head and the most laborious hand, provided there be only an honest and pious heart: and that the judgment which unworthy receivers eat and drink to themselves, needs no more affright those whom God in his mercy will consider as worthy; as he certainly will every true penitent; than the capital punishments, threatened by the law to crimes, make innocent persons uneasy: that he whose life unfit him for the sacrament, is unfit for the kingdom of heaven also; and he, who being qualified for it, neglects it, neglects a dying command of his Lord and Saviour, intended for the greatest good to him. But your public instructions on this head will be much more effectual for being followed by seasonable private applications: in which you will hear and answer their objections, be they of ever so little weight, with great meekness; not be provoked by any perverseness of theirs to shew anger, but only a friendly concern; and even if you meet with an absolute repulse, leave them with an assurance that you shall apply to them again, in hopes that God will have disposed them better to obey his precepts.

But besides increasing the number of your communicants, it were very desirable, that they who do communicate should do it more frequently. In the three first centuries the eucharist was every where celebrated weekly, and in many places almost daily. Decay of piety occasioned an injunction in the sixth, that every Christian should receive thrice in the year; which was reduced in the thirteenth, perhaps with a bad intention, to once. Our church requires thrice *at the least*: which evidently implies, that more than thrice is hoped for. And indeed each person will scarce be able to communicate so often unless the communion be administered oftener. But besides, it is appointed to be every Lord's day in cathedral and collegiate churches, and part of the office for it is read every Lord's day in every church, for an admonition of what it were to be wished the people could be brought to. This indeed at best must be a work of time: but one thing might be done at present in all your parishes, as God be thanked, it is in most of them: a sacrament might easily be interposed in that long interval between Whitsuntide and Christmas: and the usual season for it, about the feast of St. Michael, (when your people having gathered in the fruits of the earth have some rest from their labours, and must surely feel some gratitude to the Giver of all good) is a very proper time. And if afterwards you can advance from a quarterly communion to a monthly one, I make no doubt but you will.

Upon this subject I must observe to you farther, that though in one or two parishes of this Diocese the old custom is retained, of oblations for the minister, as well as alms for the poor, to both which the sentences appointed to be read are plainly adapted: yet in many parishes there is no offertory at all: though it be certainly a practice of primitive antiquity, a most proper admonition and specimen of charity; which I fear the generality of Christians much want to be reminded of; a most

seasonable

seasonable demonstration of our loving our brethren for his sake, who hath loved us ; and a thing expressly enjoined in the Rubric of the communion office. Why therefore should you not attempt to revive it, where it hath been intermitted ? Merely presenting to persons an opportunity of giving if they think fit, and only what they think fit, can surely, (if the reasons of it be explained to them beforehand) never keep any one away from the sacrament. But then, though all who have not absolutely nothing, ought undoubtedly to contribute their mite, yet no disagreeable notice should ever be taken of any, for giving but little or not giving at all : and whatever is collected, should be disposed of, so that all persons may know it, with the greatest faithfulness, prudence, and impartiality.

Another part of Divine worship, concerning which I think it needful to speak, is psalmody : a part clearly appointed in Scripture, both expressive and productive of devout affections, extremely well fitted to diversify long services, and peculiarly to distinguish the several parts of our own, which were originally separate. Our ecclesiastical laws do not indeed require it under any penalty : because there may not every where be persons qualified to perform it decently. But wherever there are, the Rubric makes provision for it, and I recommend to you that it be not omitted. You will always endeavour that your parish-clerks be persons of discretion as well as skill and seriousness. But however you will be much surer of no impropriety happening in this part of the worship, if you either direct them every Sunday to suitable psalms, or assign them a course of such to go orderly through. And unless the generality of your parishioners are provided with books and able to make use of them ; ordering each line to be read, will both secure a greater number of singers and be very instructive to many who cannot sing. All persons indeed who are by nature qualified ought to learn, and constantly join to glorify him that made them, in psalms and spiritual songs. This was the practice of the early Christians : it was restored very justly at the reformation : and hath declined of late, within most of our memories, very unhappily. For the improvements made by a few in church-music, were they real improvements, will seldom equal the harmony of a general chorus ; in which any lesser dissonances are quite lost : and it is something inexpressibly elevating, to hear the *voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters and of mighty thunders*, to speak in the words of Scripture, *making a joyful noise to the God of their salvation, and singing his praises with understanding*. Persons of a ludicrous turn may represent every thing in a wrong light : but those of any seriousness, if they will lay aside false delicacy, and that preposterous shame of religious performances, with which the present age is so fatally tainted, will find themselves very piously affected only by hearing this melody, much more by bearing a part in it : and therefore I beg you will encourage all your parishioners, especially the youth, to learn psalmody ; and excite them, if there be need, with some little reward : for you will thus make the service of God abundantly more agreeable, and their attendance on it more constant. But then, where any knowledge of the old common tunes remains, you should endeavour principally that your learners may perfect themselves in these ; that so they may lead and assist the rest of the con-

gregation, who should always join with them : or if you must admit a mixture of new and uncommon tunes, it should be no greater than you find yourselves in prudence absolutely obliged to. Else the consequence will be, what I fear many of you have experienced, that either one part of your people will resent being unjustly silenced, and this by the introduction of tunes often not so good as their former ones, and so your parish will be divided and uneasy : or if they agree to the change ever so generally and like it ever so well, yet your select fingers will either be weary in a while of what only novelty recommended to them, or grow conceited and ungovernable, or die off, or be dispersed, and the congregation will be left unable to sing in any manner at all. Where indeed the newer tunes have quite blotted out the memory of the old ones, all you can do is, to make use of what you find in use, to get some of the easiest of them learnt as generally as you can, and keep to these. And if, in order to instruct your people in either way of singing, meetings to practise out of church-time be requisite, you will keep a strict watch over them, that they may be managed with all possible decency, and never continued till candle-light, if they consist of both sexes. You will likewise discountenance, at least all frequent meetings, between the singers of different parishes, and making appointments to sing alternately at one anothers churches : for this wandering from their own, which by law they ought to keep to, usually leads them into excesses and follies.

I am very sensible, that some of the things which I have been mentioning, are by no means of equal importance with others. But nothing is without its importance, that relates to Divine worship. The mere outward behaviour of those who attend upon it is of such use, and good influence, that I must desire you will be diligent in teaching them, (but so as to persuade, not provoke them) what reverence belongs to the house of God : particularly how very wrong it is to sit instead of kneeling when they are or should be addressing themselves to their Maker, and to shew how indecent that appearance is of disregard to him, which they would not use on any account to one of their fellow-creatures a little superior to themselves. If you could only breed up the younger to a right behaviour in this respect, your congregations would grow regular in time. But mild expostulations will surely in so plain a case produce some effect upon the rest also, which will be much facilitated if you take care that proper conveniences for kneeling be provided for them. And if you could convince them also that standing is a more reverent posture to sing psalms to God in, as well as to read them, than sitting, you would come so much the nearer to the Apostolical rule of *doing all things decently*. For as some of the psalms contain the noblest acts of adoration, surely they ought not to be sung in a posture unfit to express it. Another thing, and no small one, which I believe many of your parishioners often want to be admonished of, is to come before the service begins. Undoubtedly allowance is to be made for necessary, especially unforeseen, business, and some allowance for not knowing the time exactly : but I hope you will obviate both these pleas as far as you can, by consulting their convenience in the hour you fix, and then keeping punctually to it. And at the same time you will remind them, that a due degree of zeal in religion

ligion would incline them to be rather a great deal too early at the house of God, than a little too late : that no part of the service can be more needful for them, than that which comes first; the confession of their sins: that instruction in their duty is better learnt from the psalms and lessons, which are the word of God, than from sermons, which are only our explanations of it: and that by coming so irregularly, they not only are great losers themselves, but disturb and offend others.

But it is not sufficient to give you directions about such as do come to church, without taking notice of the great numbers which I find there are in many, if not most, of your parishes, that omit coming. Now on these your preaching indeed can have no immediate influence. But it may however prevent the increase of them; and furnish others with arguments against them; and with the best of arguments, their experience of its good effects. You will therefore questionless do all you can in this way, without using any expressions in relation to their fault, which if repeated to them may exasperate them. But your chief dependance must be on private application to them, varied suitably to the occasion of their neglect. If it arises merely from ignorance, or sloth, or want of thought, they must be plainly told what they owe to their Maker, and awakened to the hopes and fears of a future life. If it be desire of gain or of pleasure that keeps them away, they must be asked what it will *profit them to gain the whole world and lose their own souls?* or shewn that to be lovers of *pleasure more than of God* will end in pains eternal. If they defend themselves, by pleading, as some will, that nothing can be told them at church but what they are acquainted with already, it will surely not be hard to shew them that they over-rate their knowledge: that if this were otherwise they may however be reminded of what they did not think of, or excited to what they did not practise: that, were they too perfect to receive any benefit, it would not be decent for them to tell the world so by their behaviour: that at least they ought to set others an example who may be the better for public instruction: and lastly, that receiving instruction is not the whole of Divine service, but praying the chief part. And though it is allowed they can pray at home privately, yet without enquiring whether they do, since God hath commanded, for plain and important reasons, that we worship him publicly, and hath excepted no one: by what authority doth any one except himself? And what will this end in, but an universal neglect of a duty which our Maker hath required to be universally practised? If it be any scruple about the lawfulness of coming to church that keeps persons away, fit opportunities should be sought with great care, and used with great prudence, to set them right: and such dissenters, for many there are, as do not think our manner of worship sinful, but only prefer another, which perhaps they are often without the means of attending upon, should be seriously entreated to consider, how they can justify separating from a lawful communion appointed by lawful authority, and even omitting all public worship frequently, rather than worship with us. But then with whichsoever of these persons we discourse, not the least personal anger must be shewn, nothing but a concern about their future happiness. For by this means if we make them no better, we shall at least make them no worse, and perhaps may leave

in their hearts what will some time or other work there. Persons who profess themselves not to be of our church, if persuasions will not avail, must be let alone. But other absenters after due patience must be told in the last place, that unwilling as you are, it will be your duty to present them, unless they reform: and if, when this warning hath been repeated, and full time allowed for it to work, they still persist in their obstinacy, I beg you to do it. For this will tend much to prevent the contagion from spreading, of which there is else great danger: and when once you have got them, though it be against their inclinations, within reach of your pulpit, who knows what good may follow? Different cases may indeed require difference of treatment: and both the same severity and the same mildness, that will subdue one, will harden another. You will therefore act yourselves and advise your church-wardens to act in this matter according to your discretion. And after a prosecution is begun, it shall still depend on your opinion whether it shall be carried on with rigour, or suspended a while in hopes of amendment. Only one caution I would give you. Let not any person's threatenings, that, if he is prosecuted, he will go over to the dissenters, move you in the least. Such will seldom do what they threaten: or if they do, 'tis better they should serve God in any way than none; and much better they should be a disgrace to them than to us. I must not conclude this head without desiring you to remind your people, that our liturgy consists not only of morning but evening prayer also: that the latter is in proportion equally edifying and instructive with the former; and so short, that, generally speaking, there can arise no inconvenience from attending upon it, provided persons are within any tolerable distance from the church: that few of them have business at that time of day; and amusements ought surely never to be preferred on the Lord's day before religion: not to say that there is room for both.

But besides the public service, your people should be admonished to spend a due part of their sabbath in private exercises of piety. For this is almost the only time, that the far greater part of them have, for meditating on what they have heard at church; for reading the Scripture and other good books; for the serious consideration of their ways; for giving such instruction to their children and families, as will make your work both easier and more effectual. And therefore, though one would not by any means make their day of rest wearisome, nor forbid cheerfulness, and even innocent festivity upon it, much less the expressions of neighbourly civility and good-will, which are indeed a valuable part of the gracious ends of the institution: yet employing a reasonable share of it seriously at home as well as at church, and preserving an especial reverence of God even throughout the freer hours of it, is necessary to make it a blessing to them in reality, instead of a season of leisure to ruin themselves, as it proves too often.

But farther, besides your and their duty on the Lord's day, it is appointed, that all ministers of parishes read prayers on holy-days, on Wednesdays, and Fridays: and undoubtedly your endeavours to procure a congregation at such times ought not to be wanting. Were I to repeat to you the strong expressions which my great predecessor Bishop *Fell* used, in requiring this part of ecclesiastical duty, they would surprise you. But

I content

I content myself with saying, that public worship was from the very first ages constantly performed on the two stationary days of each week; that all holydays appointed by the church were carefully observed by the clergy, and the number of them now is not burthenfome: that where you can get a competent number to attend at these times, you will act a very pious and useful, as well as regular part: that your own houses will sometimes furnish a small congregation; and what success you may have with others, nothing but trials, repeated from time to time, can inform you. But they, whose parishioners are the fewest and the busiest of all, I hope do not fail of bringing them to church at the least on Good Friday, and Christmas Day, besides Sundays. For though in some of your Answers to my Enquiries, these are not mentioned as prayer days, yet I presume that this arose from your taking it for granted I should understand they were. But if in any place they be not, I earnestly entreat they may: for at such times there can be no difficulty of getting a congregation. I hope likewise, that you are not wanting in due regard to those which are usually called *State Holydays*: and particularly, that if the public fast, which hath been appointed these two last years, should be continued (as we have but too much reason to apprehend there will be need) I beg you will endeavour, not only to bring your parishioners to church on that occasion; but move them to such inward humiliation for their own sins, and such fervency of prayer for this most corrupt and wicked nation, as may avert, if it be possible, the just judgments of God which so visibly threaten us.

You must have understood, Brethren, in all you have heard, that I am not exhorting you to promote in your parishes a mere form of godliness without the power. Outward observances, by whatever authority appointed, are only valuable in proportion as they proceed from a good heart and become means of edification and grace. They are always to be reverently regarded, but never rested in: for persons may observe without the least benefit, what they cannot omit without great sin. The business of your parishioners therefore is, so to use the external part of religion, as to be inwardly improved by it in love to God and their fellow-creatures and in moral self-government: and your business is to apply both your public and private diligence, that this happy end be effectually attained. You have under your care great numbers of poor creatures, living very laborious lives in this world, and depending almost intirely on you for their hopes of another. It is a noble employment to direct their behaviour and lighten their toils here, by precepts and motives which lead them on at the same time to happiness hereafter. You will be sure of their acknowledgments at least in proportion as you succeed in this work; but you will be rewarded by God in proportion as you endeavour it. Think not therefore, that I am laying burthens upon you, but only *stirring up your minds by way of remembrance*, and exhorting you so to watch for the souls of men as they *that must give account, that you may do it with joy and not with grief*. It is very little in my power either to increase or lessen your duty. Our blessed Master hath fixed it, you have undertaken it: and were I to release you from ever so great a part of it, I should only bring guilt on myself without acquitting you at all. The injunctions of the New Testament, infinitely stricter than any of men,

men, would continue to bind you as firmly as ever. Take heed therefore to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfil it.

Having a subject of such a nature to speak to you upon, and being able to speak to you in a body but once in three years, you must not wonder if I go somewhat beyond the bounds of a common discourse. There are many other things and very material ones, relating to you as parish ministers, which I could have wished to mention now: but I was willing to treat first of such matters as belong more immediately to the worship of God. If it please him that I live to another visitation, I shall in that proceed to the rest. Permit me now to add but one word or two more upon a different subject and I have done.

Whilst we are serving Christianity here, with the advantage of a legal establishment and maintenance, there are vast multitudes of our fellow-subjects in *America*, their *Negro-Slaves*, and the neighbouring *Indians*, amongst whom the knowledge of God is taught, and the exercises of his worship supported, if at all, very imperfectly, and with great difficulty, by the Society for propagating the Gospel: the income of which depends intirely on the voluntary contributions of good Christians; and is now reduced so low, and burthened with such a debt, that they find it necessary to propose, this next year, according to the powers of their charter and with his Majesty's commendatory letters, a general collection, which they have not had for above 20 years past, to enable them to go on. Application will probably not be made to every parish separately. But I hope every minister will give this excellent design all the assistance in his power: such, as can afford it, either by becoming stated contributors and members of the Society; or at least by some occasional benefaction in this time of need; and all, by recommending the cause to such of their people or acquaintance as they have reason to think will pay regard to it. If any person desires a more particular acquaintance with the nature and usefulness and present condition of this undertaking, I have given some account of these matters in a sermon at their anniversary meeting lately published by me, and shall be ready to give any of you farther information, who shall either now or hereafter apply to me for it, personally or by letter.

But I must not yet conclude, without mentioning also the Society for promoting Christian knowledge: who are carrying on the same good work in the *East Indies*, which that for propagating the Gospel is in the *West*; and at the same time are promoting the cause of religion many ways here at home: particularly by selling at very low rates, Bibles, Common-Prayers, and numbers of other religious books, chiefly of small sizes, for the use of the poor. This they also are supported in by voluntary benefactions: to which whoever is able to contribute, will do a very good work: and whoever can only purchase a few of their books for the use of his parishioners, shall have both my best assistance in it, and my hearty thanks for it.

I do not mean at all in speaking of these things to prescribe to you the methods of your charity: but only to lay before you two very deserving ones, which may possibly have escaped the notice of some of you; and to endeavour, that the cause of our Lord and Master may be served in as many ways as it can: for you must be sensible how very great need there

there is that none be neglected. By zealously making use of such as are presented to us, we may possibly be of much more service to others than we expect: but we shall be sure of doing infinite service to ourselves. And may God stir up the wills of all his faithful people, that they plentifully bringing forth the fruit of good works may of him be plentifully rewarded through Jesus Christ our Lord (a).

(a) Collect for the 25th Sunday after Trinity.



A CHARGE



A

C H A R G E

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY of the DIOCESE

OF

O X F O R D,

In the YEAR 1747.



Reverend Brethren,

I CANNOT speak to you thus assembled, without congratulating you in the first place on the happy suppression of that unnatural rebellion, which, since we met last, hath threatened our religion and liberties. Nor will either my duty, or my inclination, suffer me to omit returning you my heartiest thanks, for the unanimous zeal, you expressed against it; and I doubt not were ready to express, even before the exhortation to do so, which I was directed to send you, and which you received with so obliging a regard. Your behaviour, and that of the whole Clergy, on this trying occasion, hath abounded with such proofs of loyalty and affection to the government, under which
God's

God's mercy hath placed and continued us, that his Majesty hath declared, he shall ever have the strongest sense of what you have done for the support of his throne, and gladly shew his gratitude by any proper methods of extending his royal favour to you and to religion. It may be hoped also, that our fellow-subjects will remember, what they owe to our long-despised and reproached labours: and learn, how essential a part of the church of *England* is of our present establishment. Indeed, not only the more candid of those, who thought amiss of us, have acknowledged our merit now; but the *lying lips* are put to silence, which disdainfully and despitefully spoke against us (a). And let us go on, Brethren, to express the warmest and most prudent zeal for what we doubly felt the value of, when we feared to lose it: and so behave in this and all respects, that *they who are of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us* (b). For however imperfectly men may do us justice, our reward from God is sure.

I have recommended to you, in the course of my former visitations, various parts of your duty: first in general, as Ministers of the Gospel in a vicious and profane age; then more particularly, as Incumbents of your respective parishes. Under this latter head, I began with what immediately relates to the worship of God: and now proceed to another point, of a temporal nature indeed, as it may seem, but several ways connected with spirituals; the care you are bound to take of the incomes arising from your benefices. These endowments are sacred to the purposes of piety and charity: and it is neither lawful for us to employ them unsuitably ourselves, nor to let any part of them become a prey to the avarice of others. The few that may appear to be larger than was necessary, are in truth but needful encouragements to the breeding up of youth for holy orders. And were they lessened, either an insufficient number would be destined to that service, or too many of them would be of the lowest rank, unable to bear the expence of acquiring due knowledge, and unlikely to be treated with due regard. Besides, the most plentiful of these revenues may be well applied to religious uses: and therefore, as they have been dedicated, ought to continue appropriated, to them. But the generality of them, it will surely be owned, are small enough: and a very great part left so utterly incompetent, by the ravages of former times, that the little which remains, demands our strictest care now. For, without it, poor Incumbents will not be able to maintain themselves decently, much less to exercise hospitality and charity towards others. Yet on these things both their spirit and their success in doing their duty greatly depend. And therefore how indifferent soever any of us may have cause to be about our own interests; we ought to consider ourselves as trustees for our successors. We all blame our predecessors, if they have not transmitted the patrimony of the church undiminished into our hands. Let us think then what others hereafter will say of us, and with what reason, if we are guilty of the same fault; and give away for ever, what we should count it sacrilege in any one else to take from us.

Indeed some persons imagine or pretend that the only danger is of the Clergy's encroaching on the properties of the Laity, not neglecting their own.

own. And we acknowledge there have been times, when that was the danger. But they are long past: and God forbid we should desire to revive them. Placing excessive wealth in the hands of ecclesiastics, would both endanger others and corrupt them: as the examples of past ages have too fully shewn. But the parochial Clergy of those times, instead of being the authors of this error, were the heaviest sufferers by it. And to renew the attempt in these days, would be folly equal to its wickedness: of which we should so certainly and immediately be made sensible, indeed we are so universally sensible of it already, that there can be no need of giving cautions on this head. All we wish for is, the unmolested enjoyment of what clearly belongs to us, and a reasonable allowance of what is confessedly requisite for us, in order to attain the only ends of our institution, the present and future happiness of mankind. In how many and sad instances we fail of possessing in peace such a competent provision, I need not say. Let us all behave under whatever usage we receive; with the innocence and the prudence, which our Master enjoins. But we shall be wanting in both, if we wrong ourselves and those that will come after us, by improper voluntary diminutions of what is allotted for our support: which, through inconsiderateness and indolence, hath been often done: designedly, I would hope, but seldom. And we may be guilty of it, either at coming into our benefices, or during our incumbency on them, or when we quit them: to which three heads I shall speak in their order.

Yet indeed, as I am now directing my discourse to persons, most of them already possessed of benefices, it may seem too late to give cautions respecting the time of entering upon them. But all who have acted right then, will at least hear with pleasure their conduct approved. If any have acted wrong; which I do not know, that any of you have; on being shewn it, they may repent of it, they may consider how far they can undo what they have done, or prevent the bad consequences that are likely to flow from it. And both sorts may be influenced more strongly, to take no improper steps on any future occasion, and to warn their friends against such errors.

I proceed therefore to say, that benefices ought neither to be given, nor accepted, with any other condition or promise, than that of doing our duty in relation to them. This engagement is always understood, whether it be expressed or not: and no other should either be required or complied with. For when Bishops, originally the sole patrons, to encourage the endowment of parishes, gave others a right of presenting fit persons to them; or that right was confirmed or granted by the civil power: they must be supposed to give it only to be exercised for the future, as it had been before: when whoever was appointed to any station in the church, enjoyed the benefit of all he was appointed to, so long as he behaved well. And therefore attempting to bring the Clergy into a worse condition, is usurpation: and submitting to the attempt, is encouraging usurpation.

Yet there is a great difference between the things to which our submission may be demanded. Some are grossly and obviously unlawful. If for instance any person, in order to obtain a benefice, promises to give up such a part of the income, to connive at such a lessening of it, to accept

cept of such a composition for it, to allow such a pension or make such a payment to any one out of it : these things are in effect the same with laying down beforehand such a sum for it : which is the nearest approach, excepting that of bribing for holy orders, to his sin, who thought the *gifts of God might be purchased with money*, and was answered, *Thy money perish with thee* (c). Nor can it take away, if it alleviate the guilt, that the payment or pension, thus reserved, is allotted to uses really charitable. Still it is buying, what ought to be freely bestowed : this forced charity must disable a man from voluntary almsgiving, in proportion to its amount : and one compliance in a seemingly favourable instance, will only make way for another in a more doubtful case, and so on without end. Another excuse I hope nobody will plead ; that obligations of this kind may be safely entred into, since they are notoriously void. For we can never be at liberty to make an agreement, merely because it is so bad a one, that neither law nor conscience will let us keep it.

But supposing a person binds himself to his patron, only that he will quit his benefice, when required : even this he ought not to do. For he hath no right to promise it ; and no power to perform the promise. Whoever undertakes the care of a living, must continue that care till the law deprives him of it, or his superior releases him from it (d). Therefore he can only subject himself to a penalty which another may exact at pleasure, unless he doth what of himself he is not able to do, and knows not whether he shall obtain permission to do. Can this be prudent ? Can it be fit ? If he pay the penalty, he gives money to the patron, though not for his first possession of the benefice, yet for his continuance in it : besides that he must either distress himself, or defraud religion and charity of what he ought to have bestowed on them. If then to avoid paying it, he begs leave to resign ; he puts his Bishop under very unreasonable difficulties : who by refusing his request, may bring great inconveniences on the poor man : and by granting it, may lose a minister from a parish, where he was useful, and ought to have continued : may expose himself to the many bad consequences of having an improper successor presented to him. At least he will encourage a practice undoubtedly wrong and hurtful in the main, whatever it may be in the instance before him. And why are not these, sufficient grounds for a denial ; since whatever the incumbent suffers by it, he hath brought upon himself ?

Besides, in bonds to resign, where no condition is expressed, some unfair intention almost always lies hid. For if it were an honest one, why should it not be plainly mentioned, and both sides cleared from imputations ? Assuredly unless persons are to a strange degree inconsiderate, this would be done if it could. The true meaning therefore too commonly is, to enslave the incumbent to the will and pleasure of his patron, whatever it shall happen at any time to be. So that, if he demands his legal dues ; if he is not subservient to the schemes, political or whatever, they are, which he is required to promote ; if he reproves such and such vices ; if he preaches, or does not preach, such and such doctrines ;

if

(c) Acts viii. 20.

(d) See Stillfleet on Bonds of Resignation, in the third volume of his works, p. 731.

if he stands up for charity and justice to any one when he is forbidden: the terror of resignation, or the penalty of the bond, may immediately be shaken over his head. How shamefully beneath the dignity of a Clergyman is such a situation as this! How grievously doth it tempt a man to unbecoming, and even unlawful, compliances! What suspicions doth it bring upon him of being unduly influenced, when he is not! Or however he may escape himself, what a snare may his example prove to his poor brethren of weaker minds, or less established characters!

To prevent these mischiefs, both the ancient laws of other churches, and those of our own (*e*) still in force, have strictly forbidden such contracts (*f*). Particularly the council of *Oxford*, held in 1222, prescribed an oath against *Simony*, for so it is entitled, by which every clerk shall swear at his institution, that he hath entered into no compact in order to be presented (*g*). And Archbishop *Courtney*, in his injunctions to all the Bishops of his province in 1391, condemns those, as guilty of *Simony*, who, before presentation, engage to resign when required (*h*); and appoints all persons instituted to be sworn (*i*), that they have not given, to obtain presentation, either oath or bond to resign (*k*). Again, the Constitutions of Cardinal *Pole*, when Archbishop, in 1555, censure, as being simoniacal, all bargains or promises for procuring of benefices; and assert that benefices ought to be given without any condition, and order that the person presented shall swear, he hath neither promised, nor given, nor exchanged, nor lent, nor deposited, nor remitted, &c. any thing, nor confirmed any thing given before (*l*). And a convocation held

(*e*) *Stillingfleet* in his letter about bonds of resignation in *Miscell. Discourses*, p. 42. &c. shews several sorts of contracts that are allowed; and objects not against trusts and confidences; [as indeed I have been assured that Dr. *Bentley* held a living in trust for the Bishop's son] nor against what is done, in consideration of service, without a compact: but only against a legal obligation on the party, before his presentation, to perform such a condition; and if he do not, to resign.

(*f*) The Council of *Westminster*, 1138, appoints that when any one receives investiture from the Bishop, he shall swear that he hath neither given nor promised any thing for his benefice. *Spelm.* vol. 2. p. 39. apud *Gibson Cod.* p. 845.

(*g*) The words are, *quod propter præsentationem illam nec promiserit nec dederit aliquid præsentanti, nec aliquam propter hoc inierit pactionem*: where *hoc* most naturally refers to *negotium præsentationis* understood.

See *Conc. Oxon.* c. 18. in *Wilkins*, vol. 1. p. 588. and *Lyndwood*, L. 2. *de Jurejurando*, cap. *præsentis*, in *Wake's charge* 1709. p. 34. and *Stillingfleet* on bonds, &c. p. 721. and letter about bonds, p. 39.

(*h*) But it appears, by the preamble, that this was designed only against putting it thus in the patron's power to dispose of the profits, or turn the incumbents out, and give pluralities of livings to such as he favoured.

(*i*) *Wilkins*, vol. 3. p. 216. *Wake*, p. 35, 36.

(*k*) The injunctions of *Ed.* 6. in 1547, appoint that such as buy benefices, or come to them by fraud or deceit, shall be deprived, &c. And such as sell them, or by any colour bestow them for their own gain or profit, shall lose their right of presenting for that time. *Wilkins*, vol. 4. p. 7, 8.

(*l*) *Wilkins*, vol. 4. p. 124, 125.

held under him, two years after, complaining that, of late years, persons have procured benefices *et praelaturas*, [parish-priests are *praelati* see *Index to Lyndwood in praelatus* :] not only vacant, but likely to become so, *non precibus & obsequiis tantum, sed & apertis muneribus*, so that *electionum saluberrimæ formæ quæ per canones liberæ esse deberent, vel fraudibus obtenebratæ sunt, vel ad compromissi necessitatem redactæ*: directs, that Bishops prevent these things, and take care by themselves and their officers, especially *quos in praelatorum electionibus tanquam directores & consultores interesse continget*, that *fraudes & passionibus* be excluded: and if any one have got, *per pecuniæ & munerum sordes, praelaturam vel beneficium ecclesiasticum*, he be punished (*m*). It is indeed true, that the great evil, at which these several directions were levelled, was giving or promising money for presentations, or receiving it for resignations (*n*). And therefore it may be argued, that where no money is directly paid, or taken, or covenanted for, nothing illegal is done. But the opinions delivered, and the judgments pronounced, by the Canon lawyers, plainly extend the prohibition to whatever is equivalent to money (*o*). And it hath been urged that by how much soever a person lessens the value of a benefice to himself by a bond of resignation to the patron in order to procure it, as unquestionably such a bond doth lessen it, so much in effect he pays to obtain it (*p*). Or allowing, that in some cases this doth not hold: yet nothing will prevent unlawful contracts in many cases, but prohibiting in all cases absolute contracts to resign upon demand; which therefore the abovementioned Constitutions have rightly done. And as the oaths, prescribed in them, express the denial of having made such a contract; the oath prescribed at this time must naturally be understood to imply the same thing. For its being less explicit is no proof, that, what in common acceptance came under the name *Simoniacal* before, doth not come under it still.

However, we must acknowledge, that bonds of resignation on demand have been declared by the temporal judges valid, and not *simoniacal*

(*m*) *Wilkins*, vol. 4. p. 165.

(*n*) The tenor of them shews this. Particularly the corrupt resignations were to get pensions out of benefices, or money for quitting them, or exchanges gainful to the patron or his friends. The *Res. Leg. Eccl. Tit. de renunciatione*, cap. 3. forbids only resignations for consideration of gain. See *Wake*, p. 48. And *Tit. de admittendis ad Beneficia Ecclesiastica*, c. 24. only obliges a person at institution to swear that he neither hath given nor promised, nor will give, any thing. And *Tit. de beneficiis conferendis* forbids only compacts by which benefices are lessened. See *Wake*, p. 26. who goes too far in saying the words are general against all manner of contracts or promises. The preamble of the oath in *Can. 40.* condemns only *buying and selling* of benefices. The Latin is *nundinatio*. But *Stillingfleet* saith, p. 710, this takes in any benefit accruing to the patron, because *nomine emptionis & venditionis intelligitur omnis contractus non gratuitus*.

(*o*) See *Wake*, p. 18, 24. *Stillingfleet*, p. 719, 722. and letter about bonds, p. 46. &c. The injunctions of *Ed. 6.* forbid patrons selling livings, or by any colour bestowing them for their own gain and profit. *Wilkins*, vol. 4. p. 7, 8.

(*p*) *Stillingfleet*, p. 722.

niacal (q). And they are indeed the proper judges, whether they are such by the common and statute law. But whether the ecclesiastical law permits them, is not so clearly within their cognizance. Indeed all questions about this crime seem to have been entirely out of it (r), till an act was made, 31 Eliz. c. 6. which, *for the avoiding of simony and corruption in presentations and collations*, inflicts penalties on those who shall either give or procure them for any sum of money, profit or benefit; or for any promise, bond, or assurance of it, directly or indirectly: but at the same time allows the ecclesiastical laws to punish the same offences which the act doth, in the same manner as they did before. Now making these provisions is not saying, that nothing shall be deemed simoniacal by the spiritual judge, but what the temporal judge shall think is forbidden by this act (s). And therefore, though the latter may apprehend absolute bonds of resignation to be consistent with the statute; yet the former may justly apprehend them to be inconsistent with the constitutions of the church, which we ought to obey; and with the oath against simony,

(q) *Stillingfleet*, p. 735. *Sc. Wake*, p. 49. *Sc.* Indeed *Stillingfleet*, p. 735. says that the court, having given judgment for such a bond in the case of *Jones and Lawrence*, 8 Jac. 1. held, seven years after, viz. 15 Jac. 1. in the case of *Paschall and Clerk*, that it was simony within the statute; and he cites *Noy*, 22. for it. But *Wake* mentions not this: and *Watson*, c. 5. p. 40. says it doth not appear by the roll that there was such a trial; and if there was, it is of no great authority, nor hath been regarded since.

(r) See *Wake*, p. 39, 50. The preamble of 5 Eliz. c. 23. compared with § 13. sufficiently intimates that simony is an offence appertaining merely to the jurisdiction and determination of the ecclesiastical courts and judges. Yet *Stillingfleet*, p. 718. cites from *Croke*, Car. 361. the judges as saying, in the case of *Mackaller and Todderick*, that the common law before 31 Eliz. took notice of a simoniacal contract. But *Coke* in *Carwodie's* case, 5th Rep. fol. 8, 9. as cited by *Wake*, p. 50. puts simony among the crimes the consueance whereof belongs not to the common but ecclesiastical law, and repeats the same, p. 40. And *Croke*, fol. 789. says that the judges in the case of *Baker*, 42 Eliz. held that it appertains to the spiritual court to determine what is simony, and not to this court to meddle therewith.

(s) *Stillingfleet*, p. 718. saith "the words simony or simoniacal contract are never mentioned in this statute." And *Wake*, p. 50. cites *Noy* Rep. fol. 25. as saying that "in it there is no word of simony; because by that means the common law would have been judge what should have been simony, and what not." And *Stillingfleet*, *ibid.* allows, that if the word had been there, the judges would have had sufficient reason to declare what was simony and what not. Now in truth that part of the act which relates to the present affair begins thus. "And for the avoiding of simony and corruption in presentations, collations, and donations of and to benefices, &c. and in admissions, institutions, and inductions to the same, be it further enacted, that, if any person, &c." This may seem to imply that no other things but those mentioned afterwards were simony: otherwise the act would provide only for avoiding some sorts of simony. Accordingly *Gibson* Cod. p. 839, and *Stillingfl.* Pref. p. 714. and Disc. p. 718. think it only means to punish some particular remarkable sorts specified in it: and *Wake* agrees that it abrogates no ecclesiastical law. And this agrees with what is observed here, note (u). But still the judges, after this act, thought that judging of simony did not belong to them. See here, note (r).

simony, which ought to be taken in the sense of those who originally enjoined and still administer it; and not to have its meaning changed on the supposed authority of their opinions, who neither have undertaken to interpret it, nor, if the judgment of their predecessors be allowed, have a right to do it.

At least refusing such bonds, on account of the oath, must be the safest side: especially, as the greatest divines of this church have declared against them; and I think none for them. Though indeed, were the oath out of the question; the bonds are apparently so mischievous, as to be for that reason alone sufficiently unlawful. It may be said, that if the patron attempts to make any ill use of them, equity will relieve the incumbent. But I have shewn you, that their consequences must be very bad, whatever use the patron makes of them. And besides, how expensive, indeed how uncertain, this pretended relief will be; how seldom therefore it will or can be fought for; and how much better on all accounts it is to avoid the need of it; every one must perceive.

But let us now suppose, that a seemingly reasonable condition were expressed in these bonds: for instance, to resign when such a relation or friend of the patron's comes to the age of being presented, who perhaps hath been educated with a view to the benefice vacant (*t*). Now I do not say but a person may very lawfully, and sometimes very charitably form an intention of resigning at such a period, if circumstances then should make it proper; and may also signify such intention beforehand. But if he bind himself to it absolutely, besides the distrust of him, which requiring this implies, perhaps when the time comes, the young person will refuse to take the benefice, or the patron to give it him: and yet the incumbent must continue in perfect dependance thenceforward: for his case is become the same, as if his bond had been originally without any condition. Besides, this contrivance for procuring an immediate vacancy at such a particular time, encourages persons, even of low rank, to purchase patronages, separate from the manors on which they were anciently appendant, merely to serve interested purposes. And the generality of these, instead of considering their right of presentation as a spiritual trust, to be conscientiously discharged, will of course look on it

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(*t*) *Stillingfleet*, p. 716. supposes this to be the intent, with which an absolute bond is required; and saith, it is a case, wherein a bond may be thought far more reasonable than in others. But he expresses no positive approbation of it; nor doth he mention there giving a bond with this condition expressed. But, in p. 736. he hath that case in view, where he saith, "that there may be a lawful trust in such a case, I do not question:" yet adds, "but whether the person who takes this trust can enter into a bond and take the oath, I very much question." And *Wake*, though in p. 22. he names this as one of the most favourable cases that can be desired, condemns it notwithstanding; as an obligation, which the patron has no right to impose, nor the clerk any power to enter into; as contrary to the Canons, and the authority of the Bishop, and the oath of yielding him canonical obedience, and of doing what in the clerk lies to maintain the right of his see; but he doth not say it is contrary to the oath against simony.

as a temporal inheritance, which since they have bought, they may fairly sell, at any time, in any manner, for what they can : or at best merely as the means of providing a maintenance for such persons as they please : who therefore, unless they will be cast off intirely by their friends, must, when they are of age, however unfit for the cure of souls, however averse from it, submit to be presented, and perhaps cannot be rejected. Then further, in proportion as this custom prevails, benefices, and particularly the more valuable ones, coming to be of a temporary and precarious tenure, contrary to what they were intended ; persons of character and abilities, and a proper spirit, will not so often care to take them. Or if they do, they will not usually, indeed it cannot so well be expected they should, either defend the rights of them, or exercise hospitality and charity upon them, in the same manner, as if they were to hold them for life. Nor will the people, generally speaking, respect those who come in thus, and must behave, and go out again thus, as they ought always to respect their ministers.

But still persons may plead that whatever is objected against other engagements from incumbents to patrons, yet if they engage only to be constantly resident, to do faithfully the whole duty, which the laws of the church enjoin them, or perhaps somewhat more ; this must be allowable. And doubtless it is, provided the engagement be only a sincere promise of acting thus, as far as they can with reasonable convenience. Nay if they bind themselves by a legal tie, to do any thing, which either belongs of course to their benefice, or hath by ancient custom been annexed to it, learned and judicious authors justify them (*u*). But covenanting thus to do even a laudable action, as teaching school or prescribing to the sick, if their predecessors were not, without a covenant, obliged to it, hath been held unlawful and simoniacal (*w*) : because it is promising to save, which upon the matter is promising to give, so much money either to the patron, or however to those for whom he interests himself. And indeed, though persons were to promise only what in conscience they are antecedently bound to ; yet if they tie themselves, either to do this, or to resign ; whenever they fail in any one part of it, as to be sure they will in some, sooner or later, though perhaps very innocently ; supposing the rigour of their bond insisted upon, (as who can say it will not ?) they are at the mercy of the patron ever after. He becomes their ordinary ; and is vested, by their imprudence, with a much greater authority, than the Bishop hath : an authority of restraining their liberty, where the wisdom of the church hath not restrained it (*x*) : an authority of proceeding summarily ; and depriving them, for whatever failures he hath thought fit to insert in the bond, without delay and without appeal : and this authority he may exercise ever after, when he pleases, to just the same purposes, as if they had covenanted at first to resign when requested.

Still, without question, many good persons have both required and given bonds of resignation of these latter sorts : and in many cases, as

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(*u*) *Wake's Charge*, 1709, p. 24. *Stillington's Letter*, p. 54.

(*w*) *Wake*, p. 18.

(*x*) *Wake*, p. 25.

(*y*) *Wake*, p. 25.

no harm at all hath been intended, so no particular harm hath been done by them. But in so many more there hath, and it is so necessary to go by general rules; and one specious exception doth so constantly produce others that are a little less so; till at last the most pernicious practices creep in (y), that there is abundant reason to refuse making any contracts whatsoever in order to obtain presentation: and more especially there is reason to refuse them, on account of their mischievous influence on the revenues of the church: which was the immediate occasion of my speaking of them now; though I thought it by no means proper to omit the other arguments against them.

Perhaps it may be said: if patrons will have bonds of resignation, what can clergymen do? I answer, if clergymen will not give them, how can patrons help themselves? They must present without them, or their right must lapse to the Bishop, who will. It may indeed be replied, that though one person rejects the offer, another will accept it: and therefore he may as well. But this would equally be an excuse for the worst of wrong compliances in every kind: and consequently it is an excuse for none. Besides, it may happen, that by arguing with patrons against such contracts, they may be convinced; and learn so just an esteem for those, who refuse them decently and respectfully, as not only to present them with double pleasure, but do them afterwards greater services, than they intended them before. At least whatever clergyman behaves in so worthy and exemplary a manner, will assuredly, if the rest of his conduct be suitable to that part, either by the care of God's Providence, be raised in the world some other way; or, by the influence of God's Spirit, be made easy and happy in his present situation.

But it may be objected further, that Bishops argue with an ill grace against bonds at presentation, while they themselves take them at institution. And it must be owned, that in several Dioceses, particularly that of *Lincoln* out of which this was taken, and of *Peterborough* which was also taken from thence (z), there is an ancient and immemorial custom, (customs, you are sensible, not being the same every where;) for the clerk presented to indemnify the Bishop and his officers from all suits at law for instituting him. And accordingly in this Diocese, bonds appear to have been taken for that purpose at all institutions for 120 years past: within which time, there have been nearly, if not quite, 700 given, that are now lying in the registry: and hence we may presume the practice hath been the same from the erection of the See. The original of it probably was, that a commission of inquiry being formerly sent out, as old registers prove, upon every vacancy (a) alledged, to certify

(y) *Wake*, p. 25.

(z) In *Lincoln* Diocese they are taken only when the Bishop hath any the least suspicion about the patronage: in *Peterborough* and *Litchfield* always: in *Canterbury* whenever a new patron presents: in *Gloucester* and *Exeter* they were taken till the time of the present Bishops.

(a) That it was on every vacancy appears from Archbishop *Stratford's* Constitution, *Sæva*, A. D. 1342. in *Lindw.* p. 222. and from *Lindw.* p. 217.

certify the Bishop, whether the living was really vacant, who was at present the true patron, and whatever else it was requisite he should know in order to institute: and the expence of this commission, and of the proceedings upon it, being of necessity considerable to the clerk, who bore it (*b*); the cheaper method of a bond from him to save the Bishop harmless, was substituted in its room. And a further reason might be, that, the Bishop having 28 days allowed him, after the presentation was tendered, to consider and inform himself, whether he should institute the clerk presented or not; the clerk was willing and desirous, rather to indemnify the Bishop, if he would consent to institute him sooner, than to bear the inconvenience, and perhaps charges, of waiting to the end of that time. At least the only design of this bond was and is, that if the clerk's title to institution be questionable, the Bishop may not suffer by granting it. Now a covenant for this end is surely a very lawful one, and subject to none of the mischiefs, which, I have shewn you, attend bonds to patrons. Nor was any constitution of church or state ever pointed against it: nor I believe hath any harm ever happened from it.

But I must own too, that there is another condition added to these bonds, that the clerk shall resign his benefice if required by the Bishop, in case any controversy arise, whether his institution be rightful. But this provision is, in the bond, expressed to be made only for the same purpose with the former, the indemnification of the Bishop: and the penalty of the bond is so moderated, as to serve that purpose and no other. Accordingly I have not heard, that any one person hath ever scrupled, in point of conscience, to enter into this engagement; the meaning of it being only, that if he prove to have no right, he shall quit: nor indeed, that any one hath found cause to scruple it in point of prudence. For as you may be sure the fulfilling it would never be required without necessity; so I believe it hath never yet been required at all. That neither the intention of this covenant was bad, nor the reasons for it contemptible, you will readily allow, on being told, that it began to be inserted constantly in this Diocese, at the time when our present most Reverend Metropolitan was placed over it: which seeming innovation was indeed only conforming more exactly to the old example of our mother See (*c*). But still as it is as a condition, the insisting on which, in some cases, might have bad effects, that were not then foreseen (*d*); though in such cases it probably never would be insisted on, as

on Archbishop Peckham's Constitution *per nostram provinciam* verb. *Inquisitionem*, and from Bishop Gifford's Codex, p. 857.

(*b*) It appears from the above Constitution of *Stratford*, that the clerk paid for the commission, and therefore of course for all that was done upon it.

(*c*) I have seen a bond from the Bishop of *Lincoln's* registry with this covenant in it, printed in the time of *Jac. 2.* and the Bishop informs me the covenant hath been used ever since the restoration: how much sooner he knows not.

(*d*) e. g. A suit may be begun which would have proved ineffectual, Yet if the Incumbent resign, the expence of a fresh presentation and institution

as it never hath: I have determined, with his Grace's intire approbation, to omit it for the future.

And in every thing, I shall not only be careful to make your burthens no heavier, but if it can be shewn me, that I am able to do it, with justice and equity, I shall be glad to make them lighter. The fees taken of the Clergy in this Dioceſe, whether at institutions or visitations, are not varied in any one article from thoſe, which were returned to, and not diſapproved by, a committee of Parliament in the time of my predeceſſor. They are the ſame, as he informs me, with thoſe taken in the time of his predeceſſor. Nor have I hitherto found proof, though I have inquired with ſome care, that they have been increaſed at all materially ſince the Biſhoprick was founded (e). Thoſe of viſitation I am ſure have not in the leaſt. And yet the diminution of the value of money in that interval hath reduced the ſame ſum in name and quantity, to perhaps not a fourth of what it was in effect and uſe: on which account proportionable augmentations of fees have been made, I believe, in all temporal courts and offices; and ancient rules to the contrary have been juſtly deemed obſolete, the reaſons of them having ceaſed. So that where this hath not been done, or not to any conſiderable degree, there is cauſe to render to all their dues with great ſatisfaction.

And here I muſt take the freedom of ſpeaking to you about ſome dues owing to myſelf, ſynodals and procurations. The former are an ancient acknowledgment of honour and ſubjection, reſerved by the Biſhops of the Weſtern church, as long ago as when they ſettled their own ſhare of the tithes, in each pariſh, to be the future property of the ſeveral incumbents: and it took its name from being uſually paid at the ſynodal meetings. Now ſo ſmall a tribute, eſpecially if conſidered as a quit rent for ſo great a conſeſſion, can ſurely never be thought a hardſhip. The other, procurations, are alſo a payment ſeveral hundred years old, ſucceeding in the place of a much more expenſive obligation, that of entertaining the Biſhop and his attendants, when he viſited each pariſh. Neither of them hath been increaſed ſince their firſt beginning: the right to both is indiſputably legal: and as I am ſworn to maintain all the rights of my See, I promiſe myſelf none of you will force me to do it in a way, that cannot be more diſagreeable to you, than it will to me. If any one pleads, that complying with the demand of ſo trifling a ſum will be inconvenient to him, it ſhall be more than returned him. If any one doubts, whether it is incumbent on him or not: his reaſons for the doubt, when ever he lays them before me, ſhall be impartially conſidered, and allowed their full weight. But I hope no perſon will think it either decent or juſt, merely to reſuſe, without aſſigning a ſufficient cauſe: and diſuſe for ſome years is not ſufficient, in a matter, like this,

of

ſtitution will at leaſt be neceſſary for him: but indeed the patron may preſent another: and in the caſe of alternate patronage, another will preſent.

(e) *i. e.* Allowing each of the new inſtruments that are required, to coſt as much as each of the old ones.

of common right. Most of my Clergy have very punctually shewn me this little mark of their regard, amongst many greater. Whether any here present have omitted it, I do not know. But I trust you will all have the candor to think I have mentioned it, not from any wrong or mean motive, but because I apprehend it my duty, and have not the least doubt of your willingness to be informed or reminded of every part of yours.

And with this kind of digression I must conclude for the present. If God prolong my life and health to another opportunity, I shall proceed to the remainder of the subject. In the mean time, I heartily pray him to direct and bless you in all things.



A CHARGE



A
C H A R G E

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY of the DIOCESE

OF

O X F O R D,

In the YEAR 1750.



Reverend Brethren,

IN the course of my former visitations of this Diocese, I have recommended to you various parts of your duty, as Ministers of the Gospel in general, and of your respective parishes in particular. After things, more immediately and intirely of spiritual concern, I proceeded, in my last Charge, to the care, that you are bound to take of your temporalities ; with which you are intrusted, partly for the service of religion in your own times, partly for your successors, as your predecessors were for you : a trust, which if any of them broke, or neglected, you are too sensible they did ill, to be excusable to your own minds, if you imitate them. And dividing this care into the behaviour

haviour, that is requisite at your coming into livings, during your incumbency on them, and when you are to quit them: I went through the first of these heads; giving you proper cautions, more especially against making any contract or promise inconsistent with the oath, then required of you, or prejudicial to your own benefices, or the common interests of the Clergy. Therefore I now go on to the second, the vigilance, with which you ought each to superintend the revenues and possessions of your church, whilst you continue minister of it.

I have too much cause, in every thing, to be sensible of my own unfitness to direct: but, in several articles, relating to this point, I am peculiarly unqualified: having little experience in them, and a yet less share of the proper abilities and turn of mind for them. However, I ought not to omit being of such use to you, as I can. There may be those amongst you, who are either still more unacquainted with these matters, or at least have not considered them all in the same light: as you must have observed, that very obvious instances, both of wisdom and duty, escape the attention of many, till they are pointed out to them. And a discourse, neither complete, nor possibly free from mistakes, may notwithstanding do service, by exciting persons to think on the subject, more than they have done hitherto.

Your care, in respect to this subject, consists of two parts: recovering what may be unduly withheld from your church, and preserving what is left.

It is very unhappy, that so troublesome and invidious an employment, as the former, should ever be made necessary: which yet it hath too often been. Glebe lands have been blended with temporal estates. and pretences set up, that only such a yearly rent, far inferior to the real value, is payable from them. Tithes and other dues have been denied; under false colours of exemptions in some cases, and of *modus's* in many. Every unjust plea admitted makes way for more. And thus what was given for the support of the Clergy in all future times, is decreasing continually; and becoming less sufficient, as it goes down to them. The Laity themselves, if they would reflect, must see, that they have by no means any cause to rejoice in this. For, probably few of them in proportion will be gainers by what we lose: but the whole body of them, wherever the provision made for us becomes incompetent, must either make another at their own expence, or be deprived in a great measure of the good influences of our office, with respect to this world and the next. But whatever they are, we ourselves cannot surely fail to be deeply concerned at the ill aspect, which these encroachments bear towards religion in ages to come. Whoever is indifferent about it, shews himself very unworthy of what he enjoys from the liberality of ages preceding. And whoever is grieved at it, will set himself to consider, not how he can augment the patrimony of the church, where it is already plentiful; or any where, by dishonourable methods: (you are very sensible, what injustice and folly there would be in such attempts) but how he can retrieve any part of it, which is illegally or unequitably seized and detained.

Now here the foundation of all must be, a diligent and impartial inquiry into the right of the case: for it would be absurd to deceive ourselves;

selves ; and unfair to demand of others what we are not well persuaded is our due. Therefore to avoid both, we should ask the opinion of skilful and upright advisers. If this be in our favour, the next proper steps will be, laying our claim, with the proofs of it, so far as prudence will permit, before the person concerned ; representing it, in a friendly and serious manner, as an affair, in which his conscience is interested ; procuring the assistance of those, who have weight with him, if we know any such ; taking the opportunity of his being, at any time, in a more considerate disposition than ordinary ; pressing him, not to rely too much on his own judgment, where it may so easily be biased : yet forbidding him to rely on ours, if he would ; and begging him to consult some other worthy able person : offering to pitch on one or more, if circumstances persuade to it, whose determination shall conclude us both : and intreating him to say, whether he would not think this, in any other case, very reasonable. If still he cannot prevail on himself to comply : we may endeavour to lessen the difficulty, by proposing to accept a small payment, where none hath been made of some time ; or a small variation, where a customary payment is pleaded : in hopes, that either the desire of enjoying, with some degree of good conscience, the main of what he withholds now with a bad one ; or, at least, that of avoiding the cost and hazard of a contest, may win him over.

If none of these methods (which too commonly happens) will operate, after a due season allowed them for it ; the only remaining remedy is an appeal to the law. But here I would be far from exciting any of you to plainly fruitless or over-dangerous attempts. I am very sensible, how unfavourable the times are to ecclesiastical pretensions, how enormous the expences of legal proceedings, how small the incomes of most benefices, how strait the circumstances of most clergymen : considerations, that one should think would restrain persons of any generosity, nay of any compassion, from bearing hard upon them. But they ought not to be pleaded by any of us, to excuse ourselves from undertaking a necessary burthen ; which perhaps we are as well able to support, as any, who will be likely to come in our stead. I am sensible too, and would have you be so, that scarce any thing is a more effectual hindrance to our doing good amongst our parishioners, than the character of being litigious ; which many delight to give us : but with how little justice, in general, one single observation amongst several that might be alledged, will more than sufficiently shew ; that of 700 suits for tithes, brought by the clergy into the Court of Exchequer, which is only about one in 14 parishes, during the space of 53 years, from the restoration to the year 1713, 600 were decided for them. It is true, our obtaining justice against any man, though in ever so clear a cause, is very apt to be resented, by himself and his friends at least, as grievous injustice. But using the previous amicable measures, which I have recommended, must in some degree prevent, either severe imputations upon us, or however the belief of them : and if not intirely, yet, by mildness, and prudence, we may certainly regain in time the reputation, we never deserved to lose. At least our successors will enjoy, free from all blame, what we recover to them : whereas if we acquiesce in the detention of our due, they will be still more likely to do so, and thus the loss of it will be perpetuated.

petuated. Therefore in cases both sufficiently plain, and of sufficient importance, when all other ways have been tried to no purpose, and the right will be either extinguished, or much obscured, by delay; and perhaps the example spread further: I see not, how we can excuse ourselves from applying to a proper court of justice, if we can hope to procure a sentence from it, without absolute ruin or extream distress. For it is a mean and wicked selfishness, to hoard up wealth, consult our ease, or court the favour of our superiors, by letting the inheritance of the church be impoverished, while the guardianship of it is in our hands.

But then we must be doubly careful of what all men should be abundantly more careful of, than most are, that we never awe persons, especially poor persons, unjustly, by threatening them with law, into a compliance with our demands; and that no dispute of this kind ever entice us to do any thing fraudulent, or provoke us to do any thing ill-natured or vexatious. And particularly, if we have a demand on any of the people called Quakers, we should, if we possibly can, pursue it by that method only, which the act, for the more easy recovery of small tithes, hath provided: and rather sit down with a moderate loss, than do otherwise. For they are a generation, loud in their complaints, unfair in their representations, and peculiarly bitter in their reflections, where we are concerned: unwearied in labouring to render us odious, and surprizingly artful in recommending themselves to the great.

But I proceed to the less troublesome and disagreeable duty of preserving what we still possess. Now to this end the most obvious way is, keeping the glebe in our own hands, and taking the tithes and all other dues, ourselves: for which reason probably, amongst others, both ancient ecclesiastical constitutions, and later acts of Parliament, have restrained and limited leasing of benefices. But many are so little qualified for this, and would be so great losers by it: and others would find it such a hindrance to the discharge of their ministerial office, or the pursuit of useful studies: nay, where it hath been long disused, the people might perhaps be so much offended with the novelty: that I would by no means press doing it in all cases, but only recommend it in proper ones. And where it is done, if a clergyman were to attend to such matters too closely; and, above all, were to be over-watchful and strict about small demands: it would naturally raise a contempt, if not hatred of him. And therefore it will be much better to content ourselves with giving parishioners, by prudent instruction, a general sense of their obligation to pay their dues; and by engaging behaviour, a general disposition to it; than to exact the minuter sorts of them with an indecent eagerness. But still, where rights, that may seem inconsiderable in each particular case, amount to more on the whole, than it is convenient to lose; and yet will be withheld, if not insisted on: we must do it, with as good a grace as we can; and remind persons, if there be need, that such as make this necessary, are indeed they, who act the mean part: that it is no fault of ours to require what the law hath allotted us for our maintenance; but a great misfortune, that so much of it consists in these petty articles.

Whatever tithes it will be incommodious to keep in our own hands, we may compound for with those who should pay them, or lease them to others.

others. The former way will usually be kinder and more obliging, and so far more eligible. Yet on the other hand, if we chuse the latter, our lessee will probably find it his interest to take them in kind, which will preserve our title to them in kind : and therefore it may at least be expedient sometimes, in relation to any questionable parts of them. But if a tenant will rather give up some of our rights, than be at the trouble of asserting them, we may be under a necessity of doing it ourselves. And if we let any of our tithes to the proprietor of what they arise from, or to whomsoever we let our glebe, it should never be for too long a time at the same rent : else we run a great risque of being told, that we are intitled to nothing more. The person indeed, who makes the agreement with us, cannot think so : and yet what even he may pretend to our successors, we cannot foresee. But the person, that comes after him, may insist on it even to us : and though the evil should be delayed longer, it will happen much too soon. Written agreements, discreetly worded, may be an useful and effectual preventive. Yet these, in course of time, may be lost by various accidents : or constancy of the same unvaried payment be alledged as a stronger argument on one side, than they are on the other. And if either should prove our case, contending at law with a parishioner will be a very undesirable thing : and contending with a powerful one may be an impracticable thing. Therefore we ought never to begin customs, that may be dangerous : and if they are begun, even by our predecessor's fault, and yet more if by our own, we should think how to stop them without delay. But the least we can do, is resolutely to refuse authorizing such invasions, by giving any thing under our hands, which may but seem an acknowledgment that what we receive is a prescript and unchangeable payment, unless we are very well assured that the law will esteem it such. We ought rather to lose it ourselves, than procure it by an act, that will prejudice our successors. Barely continuing to accept it unaltered, is doing more than enough to their disadvantage : therefore we ought on no account to go further ; but on the contrary, labour to procure and perpetuate, if we can, such evidence, as may be of service to them.

Nor should we be careful only to preserve our benefices from any diminution of income, but also from any addition of expence, which would amount to the same thing : for heavy burthens, and very unfit ones, of riotous entertainments in particular, and those sometimes at the most improper seasons, have been introduced and established in many places, by the inconsiderateness and supineness of incumbents. We shall do well, absolutely to break and annihilate such customs, if it remains legally possible : and if not, to use our utmost influence towards procuring the consent of the persons concerned, to change them into something else, less exceptionable and more useful, to be secured to them as firmly, as may be ; with a covenant added, that they shall be intitled to return to their old usage, if ever they are denied the benefit of the new.

Provided the abovementioned precautions be observed, we are much at liberty to treat our parishioners as kindly, as we will : and very kindly we ought to treat them : never permitting them, if we know it, to go without any thing, which is their right ; to pay any thing, which is not
due ;

due; or even to take any thing too dear: always making them equitable abatements, admitting every tolerable excuse for their delays of payment; and rather chusing to lose ever so much by them, than with any shadow of justice be accused of cruelty towards them. Yet when we shew them any indulgence, we should let them see, we are sensible of what we do for them: else they may impute it to our ignorance, not our goodness. And we ought not to be so easy with them, as to set them against a successor, who cannot afford to imitate us; or disqualify ourselves, by promiscuous kindness to all, from being especially kind to such as want. But whatever improvements we make in our benefices, by whatever just means, it will be a prudent guard against envy, as well as a right behaviour on other accounts, to increase, at the same time, either a sober modest hospitality, for neither excess nor vain shew at all become our function; or, which is yet better, and ought never to be excluded by the other, a judicious charity; above all, to the industrious and virtuous poor, extended to their souls, as well as their bodies.

For the purpose of recovering or preserving the rights of vicarages, the original endowments of them may be very useful. And these you are to seek for in the register books of the Diocese of *Lincoln*, out of which this was taken. But I have collected copies of some; and can direct you to books, printed or manuscript, in which are copies of others; or to that part of the register-books, in which they may be found: and shall gladly give any of you whatever information is in my power. But you must not always conclude your present rights to be neither more nor less, than such an endowment sets forth: both because there may be a subsequent one, with variations; and because, where no subsequent one appears, long custom, in particular cases, may create a legal presumption, that there was one, upon which that custom was grounded.

For the same use, in rectories, as well as vicarages, terriers were directed: how anciently, I cannot say. But the 87th Canon of 1603 enjoins, that the Bishop of each Diocese shall procure them to be taken, by the view of honest men in every parish, to be appointed by him, whereof the minister to be one: it specifies the particulars, of which they shall consist, and orders them to be laid up in the Bishop's registry. How often they shall be taken, it doth not mention. But plainly the changes, which time introduces, particularly in the names of the parcels and abutments of glebe lands, require a renewal of terriers at reasonable distances. This Canon hath been observed so imperfectly, that of about 200 parishes, of which this Diocese consists, there are terriers in the registry of no more than about 126: and most of them only one: and of these, not 20, since the year 1685. In the convocation of 1704, complaints were made of the like omissions elsewhere: and in those of 1710, 1714, 1715, a scheme was formed, that where no terrier had been made for 7 years then last past, (which looks as if a repetition every 7 years was intended) (a) the minister should make one, with the church-

(a) *Prideaux*, Directions to Church-wardens, § 99. saith, that the Bishop at every visitation usually requires a new terrier. Bishop *Gibson* proposes that there should be a new where there had been none since the restoration.

church-wardens, or such parishioners as the Bishop should appoint: that three indented copies of it in parchment should be signed by them; one to be exhibited at the Bishop's next visitation, the second at the Arch-deacon's, and the third put in the parish chest (*b*). But these proposals having never received the sanction of due authority, are to be considered as no more than prudent directions: the Canon of 1603 still continues our only legal rule. And I am very desirous to perform the part, which it assigns to me. But then I must beg your assistance in order to my nominating proper persons, that is, parishioners of the greatest probity, knowledge, and substance, to be joined in the work with you. Terriers indeed are of more use in causes tried before ecclesiastical judges, than temporal: who will not allow the spiritual judicatures to be courts of record: but still, when regularly made, they will have some weight every where. At least they will be valuable and authentic informations to your successors: and probably the parishioners of future times will be ashamed to insist on claims, contrary to what they will see asserted under the hands of their predecessors, perhaps their fathers or near relations. But then, to produce these good effects, indeed to prevent their producing bad ones, they must be made with great care. If there be a preceding terrier, it must be consulted: if it be defective, the defects must be supplied: if it be accurate, there must be no variations from it in the new, but where they are necessary to render descriptions intelligible; or where other alterations have been made that require them. For contradictory terriers will hurt, if not destroy, each other's evidence. It will also be right to express in them, what peculiar burthens are incumbent on the minister, or that there are none, as well as what property belongs to him. But if his right, or obligation, to any thing, be doubtful: either no terrier must be made, till the doubt is removed; or it must be set down there as a doubtful point; but by no means given up, to please any person, or serve any purpose whatever. For terriers, that make against the Clergy, will do them abundantly more harm, than such, as make in their favour, will do them good. And lastly, though it may be needless and inconvenient to employ many persons in drawing up a terrier, yet the more sign it, the better; especially of considerable persons: for to omit any of them, and multiply the names of others, will appear suspicious. And as it may not always be easy to procure such hands, as you could wish; favourable opportunities must be prudently sought and waited for; and the work undertaken, when they offer, and not before.

Other very useful precautions, of near affinity to this of terriers, are, that if any augmentations have been made of your benefices, by payments reserved in church or college leases, by the Queen's bounty, or otherwise: or if any agreement have been entered into, between you, or your predecessors, and the patron and ordinary, for making any exchange or inclosure, or doing any other act, which affects your income, or any part of it, whether it be confirmed by a legal decree or not: proper evidences

(*b*) See *Wilkins*, vol. 4. p. 638, 656. It was also proposed that a calendar should be made of those which were put in the registry and that they should not be delivered out, without security given.

dences of these things should both be kept amongst your parochial papers, and deposited in the public office. Indeed the law requires that augmentations, made by ecclesiastical bodies or persons, be entered in a parchment book, to be kept in the Bishop's registry for that end (c). And though acts of Parliament, passed for any of the purposes above-mentioned, may be considered as things more notorious: yet without the same sort of care, the memory of these also may be lost, or some of the provisions made in them controverted.

There is still one thing more, that, amongst several other uses to which it extends, may be very serviceable to ascertain the rights of livings: I mean repeating from time to time, the ancient practice of perambulations: which hath been long freed from superstition; and, if preserved also from intemperance and tumultuous contests, the last of which evils may be prevented by friendly discourse beforehand with the chief inhabitants of your own and the neighbouring parishes; the thanksgivings, prayers, and sentences of Scripture, with which the injunctions of *Queen Elizabeth* direct it to be accompanied, will render it a very pious ceremony: and the civil benefits of it may be considerable. For though, without it, there seldom will arise any question, to what parish, lands, that have been long cultivated, appertain: yet concerning others, in the whole or in part, there often doth. And some, that are worth but little at present, may come hereafter to be of great value.

But, besides preserving the incomes of our benefices from encroachments, we are bound to preserve the lands and edifices belonging to them, in good condition. If therefore we commit waste on our glebe, or, through covetousness or negligence, impoverish it, or suffer our tenant to impoverish it, we act dishonourably and unjustly: as also, if we permit our dwelling-houses or out-buildings to fall into decay, for want of early or sufficient repair. A small expence in time may prevent the necessity of a much larger afterwards, and thus, by neglecting it, we may hurt ourselves; which would doubtless be unwise: but designedly throwing the burthen on our successor deserves a harsher name. And if we either squander extravagantly, or hoard avaritiously, what we save thus; it doubles the fault. If mere indolence be the cause of our omission; it is by no means a good principle; and produces effects, as bad, as if it were a worse. Nay, if we are influenced by the desire of making only a reasonable provision for our families: we have no right to provide for them by wronging our successor; and perhaps depriving our parishioners of the benefit of having a minister resident amongst them. Possibly some may say, that their executors must account for whatever they leave out of order: and therefore they do no harm. But it may be, they will leave them nothing to account with: especially as the common law prefers the payment of other debts before dilapidations (d). At least they well know, that the law, though it will allow more, than executors commonly pretend; and perhaps more, than would have prevented the damage, if applied in time; will not allow enough to repair it afterwards; or however not to compensate moreover for the expence and trouble of taking that remedy: and that therefore, in all likelihood, a successor, to avoid

(c) 29 Car. 2. c. 8. §. 4, 5, 6.

(d) See *Gibson's* Codex, p. 791.

avoid law, will chuse rather to accept of less, than he ought to have. Now driving him to this, is doing him a gross injury; and that very probably when he is just coming into the world in such circumstances, that it will weigh heavy upon him, and may put him behind hand for a long time. Some again will plead, that they really cannot afford to repair their houses. And doubtless the condition of many is very pitiable, and deserves the assistance, as well as compassion, of their richer neighbours and brethren. But still what reason is there to think, that they, who come after them, will be better able, when the houses are grown worse? And what must it therefore end in, unless timely prevention be applied? Others may alledge, theirs are in repair; and no dilapidations will be found, when they leave them. But are they in such repair, so substantial and so decent, as a minister's house ought, that belongs to such a benefice: or only just habitable, and patched up to hold out a little longer? Perhaps you keep your house in as good a condition, as you found it. But did you think your predecessor acted well, when he left it you in no better? If not, that which was his duty, is now yours. These things all incumbents ought to consider: but some more especially; as they who have large benefices, and they who have two; which may be ordinarily supposed equivalent to a large one. Yet these latter, in how good order soever they may, for their own sakes, keep the house they usually reside in, have too often left the other to be treated as a farmer or tenant pleases: till it hath grown, if not ruinous, yet very unsuitable to its next proper inhabitant. Again, rich persons, that are possessed of poor livings, ought peculiarly to reflect, how noble an opportunity is put into their hands of being benefactors to them: by repairing, or if need be, rebuilding, and fitting up, the houses; and improving whatever little space of ground lies about them, in such manner, as will make both comfortable to the succeeding owners. And the very different method, which they have sometimes taken, of living in better habitations themselves, and letting these run into decay, is extremely ungenerous and illiberal. Yet indeed, on the other hand, making parsonage or vicarage houses, or the appurtenances of them, so large for their own convenience, as to bring on afterwards too great an expence in supporting them, would be a mark, either of much vanity, or little consideration.

On this whole subject I might, instead of persuasion, use authority alone. But as the latter would be much less pleasing to me: so I hope the former will be as effectual with you. Else, the laws of the church in this nation, empower the Bishop, if incumbents do not repair their houses in a decent manner (*e*), to take cognizance of the neglect either on complaint or by voluntary inquiry, and to proceed against them by ecclesiastical censures; or, after admonishing them in vain, to make himself

(*e*) *Semper tamen rationabilis consideratio sit habenda ad facultates ecclesiæ.* Const. Edm. *Si Rector*; on which *Lyndwood's* note is, *Quia in beneficio pinguiori requiruntur ædificia magis sumptuosa quam in beneficio minus pingui.* Lib. 3. Tit. 27. de eccl. ædificandis. Verb. *Facultates Ecclesiæ*, p. 251.

himself what repair is needful out of the profits of their benefices : and what proportion of them shall be applied to this purpose, is left to his discretion (*f*) : but the injunctions of *H. 8. Ed. 6. and Q. Eliz.* directed a fifth (*g*). And a further constitution of *Othobon*, published in the year 1268, expressly orders, that such a sequestration be made in the case of houses fallen down, as well as decayed (*h*). And the *Ref. Leg. Eccl.* had provided in the same manner for the same thing (*i*), in conformity with evident reason. Indeed, where no house hath been for a long time, compelling the incumbent to rebuild one may seem hard. But is it not harder still, that his parishioners and successors should never more enjoy an advantage, intended to be a perpetual one? At least, whatever he may think of his legal obligation, he should consider, whether he is not in conscience obliged to devote some fitting share of his income to this use. Surely, if he doth not think it a strict duty, he must think it, unless there be some peculiar reason to the contrary, an excellently good action. And supposing that what he can lay by, will amount only to a tolerable beginning : yet others may, and probably will, sooner or later, add to it, and complete the work.

But whatever care you ought to take, and I ought to see that you take, in relation to your houses : there is still a much greater, for the same reasons and more, due from you, who are rectors, in relation to your chancels : and I am yet more expressly authorized, by Statute-law as well as Canon, to superintend this matter. Chancels are the most sacred part of the church : and the whole church ought to be preserved in a condition, worthy of that Being, whose it is ; and fit to inspire his worshippers with reverence. The light of Nature taught the Heathens to adorn their temples (*k*). God himself provided, by express and minute directions, for the beauty of his sanctuary amongst the Jews : the ancient Christians imitated these precedents, as soon as ever the danger of persecution ceased (*l*) : and if the following ages carried their notions of magnificence and ornament in religious edifices too far, as undoubtedly they did, in heaping up treasures there, which had much better have been distributed to the poor, than kept to provoke the envy and avarice of the great : yet in this country, for several generations past, the contrary extreme hath prevailed to so shameful a degree, as must needs give Papists an exceeding great disgust to Protestantism ; and Infidels no small contempt of Christians, as either despising inwardly the religion they profess, or being too sordid to pay it the common outward marks of respect.

Now what hope can we have of bringing our people back, unless we set them the example? What can we say to our parishioners about their churches, or to lay-impropriators about their chancels ; or, say what
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(*f*) See *Gibson's Codex*, T. 32. c. 3. p. 789, &c.

(*g*) See *Wilkins*, vol. 4. p. 5. The *Ref. Leg. Eccl. Tit. de Dilapidationibus*, c. 2. p. 77. directs only a 7th.

(*h*) *Gibson's Codex*, Tit. 32 c. 3. p. 789.

(*i*) *Tit. de Dilap.* c. 2. p. 77.

(*k*) *Hor. Od.* 15. lib. 2. and *Sat.* 2. lib. 2. v. 103, 104, 105.

(*l*) See *Bingham*.

we will, how can it be expected they should mind us, if we are blameable ourselves on the same head? In respect of their duty in this point, and some concern, (indeed not a little) which you have with it, I intend to speak at large, if God spare my life and health to another visitation. But at present I confine myself to what is more immediately and intirely the province of the Clergy. Anciently the repair of the whole church was incumbent on the rector as of common right (*m*). I believe it continues to be so still in other nations: but the custom of ours hath releas'd us from the largest part of the burthen: for which reason we ought to bear the remainder very chearfully; and exceed what in strictness might be demanded of us. Plainness of appearance, though carried almost to the borders of neglect, in relation to our own persons and abodes, may be a judicious and instructive mark of simplicity and humility. But it will be much more so, if, at the same time, we are liberal in providing for the honour of sacred things. And if, instead of that, we take just the contrary part; dwell, as the Prophet expresses himself, *in ceiled house*, and let the house of God lie waste (*n*); suffer the principal part of it, and that with which we are intrusted, to be in a worse condition, than any common room we live in; think nothing too good for ourselves, and every thing good enough for him and his service; it is an exceeding bad sign; and must have a most undesirable effect on all who observe it. I believe indeed that the chancels, which belong to incumbents, will be generally found in the best condition of any. Yet some even of these, I fear, have scarce been kept in necessary present repair, and others by no means duly cleared from annoyances, which must gradually bring them to decay: water undermining and rotting the foundations, earth heaped up against the outside, weeds and shrubs growing upon them, or trees too near them. Where sufficient attention is paid to these things; too frequently the floors are meanly paved, or the walls dirty or patched, or the windows ill glazed, and it may be in part stopt up, or the roof not ceiled: or they are damp, offensive and unwholesome, for want of a due circulation of air. Now it is indispenfably requisite to preserve them not only standing and safe, but clean, neat, decent, agreeable: and it is highly fit to go further, and superadd, not a light and trivial finery, but such degrees of proper dignity and grandeur, as we are able, consistently with other real obligations. Perhaps they may have been long, or perhaps always, as mean as they are at present. But the meanness which in ages of less elegance might give no offence, may justly give more than a little now. And why should not the church of God, as well as every thing else about us, partake of the improvements of later times? In several of your chancels, I doubt not, every thing which I have been recommending is done. In others you have resolved to do it: and if any have not rightly considered the matter before, they must be sensible, that it was my duty to admonish them, and is theirs to regard the admonition. For, as to the excuses, which may be pleaded under this

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(*m*) See *Const. Othob.* Tit. 17, and *John de Athon*, Verb. *Cancellor.*

(*n*) *Hag.* i. 4.

head of chancels, they have been obviated, under the former of parsonage-houses.

It only remains now, that I speak briefly to the third point, our obligations in regard to the temporalities of our benefices, when we have a near view of quitting them: whether by death, which may be near us at any time, and must be so in old age; or any other way. Some, because they were not to continue incumbents long, have set themselves to consult their own interests, by neglect of all expensive duties, by committing waste, by allowing others to commit it. A manner of proceeding, in all cases unjust: when they are removing to a better income, peculiarly dishonourable: when they see their latter end approach, shockingly wicked; unless the decay of their faculties furnish some excuse for them. Rejecting therefore all such practices with just abomination, we are bound in these circumstances, to consider seriously, what our past faults and omissions, relating to this article, have been: to undo, as far as we can, what we have done amiss: to do immediately what we ought to have done sooner: to make the amends we are able, if any harm hath happened by the delay; and indeed, some amends for the chance there was, that harm might have happened. But, how rightly soever we may have acted hitherto, there will still be duties, peculiar to the time, which I am now supposing: that we secure to our successors whatever books, deeds, and papers, relating to our benefices, came down to us from our predecessors; whatever evidences our own incumbency hath furnished; in a word, whatever notices may be of importance, concerning the rights, or the value, of the living, we enjoy. But particularly, if we have been so inconsiderate, as to make any long agreement, which a succeeding minister may be in danger of mistaking, or others may be tempted to set up, for an established prescription; as may easily happen if it was done many years ago: we ought to leave them the most authentic proofs of the real state and truth of the case. Some have through indolence omitted these things. Others have designedly kept in their own power, or left in that of their executors, all such means of information; that their successors, in order to receive them, may be bound to behave reasonably and kindly, as they are pleased to term it; that is, may be under a necessity of submitting to whatever unreasonable things shall be demanded of them; in respect of dilapidations, or any other point. This, you cannot but see, would be making an unfaithful use of those lights, which have been intrusted with you by others, and an oppressive one of those which you have added yourselves. Or supposing that only equitable requests are made to a successor, and that he refuses them: still it is not a Christian part, to prevent this injury by threatening, and much less to revenge it by doing, what in all likelihood would be a far greater injury; and may extend its bad effects, beyond the person, who hath given the provocation, to all that shall fill his place hereafter, though perfectly innocent; and to every one that might have shared in the advantage of their enjoying a more plentiful income. Nor is it sufficient, that you disapprove such conduct, unless you make a due provision, that your representatives when you are gone shall not be guilty of it. You may have a better opinion of them in this respect, than they

they deserve : at least, there can be no harm in taking a little more care of such a matter, than might be absolutely necessary.

One powerful motive to be careful in all the points, which I have been mentioning, is, that few things will contribute more to your maintaining while you live, and leaving when you die, the character of men of probity and honour, amongst your neighbours in general, and your brethren of the Clergy in particular, than your diligent and disinterested attention to act worthily and kindly in relation to your successors, though probably you know them not, or however have no personal connection with them. Nor will many things throw a blacker or more lasting stain upon persons, than a low cunning, or a selfish indifference, in these affairs. But indeed conscience, as well as reputation, is deeply concerned in the matter, as I doubt not, but you are all sensible. Nor surely will any one else imagine, either that my exhortations to you, any more than yours to your hearers, imply you to be guilty of, or especially inclined to any of the faults, against which they are levelled : or that, by speaking thus long of your worldly affairs, I seem to think them of weight equal, or comparable, to your spiritual functions. But the best of us have need to be admonished of all our duties, be they duties of higher rank or lower, each in their turns. Temporal things are not to be neglected : and those least of all, which are set apart for the service of things eternal. But then we must be watchful over them, in order to employ them, as they were meant to be employed : and if we preserve and transmit them ever so faithfully, but use them unfaithfully ; studying only or chiefly to enrich or advance ourselves, or gratify our sensual appetites, or love of diversions, or of elegant appearance, by means of those revenues, which were given us for ends widely different : (partly to make a comfortable and moderate, not a superfluous and invidious provision for ourselves and ours, and partly to serve the purposes of religion and charity) we offend God, sin against our brethren, and provoke men to take from us what they are too ready to say we do no good with : as indeed little would be done, were such a conduct general. It is true, and the laity ought to consider it a great deal more than they do, that we have very few of us much, if any thing, to spare. But they who have, should *let their light shine before men*, and be seen to lay it out in pious uses prudently chosen : and the poorest should occasionally give what alms they can ; and make amends for their inability on this head, by a double diligence in useful instruction, pious example, and obliging behaviour, to the meanest of their people. Without a remarkable degree of such care, we shall have few or no friends : and notwithstanding it, we shall have many enemies. This is hard treatment : but angry complaints will only make it worse ; and the most reasonable expostulations not much better, unless we first consider, wherein we are faulty or defective, and amend it ; wherein we are unjustly blamed or suspected, and clear ourselves : then patiently persevere in well-doing, *in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report* (o). Other means, if they

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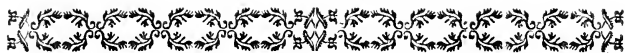
could support us, cannot enable us to answer the end of our institution. But by these we may still hope, not only to confute, but, which must ever be our chief aim, if possible, to convert, at least to mollify our adversaries; and so recommend ourselves to more impartial persons, that they may *receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls* (p). Or should we, after all, in respect of ever so many, *labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought, yet our judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God* (q).

(p) James i. 21.

(q) Isa. xlix. 4.



A CHARGE



A
C H A R G E
DELIVERED TO THE
CLERGY of the DIOCESE,
OF
O X F O R D,
In the YEAR 1753.



Reverend Brethren,

✻✻✻ I HAVE never attempted in my former visitations, nor shall I in this, to entertain you with any thing new and curious: thinking it much fitter for me, and better for you, to speak to you of such points, immediately relating to common practice, as, though easily understood, are too frequently disregarded. With this view I have gone through the principal parts of your duty, as parochial ministers, in respect both of spirituals and temporals. But besides what is wholly incumbent on yourselves, in some things you are jointly concerned with your church-wardens: and in others, though not expressly commissioned by law to interpose, you may do it nevertheless, with peculiar propriety, weight, and influence.

Of the former sort are those offences against religion and morals, which the church-wardens are bound by oath to present; and the incumbent, or his curate, empowered and charged by the 113th and following Canons to join with them in presenting, if need be; or to present alone, if they refuse. This naturally implies, what the 26th Canon expresses, that the minister is to urge the church-wardens to perform that part of their office. Indeed your first endeavour should be, by due instructions and exhortations, to hinder such offences: your next, by due reproofs, public or private, to amend them. But if both prove ineffectual, what remains is, to get them corrected by authority. I am perfectly sensible, that both immorality and irreligion are grown almost beyond the reach of ecclesiastical power: which having in former times been very unwarrantably extended, hath since been very unjustly and imprudently cramped and weakened many ways. I am sensible also, that sometimes church-wardens, nay even ministers, are so dependent on persons, who deserve to be presented, that they cannot present them without imminent hazard of ruining themselves: and farther still, that some offenders, if they were thus exposed, would only become worse, and set themselves to make others worse: while some again, as the Apostle expresses it in this very case, would be *swallowed up with overmuch sorrow* (a). Now surely it cannot have been designed by our gracious Redeemer, or the rulers of his church, that the power of spiritual censures, which the same Apostle hath twice declared the Lord to have given for edification, not for destruction (b), should be exercised in circumstances like these. Therefore when circumstances are evidently and undeniably of this kind, I think you should not insist on your church-wardens presenting. But there is much more danger of their being guilty of too great remissness, than running into overmuch rigour. And therefore you must advise and entreat them to make presentments of sinners, where probably it will be useful; and to condemn the displeasure of bad people, when it can have no extremely ill consequences, (of which there is commonly much more fear than is necessary) for the hope of their amendment and the good of others round them. The very office of church-wardens obliges them to this: their oath yet more firmly. And if they are backward still, after being told it doth, you must acquaint them, that you are directed by the 26th Canon, (in the execution of which however, as in all points of discipline, discretion should be used,) to refuse them the holy communion; not indeed for every neglect of presenting offences, but if they wilfully neglect it in desperate defiance of their oath, when they are urged to it by their neighbours, their minister or ordinary: for so the same Canon describes the case: in which case likewise you will inform them, the court is authorized, by Canon 117, to proceed against them for perjury. But, along with these terrors, you will be sure to join fitting encouragements. You will promise to defend them to the parishioners, and even to the person presented, as doing only their duty. You will assure them, as you may, first, that the court will take notice of their presentments, no farther, than is proper; so that they shall not incur the displeasure of the offenders and their friends for nothing; then, that it will proceed, not with a view to

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(a) 2 Cor. ii. 7.

(b) 2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10.

gain, but to reformation and example; not with excessive, nor, if it can be avoided, with the utmost rigour, but with equity and moderation.

If all this be unsuccessful, you must, in cases that require it, offer to join with them, or even resolve to present without them. But you must never take any step in these matters, much less the more extraordinary steps, from motives of resentment, interest, or party. If such inducements can be with any colour of reason imputed to you, they will so grievously discredit what you do, that probably you had better do nothing. But only take care to shew, that you act merely from good intention, accompanied with temper and prudence, after trying gentler methods in vain: and some will vindicate, and even applaud you: more will inwardly and silently respect you; and the number of the rest will not be formidable.

But then whoever brings a complaint, must enable the court to take due cognizance of it: else presentments will be despised; and the consequences be worse, than if they had not been made. Evidence must of necessity be furnished: otherwise there can be no proceeding. Expenses, I hope I may promise, will be as low as possible; and they should be cheerfully born for the good of the parish and the public. It is not reasonable that the court should bear them. Temporal courts never do. And besides, there is room for plausible, though unjust, suspicions of partiality, where the judge appears to be in effect prosecutor too, and is interested in condemning the party accused.

When persons are presented, you must use your best endeavours to make them sorry, not merely that they are in danger of being punished, but principally that they have sinned: and in proportion as you succeed in that, recommend them to such favour, as can be shewn them. When persons are excommunicated, (which I heartily wish no one ever was but for crimes, though indeed a wilful contempt of authority is a great crime) you must press them to consider seriously, how they would be affected, if a physician or a lawyer of eminence pronounced their case desperate; and of how much greater importance the concerns of eternity are, than those of time. You must also admonish them, that slighting a censure, passed on them for their amendment, will make their condition still more deplorable. And when they have been denounced excommunicate, by the 85th Canon, the church-wardens are to see, that in every meeting of the congregation they be kept out of the church. Nor must you suffer them to be sureties for children in baptism, to receive the holy eucharist, or to have Christian burial. Farther, if they continue without absolution for three months, the 65th Canon directs you to declare them excommunicate in the parish church every half year; that others, meaning such as have no necessary connections with them, may thereby be admonished to refrain their company, and excited the rather to procure out a writ *de excommunicato capiends*: that is, if the circumstances of the case make it requisite. Again, when persons do penance, you must be diligent to make them seriously sensible of the usefulness of such discipline; and the unspeakable obligations they have to the Gospel of Christ, which alone assures men of forgiveness on any terms. And lastly, both on all such, and all other fit occasions, you must remind your people, that however the censures of the church may
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be relaxed or evaded, the final judgment of God on obstinate sinners is both unavoidable and insupportable.

Besides the presentment of persons who give offence, you are concerned likewise in that of things belonging to the church, which are not kept in good repair and order.

I have already spoken to you concerning the repair of your houses and chancels : and enlarged on the reasons, why both, but especially the latter, should be always preserved not only in a firm and safe, but decent and respectable state. Now the same reasons hold in regard to the rest of the church : and after you have set the example in your own part, you may with reputation and weight call on your parishioners to do what is proper in theirs. And indeed you are bound to it. For, as *John of Athon* hath justly observed (c), *Licet per consuetudinem exoneretur rector a sumptibus præstandis, non tamen eximitur a curâ & solitudine impendendâ.* Thus far even the body of the church is still under your inspection : and if any thing be remarkably amiss there, and you take no notice ; good and considerate persons will lament it, as a bad sign and of bad consequence : others will make your indifference a plea to excuse their own ; and yet while they are glad of it, will be likely enough to condemn you for it ; and perhaps be led by it to think meanly of religion, as well as of you. Besides, church-wardens have often but little sense of propriety in these matters : therefore you should labour to give them a sense of it : convince them, by reason and Scripture, of the honour due to the house of God : shew them, that their own honour too is interested ; that a church in handsome condition is a credit to the whole parish ; and in particular to the officers, who have put it in that condition, and whose names will be long remembered on that account. They are often afraid of the expence. Argue with them, that things may be done gradually, and so the expence be rendered almost imperceptible : persuade them to lessen their expences in needless matters ; in eating and drinking at visitations, and on other occasions, sometimes to excess, never to any good purpose ; and observe to them, how much righter and more commendable it would be, to lay out or lay up that money for proper uses : how shameful indeed, to squander it in riot and folly, and be never the better, but the worse the next day ; when they might dispose of it so, as to see the good effects for years, and have them seen for ages. If still you cannot influence the present church-wardens, try their successors. You have a concurrent right with the parishioners in chusing them ; and if your opinions differ, you are to chuse one, they another : unless there be a custom to the contrary. Surely then, within some reasonable time, you may get such as will hearken to you. If you fail of success that way, desire your people to reflect how their money goes : not in fees of visitations, which are no higher now, than when the value of money was thrice, perhaps five times, higher, but in extravagance and intemperance : that therefore they ought not to complain of the court, but of their own officers ; indeed ought to disallow the wrong and idle articles of their accounts ; and may be assured, the court will support them in doing so.

Sometimes the church-wardens are willing to lay out money as they ought,

ought, but the parishioners unwilling. In that case you must acquaint the former, that no man's consent is wanted for their repairing and keeping in good order, both the church, and every thing belonging to it, which is either necessary, or which they found there : nor is the consent of every man requisite, but of the majority only of a parish-meeting duly called, for adding any thing new, provided the ordinary approve it. However, they should do their utmost, and you should assist them, to procure the concurrence of all the parishioners ; or at least, of as many as possible : to whom you will represent for this end, that a moderate expence now will prevent a much greater hereafter : that almost all the churches in the nation were built many ages ago, and a very great part of them about the same time : that without constant and substantial repairs, in another generation or another century, they will be falling at the same time ; and how will they be rebuilt ? The inhabitants, if we may guess from what we see at present, will be both less able and less inclined. As for help from bishops : those for other things produce but little ; but those for churches extremely little ; to the great shame indeed of persons, who call themselves Christians : and you should labour to rectify their prejudices on this head, and excite them to be more charitable. But God knows whether they will ; and if hereafter they should, what can be hoped from it, when almost every parish in the land will want a bishop ? In many, it is to be feared there will be no churches ; in others, wretchedly mean ones ; to the contempt of all religion amongst Infidels, and of the Protestant religion amongst Papists. Repeat and inculcate it therefore on your people, that they must take care of the churches they have : if not, their posterity will run the risque of having none. Too many will scarcely be moved even by that consideration : but there is the more need of moving such as you can ; and, getting into a condition of moving more, by all proper methods of recommending the Gospel and yourselves.

But to persons of rank and figure in your parishes, one should hope you might apply with very fair prospect of success. To these you may surely represent at favourable seasons, that labouring people part very hardly with the money, which they get very hardly : that therefore their superiors should not only use their influence and example to make them willing, but indeed should do for them what perhaps they are almost as unable to do, as they are unwilling ; especially what goes any length beyond repairs absolutely necessary : for that people of low degree, though they may have some notion of neatness and elegance, yet will murmur grievously to pay much for it in their churches, and part of their ill humour will fall on the doctrine taught there : that especially if they are tenants, their concern in the place being temporary, and possibly also short or uncertain, they will of course endeavour to shift off the burthen from themselves : but that landlords have a more lasting interest, and will find their account better in doing things early at their own cost, than in letting them run on, till the cost is much greater : for then, in some shape or other, it must come out of their pockets. With these considerations you will not fail to join others of a higher nature : that sacred fabrics are appropriated to the noblest of uses, the worship of the great God ; and to preserve or put them in a condition suitable to it

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is one very proper method of expressing and cherishing a sense of piety in their own minds, and spreading it through their families, neighbours and dependants; whereas, by suffering his house to be an object of contempt and scorn, while perhaps they spare nothing to beautify their own, they will be understood, and will tempt all around them, to despise the service performed there, and him to whom it is paid: that repairing and embellishing their churches will employ the poor full as beneficially, as adorning their seats and gardens, and procure them a much better grounded, and more general, esteem. Indeed it is surprising, that noblemen and gentlemen will squander vast sums in the gratification of private luxury and vanity, for which more condemn than applaud them; and not consider, that much smaller sums bestowed on public works, especially in honour of religion, would gain them the admiration of a whole country; and the peculiar blessing of many, whom they would thus ease from burthens: besides that they might shew their good taste, if that be the favourite point with them, no less in one way than the other. But even Heathen writers have observed long ago, that expensive personal indulgence, and mean spirited parsimony in what regards the community, are often companions, and always ill symptoms (*d*).

But you may press the obligation of repairing and ornamenting yet more strongly, both on such of the nobility and gentry, and on such colleges and ecclesiastical persons or bodies, as are impropiators: and likewise on the lesses of these latter; because they have a more beneficial interest in the estate, than the lessors. Being possessed of the greater share of what was originally given for the support of the service and the fabric, they are bound at least in conscience, to take care of both, if it be needful: but of one-part of the fabric, the chancel, they are indisputably bound by law to take care. And yet too commonly even those amongst them, who should be the most attentive to this point, strangely neglect it; or throw it on their tenants, who they know will of course neglect it; and concern themselves no farther. So their chancels are only in such sort of repair, as their barns and out-houses. Now handsome benefactions to put them in a better condition, given from time to time, and especially when good fines are received, would shew piety and generosity at once; would abate the unjust envy and hatred, to which academical and ecclesiastical owners of estates are liable; and set an example, which others might probably imitate.

I have already said, in speaking of chancels, that the ornaments of sacred places ought not to be light and gaudy, but modest and grave. Amongst these, a very proper one, of the cheaper kind, is, writing on the walls chosen sentences of Scripture. This was done as early as the 4th century (*e*): but in process of time ceased to be done, at least in the vulgar tongue: and being restored at the reformation, was forbidden, as promoting that cause, by Bishop *Bonner* in Queen *Mary's* reign (*f*). It not only diversifies the walls very agreeably and decently, but affords useful matter for meditation to the people, before the service begins; and may afford them useful admonition, when their eyes and thoughts

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(*d*) *Cic. pro Flacco. Hor. Od. l. 2, 15. Sat. l. 2. 2. 103, 104, 105.*

(*e*) *Bingb. viii. 8, 3.*

(*f*) *Wilkins, vol. iv. p. 108.*

are wandering in the course of it. For these reasons, I presume, the 32d Canon directs, that such sentences be written in convenient places; and likewise, that the ten commandments be set upon the east end of every church and chapel: to which undoubtedly the creed and Lord's prayer, though not mentioned in the Canon, are very fit companions.

You must also endeavour, that such care may be taken of the furniture of the church, and whatever is used in it, as the Canons and Rubrics and the nature of the thing require: that the surplice be originally of proper linen, and kept clean, and renewed before it becomes contemptible by age: that the Bible and Prayer Books be whole and unfulled, and well bound: that the vessels for the celebration of both the sacraments, and the cover of the holy table, but more especially the bread and wine placed upon it, be suitable in all respects to the solemnity: not such as may give disgust to the more delicate, and tempt them to abhor, as the Scripture expression is, *the offering of the Lord* (g). These are, in their kind, points of importance: and such as you may for the most part easily carry. Another thing, worthy of notice, is the condition of your church-yards. I take it for granted, though I am afraid I forgot to name it, that you keep those, which belong to yourselves, neat and decent: not turning in cattle to defile them and trample down the grave-stones; and make consecrated ground such, as you would not suffer courts before your own doors to be; but taking the profits of the herbage in such manner, as may rather add beauty to the place. And I hope, where a church-yard belongs to an impropriator, you will do your best to get the same respect paid it; and to whomsoever it belongs, the fences well kept up.

If, in any or all of the particulars, which I have specified, your representations will be less offensively introduced, or your attempts be of more weight, for your being able to say, that I directed you to make them, I do hereby direct you accordingly; and desire you to say I did. Nor should you be contented with a transient mention of the subject once or twice; but where there is any hope, return it on proper occasions, and try the force of modest importunity. If, after competent trial, you find no effect, you must urge the church-wardens, to present what is amiss, if they will do no more. Indeed such things as belong to their own care, they should not present, but amend: and the Canons require, not the former, but the latter. Only when they have not time for the latter, the former is all they can do: and when they have, it is better than doing nothing. For it gives notice, and furnishes room for admonitions and injunctions. If there be need, here again you must encourage them to present, by engaging to plead their cause with the parishioners. You may also safely promise them, that they shall suffer no oppressive or hard treatment, shall not be required to lay out upon any thing more than is fitting, and shall have reasonable time allowed, even for that. I need not say, that both to qualify yourselves for pressing them to present, and on many other accounts, you must take effectual care, that nothing belonging to you be presentable. Else they will have a ready answer for you: and it will be a sad thing to stand in awe and be at the mercy of those, who ought to reverence you. If you cannot prevail

prevail on them otherwise, I apprehend you may join with them; and if you cannot prevail on them at all, I apprehend you may present without them, in the case of repairs, as well as offences, by virtue of the interpretation, which practice hath put on the abovementioned Canon: though it speaks, I own, expressly of nothing besides offences. But in doing either of these things, you must be sure to observe the cautions given under the former head.

Yet after all, I am well aware, that you may often have great difficulties to encounter, possibly sometimes too great to surmount. And to diminish them from you, I have endeavoured to procure a parochial visitation from the Archdeacon, which he hath promised. But then, for the credit of your parishioners and your own, let this be an inducement to put things in good order, that he may find them so: not to leave them in bad order, that he may rectify them.

Another very useful institution, for these and many valuable purposes, was that of rural Deans: which took place here before the conquest, was kept up till the great rebellion, was restored afterwards in several Dioceses, and particularly in this by the admirable Bishop *Fell* (*b*), was found not quite extinct and was completely revived by the late excellent Bishop of *Glocester* (*i*), in that county, and is preserved to this day in some parts of the nation besides. These Deans, being chosen out of the resident parochial Clergy, could inspect, with small trouble, the churches and parishes within their several narrow districts; and being bound to report what they found amiss, could do it with little or no offence. In the latter end of Queen *Anne's*, and the beginning of the late King's reign, the convocation made some progress towards the re-establishment and better regulation of this office. When that, or any other branch of discipline, may be the subject of public consideration again, is very uncertain. I should be very glad, with your approbation, to set it up once more amongst us, in such form as might be most beneficial and satisfactory: but contented at present with hinting the matter, I leave and recommend it to your serious thoughts.

A third particular, of considerable importance, in which you are jointly concerned with the church-wardens, is the keeping of the register book. The 70th Canon directs, that it be of parchment: and though an act of Parliament, lately passed, allows marriages to be registered in a paper book; yet parchment is far more durable: nor is the difference of expence worth regarding, as it returns so seldom. This book should be strongly bound, and not over large; lest it should be worn and damaged, before it is filled. For the safe preservation of it, and doubtless of all preceding books of the same kind, the Canon orders; that a chest be provided with three locks and keys; one for you, one for each of the church-wardens, who are ordinarily two; and that on Sundays, if there hath been any christening, marriage or burial, in the week before, it shall be entered there. I am afraid it is seldom thus kept: and yet there would be no great trouble in it, after a little use. Or where that is otherwise, either the minister or a church-warden should keep it: and each of them should see from time to time, how it is kept.

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(*b*) *Kennet. Paroch. Ant.* p. 653.

(*i*) Bishop *Benson*.

The entries, if they cannot well be made every Sunday, should be made very frequently, and in the mean time the minister, if he hath not the book, should take memorandums. He is the person directed to write in it, and usually much the fittest. But if, through any accident, that happens not to be so, he should appoint a proper person, and superintend him. The names and surnames of the parents ought to be added, in registering not only baptisms, where it is enjoined, but marriages and burials too, as far as may be : for it may prevent doubts and disputes. It will also be very useful, to put down the day of the birth and death of each person, as well as of the baptism and burial. The late act above-mentioned hath directed farther, that every page of the register of marriages be numbered, to discover if any leaf be afterwards cut out ; and ruled with lines at equal distances, to discover if any article be afterwards put in. And you will do very well to observe the same precautions in registering baptisms and burials. When a page is filled, the Canon requires the minister and church-wardens to subscribe their names ; which they should do just below the last line. And if this be not done immediately, it may without any inconvenience be done soon after : and was done by me and the church-wardens, for many years, in one of the most populous parishes of the kingdom. Lastly the Canon requires, that an attested copy of this book be annually transmitted to the Bishop's registry, received without fee, and faithfully preserved there : and it authorizes me to proceed against those, who are negligent about any of its directions. I must therefore both intreat and insist, that you inquire in what condition your old and your present register books are, and get them kept for the future as they ought. I have more than once been put under great difficulties in ordinations, for want of exactness in the register of baptisms. That of marriages is of so great concern, that altering it designedly to establish or void a marriage, is by the act above-mentioned made felony. In all cases the book, faithfully kept, is good evidence : and falsifying it is punishable at common law. I would only observe farther on this head, that in the preamble of a bill, which passed the House of Commons this last session, and had a second reading in the House of Lords, it was asserted as notorious, that " great inconveni-
" ces have arisen from the present defective manner, in which parochial
" registers are formed ; and the loose and uncertain method, in which
" they are kept and preserved ; whereby the evidence of descents is fre-
" quently lost and rendered precarious." So far as this may be fact, it will be most for our honour to amend it, without the interposition of the legislature.

A fourth point, of which I hope you will think yourselves bound, if not by law, yet in conscience, to take a joint care with the church-wardens, is that of parochial charities. The minister is the representative of the church, intrusted with its interests ; and you ought to endeavour, that such benefactions be first preserved, and then applied in a proper manner.

If it be doubtful, whether such or such a donation hath been given to your church or poor, or the support of a school in your parish, you will make proper inquiry concerning the matter. If it be given by any writing, you will procure that writing, or an attested copy of it, to be laid

up safely, either in the parish chest, or the Bishop's registry; indeed a copy in each place would be best; and an account of the gift should be inserted in your parish book. For if deeds are left in private hands, and especially without authentic notice where they are left, they are sometimes designedly suppressed; and often undesignedly destroyed or lost, through the ignorance or carelessness of the persons possessed of them. It will also be very proper, to have a table, mentioning the charity, hung up in your church; that as a grateful remembrance of the benefactors may be continued to posterity, and others incited to follow their good example: as a paper of directions drawn up by the lower house of convocation in 1710, hath well expressed it (*k*). If the benefaction be an estate vested in trustees, it will be very material to get the trust renewed in due time; else in all likelihood there will be expence, if not danger; and to trustees of as good credit and ability, as possible. They must likewise be warned, never to let out such lands on long leases, or at very low rents, in favour of any body: but to raise the rents when they can; at least to vary them, which will make it easy to raise them, when there is opportunity: otherwise it will soon be pretended, that they have no right to raise them; of which there are some unhappy instances in this Diocese. If the gift be in money, you must press to have it placed in the public funds, in case it be considerable enough; or else in the best private hands, and on the best security that can be obtained; paying no regard in such cases to personal friendships; and being particularly careful, that parish officers do not keep it in their own custody. If they do, the interest will usually be paid out of the public money, and most probably the principal will be lost in a few years.

But charities are preserved in vain, unless they are well applied: and they are often sadly misapplied. Gifts to the church, where it is not otherwise expressed, must be supposed intended for beautifying the church: else it will be never the better for such gifts: for it will be equally repaired without them: the parishioners are bound to that: and the chief of the burthen usually falls upon the richest, for whose relief charities were certainly not intended. And yet such benefactions are too commonly employed, not only in mere repairs, but in what hath no connection with the fabric; in providing bread and wine for the communion, in paying church-wardens bills for all sorts of things, it may be for extravagant and riotous entertainments amongst the rest, in easing the poor's rates, in I know not what; and the church all the time, instead of being any way improved, suffered to grow dirty and even ruinous. A lamentable abuse of this kind, (where a steeple fell down, and was in part rebuilt by contribution, while an estate, more than sufficient to have kept the whole building in good order and beauty, was perverted to other uses) I have taken much pains to rectify, but fear it is not thoroughly rectified yet. Again, gifts to the poor were certainly intended for the benefit of the poor; to make provision for such of them, as are not on the parish list, or a better provision for such as are. And yet they are sometimes embezzled and squandered, in a great measure, if not wholly; sometimes bestowed to serve private or party purposes: and very frequently sunk into the legal rate; so the wealthy are benefited; and the

the needy have not a farthing more, than if nothing had been given for them.

I know it is not always easy, perhaps not always possible for you, to remedy these ill practices. But a great part of the blame will be laid on you, right or wrong, unless you try to remedy them. And it may prove less difficult than you imagine. Church-wardens and overseers perhaps are ignorant, or going on thoughtlessly, and would be thankful to you for good advice: or however would be ruled by it, on your representing to them the heinousness of robbing God or the poor; and the honour it will do them, and the consolation it will afford them, to have put things into a right channel. Or supposing them backward to comply, you may be able to get considerable persons in the parish or neighbourhood to second you. At least you will get the reputation of a most laudable zeal, and if you conduct that zeal aright, of discretion also: and these together may produce unexpected success; especially where the abuse is not yet become inveterate. But if nothing else will do, and the case be plain, and the object of sufficient importance: recourse should be had to the authority of the law; and you should be willing to bear a proportion of the charges, if it be requisite and you are able; only taking the strictest care to proceed with mildness and fairness.

I have now finished the course of directions to you, which I began 15 years ago. And as I can truly say, that in this and every part of my behaviour as your Bishop, I have, through the Divine assistance, diligently laboured, to do my duty with uprightness, and promote your good and that of your parishioners, present and future; so I hope you will accept my endeavours with candour, and study to profit by them; excusing my failings, which I know have been many, and will now be too likely to increase. I am advancing apace into the decline of age. Three of my brethren (*1*), my oldest and best friends, have gone before me in less than twelve months. I must expect to follow them soon. Whether I may live, or, if I live, whether I may be able, to meet you thus again, God only can foresee. May he grant us to meet in a better world.

But before I conclude, permit me to subjoin, to these general admonitions, a few words concerning two particular occurrences.

In the first place I return you my hearty thanks for the pains, which you have taken in behalf of the Society for propagating the Gospel. The collection hath upon the whole been made very successfully throughout the kingdom; and amounts to almost 19000*l.* if not more: whereas ten years ago it fell short of 15000*l.* But I believe the contribution of this county hath been in proportion the largest of any. The last time it was barely 300*l.*; nor was that to be accounted small; and now it is very near 500*l.*: I mean in both cases exclusive of the University: which distinguished itself very honourably then, and I doubt not, will at present. May God increase, and bless, and reward the zeal of all his servants every where for supporting, and enlarging the kingdom of his Son, and making the confession of his Name effectual to the salvation of mankind.

The other subject, on which I would speak to you, is the contest about representatives

(1) Bishops Butler, Benson, and Berkeley.

representatives for this county in the next Parliament. Let no one be alarmed. I need not, and I do not mean, to give you at a meeting of this nature, my opinion which of the candidates you ought to prefer: of that I say no more here than that you ought to regard, in the first place, the inseparable interest of the excellent church we are members of; and, its only human support, the just and gracious government we live under; then other subordinate considerations. My purpose is merely to exhort you, (*and I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation*) (*m*) that on this occasion, *your conversation be such, as becometh the Gospel of Christ*: in doing which, I have neither one party, nor one person amongst you, more in my view than another: but, if I may use the Apostle's words, *am jealous with a godly jealousy over you all* (*n*). I cannot indeed suppose, that any of you would be guilty of the grosser faults too common at such times, or any wilful wrong behaviour. But in the midst of so many clashings, provocations, and disappointments, as will happen, so many mistakes and misrepresentations as arise one knows not how; the incitements to uncharitable and contemptuous thoughts, to unadvised and injurious words, in anger or in mirth, nay to unkind and hard and even unjust actions, are very great, and the best of us all should be continually suggesting to our minds proper cautions for avoiding these dangers. Else we shall fall into sin against God and our neighbour: we shall lose the esteem of part of those whose improvement by us depends on their esteeming us; and set a bad instead of a good example to the rest. Let every one of us therefore be very watchful over our conduct: or if we have not been so, let us amend it: and if we find preserving our innocence difficult, let us meddle the less with these matters: for indeed being over busy about them is not very suitable to our function. But while we are strict with ourselves, let us be very mild in regard to others, whom we think to have done amiss: we may blame them without cause; or if we do not, it is easy to err; and we, amongst others, are sadly liable to faults. But let us be especially mild towards our own brethren. For why should we diminish our little remaining strength by intestine dissensions, and teach yet more persons to think ill or meanly of us, than do already? Surely the common cause of religion and virtue, which we are jointly intrusted to support, should have infinitely greater force to unite us, than any thing else to divide us.

Next to yourselves, you will study to preserve as many of your parishioners as possible, from the sins *that so easily beset them* at these seasons of epidemical unreasonableness and licentiousness. Those, who are of your own side, you may counsel and reprove more freely. With the rest you must be extremely calm and patient: take the most favourable opportunities, and use the most persuasive methods of speaking: but in some way or other, private or public, all, who need it, should be told, *whether they will bear or whether they will forbear*, that the great Christian laws of dutifulness to superiors, mutual good-will, forbearance, forgiveness, equity, veracity, moderation, sobriety, lose not the least of their obligation during the continuance of these disputes: that all virtues are to be chiefly exercised, when they are chiefly tried: and that therefore

now

(*m*) Heb. xiii. 22.

(*n*) 2 Cor. xi. 2.

now more particularly, you, as the Apostle directs, must put them in mind, and they must keep in mind, *to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men* (o). I end this long discourse in the words of the same Apostle: *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable, (for so the word is rightly translated in the margin) whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think of and do these things: and the God of peace shall be with you* (p).

(o) Tit. iii. 1, 2.

(p) Phil. iv. 8, 9.



A

C H A R G E

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY of the DIOCESE

OF

C A N T E R B U R Y,

In the YEAR 1758.



Reverend Brethren,

THE Disposer of all things having permitted his Majesty, by the
T advice of his faithful servants, to nominate me for your Bishop:
though I saw many reasons to dread this promotion, arising from
the difficulties of the office and of the times, from the great qualities
of my predecessors, and my own increasing weaknesses; yet I thought
myself bound to obey his commands, and with the same gratitude for his
favourable opinion, as if I had wished to receive them: determining,
through God's grace, to perform the duties of my station as well as I
could; and hoping for the candor, the assistance and the prayers of good
people. To make some amends by diligence for my deficiencies in other
c respects,

respects, I resolved immediately to visit my Diocese : for which purpose we are here assembled.

These meetings were designed, partly to give the Clergy opportunities of conferring with each other, and consulting their superiors, on matters relating to their profession; and I am very desirous, that you should render them as beneficial in this way, as possible: but principally, to give Bishops opportunities of exhorting and cautioning their Clergy, either on such general subjects as are always useful, or on such particular occasions as the circumstances of things, or the inquiries, made at or against these times, point out; and of interposing their authority, if there be need; which, amongst you, I am persuaded, there will not. To provide more fully for your instruction, I have ordered a Charge to be sent you, which I delivered to the Clergy of *Oxfordshire*, and printed at their request, about twenty years ago. Would God it were become unseasonable now. But, as unhappily it is not, I earnestly recommend the contents of it to your most serious thoughts: and would have you look on what I shall at present say further, as supplemental to it.

Counsels and admonitions to parochial ministers pre-suppose their residence. The founders of parishes provided them with glebes, and built houses for them, purposely that they might reside. The laws of the church have from the beginning, and do still require, as indeed common equity doth, that this valuable consideration, for which these endowments were given, should be faithfully paid. And going over and performing the service from time to time, or engaging some other clergyman to take care of it, or of the occasional part of it, seldom answers the original intention. Your people will not so readily, and cannot so conveniently apply to the minister of another parish: and when they do, his assistance, for the most part, will be less early, or less constant, than it should: though doubtless they, who have undertaken to supply their neighbours absence, ought to do it very conscientiously. But besides, even the Sunday-duty, when the incumbent unnecessarily comes from a distant place to do it, will be considered as accompanied with something like a breach of the Sunday, will not always be kept to the stated hours, will often be hurried over indecently: the catechism will either not be taught or not expounded, if the distance be at all considerable; nor probably will the sermon be well adapted to the audience. For it is only living amongst your people, and knowing them thoroughly, that can shew you, what is level to their capacities, and suited to their circumstances; what will reform their faults, and improve their hearts in true goodness. Yet this is your business with them: and unless you perform it, every thing else is nothing. Further, such as want your help most may not come to your sermons, or may not apply them to their own case, or may need to have them enforced by considerations peculiar to themselves, and unfit to be specified in public. Speaking to them separately, and agreeably to their several states of mind and life, may have unforeseen influence. And being always at hand, to awe the disorderly and countenance the well-behaved, to advise and comfort the diseased and afflicted, to relieve or procure relief for the necessitous, to compose little differences and discourage wrong customs in the beginning, to promote friendly

offices, and keep up an edifying and entertaining conversation in a neighbourhood, must add incredible weight to public instruction.

Indeed your congregations expect these things from you, and have a right to expect them. The nature of your office requires them: you have all at your ordination expressly promised to *use both public and private monitions and exhortations, both to the sick and whole within your cures, as need shall require and occasion be given, the Lord being your helper.* Now we cannot use them duly, without being resident. But further still, since their ordination, all vicars have sworn particularly to be resident unless they are dispensed with, which means by lawful authority: nor doth any dispensation of a Bishop last beyond his own time; or beyond the term, for which he gave it; or, if that were indefinite, beyond his pleasure: points, which vicars ought to consider much more seriously, than they often do. And every rector hath sworn in general, to *obey his Bishop in all things lawful and honest.* Now surely residence is lawful and honest: and what is punishable by a Bishop may, if done without his leave, be well interpreted disobedience to him: and the non-residence of rectors is punishable just in the same manner with that of vicars.

It must not therefore be pleaded, that however necessary the residence of some minister may be, that of a curate may suffice. For your engagement is, not merely that the several duties of your parish shall be done, but that you personally will do them: and if it were enough to substitute another to do them, a layman would be, in point of reason and conscience, as capable of holding a benefice, as a man in holy orders. Besides, a curate will usually have less knowledge and less experience, than the incumbent: and he and the parishioners will conceive, that they are less related to each other. He will consider himself, as being with them only for an uncertain, and he may hope, a short time; which will tempt him to neglect them. And they will consider him, as not the person, who hath authority over them; which will tempt them to disregard him: especially as the largest salary, that can be legally appointed, or generally afforded to a curate, will not enable him to recommend himself to them by doing good amongst them in any expensive way: whilst yet the people will think, and justly too, that the whole income of the benefice was intended to procure them a minister, to do them as much good in every way, as could reasonably be expected from it.

There are indeed cases, in which the law dispenses with holding two livings, and by consequence allows absence from one. But persons ought to consider well; supposing they can with innocence take the benefit of that law; whether they can do it on other terms, than their dispensation and their bond expresses, of preaching yearly 13 sermons, and keeping two months hospitality, in the parish, where they reside least. For the leave given them on these conditions, is not intended to be given them, however legally valid, if the conditions are neglected: always excepting where just impediments happen. There are likewise cases, in which the non-residence of persons, who have only one living, is permitted by law. But some of these also are put under limitations, beyond which the permission doth not reach.

Further still, I am sensible, that considerations of health and strength, and particular circumstances of incumbents or their families, require

leave of absence to be sometimes allowed, where the law makes no allowance. But then it should never be taken for any considerable time, without being asked: nor should it be asked without good cause. And mere fancy, or desire of living more at ease, or in a cheerfuller, and, it may be, less clerical manner, is by no means a sufficient cause. Nor indeed is the allegation of health to be urged too far, or to be too much regarded. For places, called unwholesome, prove upon trial very wholesome to many persons: and those, which are least so, must have some ministers in or near them; and whom rather, generally speaking, than such as enjoy the whole profits? Much less is indulgence to be granted for every present convenience, or prospect of temporal advantage: which if clergymen appear to have greatly at heart, and the care of their parishes but little, indeed it looks very ill.

Another plea may be offered by some, that though they live not on their own cures, they serve others. And it is not always an insufficient one. But, with very few exceptions, the most natural and most useful method by far is, that each take the oversight of the parish, which properly belongs to him: and absenting himself from that, for a little more income, a little more agreeableness, or any slight reason, is unbecoming and unwarrantable behaviour.

At the same time I acknowledge, that the poorness of some benefices makes the residence of a distinct minister upon each of them impracticable: and therefore they must be served from an adjoining parish, or a greater distance; and no more duty expected, than there is a competent provision for. But then I fear, indeed I have found, than in some benefices, not so poor, one minister supplies two churches on a Sunday; contrary to a repeated injunction of successive Archbishops to their suffragans, which they certainly designed to observe themselves; and the words of which are these; *that you do not allow any minister to serve more than one church or chapel in one day, except that chapel be a member of the parish church; or united therunto; and unless the said church or chapel be not able to maintain a curate.* The consequence of disregarding this injunction is, not only the very bad one, that the service is performed in irreverent haste, but that catechising is neglected in both places, if not altogether, yet in a great degree. Nay, perhaps for great part of the year, if not the whole, each of them hath prayers but once. Where indeed it can be truly alledged in this last case, that the inhabitants of each parish not only with convenience may, but actually do, attend at both churches, the plea must be allowed its weight. But, as to other excuses: if the number of the people be small, the service is not less enjoined, and is more easily performed: if they had rather have a sermon at another church, than merely prayers at their own; they ought to have more than prayers; an exposition of the catechism, which they will account equivalent to a sermon: or you may reduce it with ease into the form of a sermon; and then many of them will come to their own church, who now go to no other, but profane the rest of the day: if they are content with part of the Sunday service, which however may be said or believed without sufficient ground, yet probably they would be glad of the whole. But supposing them to be indifferent about it, or even averse from it, their minister is bound to shew them, that they

ought not. And how long soever this hath been the practice ; if it ought not to have been so at all, the longer the worse. My pious and learned predecessor, Archbishop *Potter*, lamented heavily to me the irregularities of this kind, which he found in this Diocese : and if any remain, I must, after his example, endeavour to have them rectified.

I hope they will be rectified by the best method, beyond comparison ; your own serious reflections on what you owe to your flocks, and what you owe to the great Shepherd of souls. Though you are ever so expressly permitted by human laws to be absent from your cures, or by your ordinary to serve them, or let them be served, by halves ; you are answerable to an infinitely higher tribunal for what God, and not man alone, hath made your duty. Therefore, if you regard the peace of your own souls and your final comfort, you will never do any of these things, unless very strong reasons oblige you to it : and you will never be glad of such reasons, but heartily sorry. You will give your parishes both morning and evening prayer, wherever it is possible : and you will supply them in person, unless particular circumstances render it impracticable, or unless, by living at a distance for the present, you are more useful to religion some other way, and peculiarly qualified for that usefulness. Far from catching at weak pretences, you will be rather diffident about strong inducements ; and much readier to follow the directions, than solicit the indulgence of your superiors. But if any do chuse the worse part, they must remember, that we Bishops are bound to oppose, instead of consulting their inclinations, from concern for them, as well as their parishioners. And therefore you will not surely think it real good-nature to connive at liberties of this kind presumptuously taken without leave, or to grant requests made for them, as matters of course : nor impute it to a fondness of exercising power, when compliance with the rules of the church is required : nor yet hastily condemn it, as partial behaviour, if an indulgence, denied to one, is granted to another : for there may be, in the cases of different persons, considerable disparities, unknown to you, or unobserved by you.

But when it is ever so clear, that the non-residence of ministers ought to be allowed, it is at least equally clear, that they should use their best endeavours to make their people amends for it. One thing, proper to be done for this end, is relieving their poor : which as they could not with decency avoid doing, according to their ability, if they lived amongst them, they ought to do more largely, if they live elsewhere. For no reproach will lie heavier on our order, than that of reaping all, and sowing nothing : whereas, they who give alms in their absence, will be in effect always present to one valuable purpose : will be readily presumed to be well-wishers to their parishes in every way ; whilst they are benefactors to them in this way : and by such a specimen of the influence of religion upon themselves, will remind their congregations, very acceptably, of the influence, which it ought to have upon them ; especially if they make their charity more directly subservient to religion, by affording distinguished encouragement to pious and virtuous persons, and those who appear likely to be made such ; by procuring children to be instructed in their Christian duty, and other proper knowledge ; by distributing useful books amongst the needy and ignorant. What is thus bestowed,

flowed, is of all the service it can be : whereas injudicious bounty may even produce harm.

Another thing, incumbent on such as cannot reside constantly, is to inspect however the state of their parishes as frequently as they can : spending days, or weeks, or longer seasons there occasionally ; and in proportion as their time is shorter, using more diligence in public and private instructions and warnings. For they are peculiarly bound to do what they are able, who are not able to do what else they ought. But if even this be out of their power, they may at least be assiduous in getting informations from persons of understanding and seriousness, in or near their cures, with what regularity, with what spirit and zeal, each part of the parochial duty is performed ; whether true inward piety makes any progress ; whether any and what abuses and neglects are crept in. And he, who reckons it enough, that, for ought he knows to the contrary, his parishioners go on like their neighbours, hath by no means the requisite concern for their souls, or his own.

But whenever absence is necessary, or the largeness of a parish, or the infirmity of a minister, hinders him from taking the whole care of it personally, the principal point is, the choice of a fit substitute, to be employed in his stead, or share his burthen : for no superintendency will make an unfit one answer the end. And therefore I charge it upon your consciences, not to suffer cheapness, recommendation of friends, affection to this or that person or place of education, in short any inducement whatever, to weigh near so much with you, as the benefit of your people, in chusing persons to serve your churches. For on you the choice of them lies in the first place : but not on you alone. The laws of the church require, particularly Can. 48, that *no curate or minister be permitted to serve in any place, without examination and admission of the ordinary* : in consequence of which, one of the before-mentioned archiepiscopal directions to the suffragans of the province, is this : *That you make diligent inquiry concerning curates in your Diocese : and proceed to ecclesiastical censures against those, who shall presume to serve cures, without being first duly licensed thereunto ; as also against all incumbents, who shall receive and employ them without obtaining such licence.* Yet I would avoid rigour in all cases. The expence of a licence, by means of the stamps, may to some be rather inconvenient, and greater than the government perhaps intended : at least, if they are likely to remove, and so repeat that expence, in a short time. And such curates I would excuse : only desiring them to consider, what security of continuing in their station, and receiving their salary, a licence brings them. But then you cannot think it right, that I should be left in ignorance, who serves a church under my care, till I learn it by accident, or private inquiry, perhaps many months after ; through which omission, men of bad characters, men not in orders, may intrude ; as there hath lately been a flagrant instance in this Diocese. I am far from looking on the past failures of giving notice, as designed negligence of your flocks, or disrespect to your superiors. But I shall have cause both to think of them and treat them as such, if continued after the warning, which I now give, that no one is to officiate statedly, or employ another to officiate so, within my jurisdiction, unless he first obtain my consent ; or what in effect will be mine, that of your very
worthy

worthy and vigilant Archdeacon. Think not, I beg you, that this is taking more on myself, than my predecessors did. Their own directions prove, that they would have done the same thing, if they had seen the same necessity. Far be it from me to *lord it over God's heritage* (a) : but I am bound to *keep that which is committed to my trust* (b).

When you want curates, I recommend it to you, first to inquire after persons of merit, already ordained, and if possible ordained priests, taking care to see their orders, as well as to examine into their characters, before you think of granting nominations to others. The number of clergymen indeed is rather deficient, than superfluous. But still one would not add to it by overlooking undeservedly those who are of it already. And particularly where help is wanted only for a short time, I shall insist on this point: nor will, without absolute necessity, ordain any one upon such a title. And if fraudulent titles are brought merely to procure orders, as I hope I shall discover them soon enough to disallow them, so I shall be sure to remark and remember, who hath attempted to impose upon me by them.

The next thing to be considered in relation to curates is, their testimonials. And here the Canon and directions already quoted enjoin, that no Bishop *admit such as remove out of another Diocese to serve in his, without the testimony in writing of the Bishop of that Diocese, or ordinary of the peculiar jurisdiction, from whence they come, of their good life, ability, and conformity to the ecclesiastical laws of the church of England.* For the clergymen of one Diocese, or jurisdiction, at least their hand-writing, being usually unknown to the Bishop of another, he can seldom, of himself, be sure, either that he hath their genuine testimony, or how far he may trust it. Therefore it is fit, that he should desire the attestation of their proper superior. And even to this it will be prudent to add such further information, as can be got: considering how very carelessly testimonials are sometimes granted, even by reputable persons.

But let me intreat you never to be guilty of such carelessness yourselves, for whatever purpose one is asked of you. Both the nature of the thing, and the directions repeatedly mentioned, require, that no Bishop *accept any letters testimonial, unless it be declared by those who shall sign them, that they have personally known, not only the man, but his life and conversation, for the time by them certified; and do believe in their conscience, that he is qualified for that order, office or employment, which he desires.* Now testimonials, concerning such things as these, cannot be matter of mere form, unless our whole profession be a very empty form. We, the Bishops to whom they are given, do not, and must not, understand them to be so: it would be absurd to demand them if we did. Some customs indeed may grow to be things of course: the reasons for them ceasing, or not being thought of moment; and yet the law for them continuing. But the reasons for testimonials can never cease, or be thought of small moment. They are the only ordinary information that we have, in a case of the utmost importance, in which we have a right to be informed. For no one can imagine, that we are to ordain and employ whoever comes, or depend on clandestine intelligence. We must therefore and do depend on regular testimonials. And if they be untrue, we are most injuriously

(a) 1 Pet. v. 3.

(b) 1 Tim. vi. 20.

injuriously deceived by them : and all the mischiefs, that follow from thence, will sit heavy one day on the deceivers. But, even exclusively of this great consideration, would you be chargeable with declaring a deliberate falsehood under your hand ? Would you have unworthy men fill ecclesiastical stations, and exclude their betters ? Would you have your Bishop reproached, and your order vilified, through your fault ? If not, remember, how utterly inconsistent with all concern for religion, with all veracity, probity and prudence it is, to sign testimonials at random ; how lamentable a sort of clergy it will produce ; how dreadful an encouragement to wickedness and profaneness it will prove. Remember also, that you express in these instruments, not what you charitably hope a person will be ; but what you actually know he hath been : not what others tell you at the end of the time, for which you vouch ; but what you have seen and heard through the course of it : so that, if for a considerable part of the three years, commonly specified, you have seen and heard nothing of him, for that part you can certify nothing about him. And remember lastly, that though the affirmation of a person's having lived piously, soberly and honestly, comprehends a great deal, yet the concluding article, your belief of his fitness for what he desires, implies a great deal more. For let him be ever so good and even learned a man, he cannot be fit for a clergyman, and the care of a parish, without competent gravity and discretion, and a voice and a manner suitable to a public assembly : of all which things they, that have had some familiarity with him, are usually the best, if not the only judges. This part of the testimonial therefore is highly necessary : and every part of it must be well considered, before it is given ; and no regard paid to neighbourhood, acquaintance, friendship, compassion, importunity, when they stand in competition with truth.

It may sometimes be hard for you to refuse your hand to improper persons. But it is only one of the many hardships, which conscience bids men undergo resolutely, when they are called to them. It would be much harder, that your Bishop should be misled, the church of God injured, and the poor wretch himself assisted to invade sacrilegiously an office, at the thought of which he hath cause to tremble. And if you fear he will be revenged on you for not yielding to him, this furnishes an additional reason for denying him : for will you, or can you, say of such a one, that he is qualified to be a minister of the Gospel any where ? But if the persons, to whom candidates apply, would only make it a rule to meet, and act jointly on the occasion, and keep secret the particulars of what passed, it might be unknown, from whom the denial proceeded. Or suppose it known, the resentment of such, as deserve to be refused, will seldom do a worthy man much hurt : and a number of such refusals will do the public unspeakable good. Indeed the expectation of a refusal's following upon wrong behaviour will in a great degree prevent such behaviour, and turn this whole difficulty into a pleasure. But what is unavoidable with innocence, must be virtuously born : and instead of submitting to recommend unfit persons, you ought, if others recommend them, which God forbid, to interpose immediate cautions against the danger, in all flagrant cases. Still not every past fault, nor every present infirmity, should be alledged, or allowed, as an impediment. But
into

into an office, the most important of all others, none should be admitted, who are void of the proper spirit, or a competent share of the needful qualifications for it: and the less, because, though we can refuse to ordain them, we often cannot keep them back from very unsuitable stations, when once they are ordained.

After presenting the title and testimonials, whether for orders, a curacy, or a living, follows the examination. For though the testimonial expresses an opinion, that the person is qualified; which may be very useful, to restrain such from applying, as are notoriously unqualified; yet we Bishops must not, especially in the case of orders, rest on a mere opinion; but assure ourselves by a closer trial, whether he hath sufficient knowledge of religion and the holy Scriptures to teach them in public, and apply them in private, and defend them against opposers: the two first of which are absolutely necessary; the third, highly requisite. As therefore, on the one hand, I hope I never have been or shall be over strict in this respect, and rejecting candidates will give me almost, if not quite, as much concern, as it can give them: so on the other, I must adhere to my duty; against all sollicitations of friends, and all intreaties of the parties concerned, who little think what they do, when they press into such an employment prematurely. I shew my regard to you, when I exclude unqualified persons out of your number: and I shall never doubt your candid interpretation of my conduct; nor indeed your zeal to vindicate it, when you are acquainted with my reasons, which any of you shall, who hath cause to ask them. But that no injustice may be done to those whom I postpone, any more than to myself: I beseech you to consider, and, if needful, to say in their behalf, that though deficient in knowledge, they may have a goodness of heart, more valuable than the highest knowledge: though not qualified yet, they may be, soon; may already have made a good progress, though not a sufficient one; may indeed have more learning on the whole, than many who are admitted, only not have applied themselves enough to theological learning.

Examination must occasionally be repeated after persons have been ordained. The 39th Canon requires it before institution to benefices: therefore surely it is advisable also before admission to curacies. A man, who was fit to be ordained, may yet have become since, through negligence, or bodily indisposition affecting his mind, unfit to be employed: or he may be capable still of what he was ordained for, but not of what he applies for: or his ordainer, though ever so duly careful, may sometimes have mistaken, or been misinformed: and if he hath chanced to be too indulgent, the bad effects of his indulgence ought to be prevented. Accordingly re-examination is common. My brethren the Bishops, I am sure, will not blame me for using it: and I trust, you my brethren will not.

When a curate nominated hath been examined and approved, the next step is, to appoint him a salary. And here I am very sensible, that what is far from a comfortable maintenance for life, may however be a tolerable competency at first: and likewise, that some benefices are so mean, and some incumbents in such low circumstances, or burthened with so numerous families, that they must be excused, if they endeavour to get help

help on as easy terms, as they well can. But if any minister, who hath either a large preferment, or two moderate ones, or a plentiful temporal income, tries to make a hard bargain with his brother, whom he employs; and is more solicitous to give the smallest salary possible, than to find the worthiest person; it is matter of severe and just reproach: the friends of the Clergy will be scandalized at it; their enemies will take dreadful advantages of it; indeed the people in general, if we think a trifle enough for him that doth the work, will be apt to conceive it very needful, that he, who doth little or nothing, should have a great deal more. For this reason therefore, amongst incomparably weightier ones, it concerns you much, both to labour diligently, and to allow liberally. Accordingly I hope I shall never have the disagreeable office thrown upon me of augmenting what is proposed, but the satisfaction given me of confirming and applauding it.'

But besides making a reasonable allowance, the minister of a parish ought to provide, with the kindest attention in all respects, for the convenience and accommodation, the credit and influence, of his curate: who is bound in return to consult faithfully the minister's honour and interest in every thing; but above all, to be unwearied in that best proof of his gratitude, a conscientious care of the souls committed to him; not proportioning his diligence to the poor recompence paid him here, but to the unspeakable happiness reserved for good shepherds hereafter.

Indeed whether the principal or his representative, or both reside, their industry and fervency and prudence will be the measure of their people's benefit, and their own final acceptance. If you content yourselves with a languid formal recital of stated offices, and by indolence, or amusements, or business, or even studies, are lost to your parishioners, while you are in the midst of them, or by indiscretions in conversation, dress or demeanour, become disliked or despised by them, you may, in respect of any spiritual usefulness to them or yourselves, be, almost as well, perhaps better, ever so far off. But this is no excuse for being absent, but only a reason for being present to good purpose. And as the non-residence of some, the unactive residence of others, and the offensive conduct of a third sort, (which cause great sorrow, but moderate complaints amongst wise and good people,) are favourite topics of invective against us, not only in the mouths of irreligious persons, but of a new sect pretending to the strictest piety; though we are bound always, we are peculiarly bound at present, to behave in so exemplary a manner, as will *cut off occasion from them which desire occasion to glory* (c) of themselves, and speak evil of us. It is not *rending to them railing for railing* (d); it is not ridiculing them, especially in terms bordering on profaneness, or affecting more gravely to hold them in contempt; it is not doing them the honour of miscalling other persons of more than ordinary seriousness by their name, that will prevent the continuance or the increase of the harm, which they are doing. The only way is, for the Clergy to imitate and emulate what is good in them, avoiding what is bad: to attend their cures, edify their parishioners with awakening, but rational and scriptural, discourses, converse much with them, as *watchmen for their souls*

souls (e), be sober, grave, temperate, and shew themselves in all things patterns of good works (f). If the people see, or but imagine, their minister unwilling to take more pains about them, or preserve more guard upon himself than for shame he must, no wonder if it alienates them powerfully both from him and his doctrine: whereas when they perceive him careful to instruct them, and go before them, in whatever is their duty to do, they will hearken to him with great regard, when he cautions them against overdoing; and be unlikely to seek for imaginary improvements abroad from irregularities and extravagances, whilst they experience themselves really improved at home in an orderly established method.

But then, to improve them effectually to their future happiness, as well as to silence false accusers, you must be assiduous in teaching the principles, not only of virtue and natural religion, but of the Gospel: and of the Gospel, not as almost explained away by modern refiners, but *as the truth is in Jesus* (g); as it is taught by the church, of which you are members; as you have engaged, by your subscriptions and declarations, that you will teach it yourselves. You must preach to them faith in the ever-blessed Trinity: and vindicate, when it is requisite, those parts of our Creeds and offices which relate to that article, from the very unjust imputations of absurdity and uncharitableness which have been cast upon them. You must set forth the original corruption of our nature; our redemption, according to God's eternal purpose in Christ (h), by the sacrifice of the cross; our sanctification by the influences of the Divine Spirit; the insufficiency of our own good works, and the efficacy of faith to salvation: yet handling these points in a doctrinal, not controversial manner, unless particularly called to it; and even then treating adversaries with mildness and pity, not with bitterness or immoderate vehemence.

The truth, I fear, is, that many, if not most of us, have dwelt too little on these doctrines in our sermons: and by no means, in general, from disbelieving or slighting them; but partly from knowing, that formerly they had been inculcated beyond their proportion, and even to the disparagement of Christian obedience; partly from fancying them so generally received and remembered, that little needs to be said, but on social obligations; partly again from not having studied theology deeply enough, to treat of them ably and beneficially: God grant it may never have been for want of inwardly experiencing their importance. But whatever be the cause, the effect hath been lamentable. Our people have grown less and less mindful, first of the distinguishing articles of their Creed, then, as will always be the case, of that one, which they hold in common with the Heathens; have forgot in effect their Creator, as well as their Redeemer and Sanctifier; seldom or never seriously worshipping him, or thinking of the state of their souls in relation to him; but flattering themselves, that what they are pleased to call a moral and harmless life, though far from being either, is the *one thing needful*. Reflections have been made upon us, of different natures, and with different views, on account of these things, by Deists, by Papists, by Brethren of our own, which it is easy to shew have been much too severe.

But

(e) Heb. xiii. 17.

(g) Eph. iv. 21.

(f) Tit. ii. 2. 7.

(h) Eph. iii. 11.

But the only complete vindication of ourselves will be to preach fully and frequently the doctrines, which we are unjustly accused of casting off or undervaluing: yet so, as to reserve always a due share of our discourses, which it is generally reported some of our censurers do not, for the common duties of common life, as did our Saviour and his Apostles. But then we must enforce them chiefly by motives peculiarly Christian: I will not say, only by such; for the Scripture adds others. And while we urge on our hearers the necessity of universal holiness, we must urge equally that of their *being found in Christ; not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness, which is of God by faith (i).*

Copious and interesting as the subject is, I must now conclude. And *I beseech you, Brethren, suffer the word of exhortation (k):* for I have spoken to you from the simplicity of a plain heart, and the sincerity of a deep concern for the interests of the church of Christ, and the everlasting welfare of every one of you; not as condemning, not as disesteeming you, very far from it, but as being *jealous over you with godly jealousy*, and deeply affected with the present state of religion amongst us. Wickedness, profaneness, avowed infidelity, have made a dreadful progress in this nation. The civil power, in most cases, doth little to check that progress: and it is an unhappiness in our most happy constitution, that it cannot easily, if at all, do what one might wish. Ecclesiastical authority is not only too much limited, but too much despised, as matters now stand amongst us, to do almost any thing to purpose. In the small degree, that it can be exerted usefully, I hope it will, and promise my utmost endeavours, in all cases notified to me, that it shall. But the main support of piety and morals consists in the parochial labours of the Clergy. If our country is to be preserved from utter profligateness and ruin, it must be by our means: and, take notice, we cannot lose our influence, but in a great measure by our own fault. If we look on what we are apt to call our livings only as our livelihoods, and think of little more than living on the income of them according to our own inclinations: if for want of *a good conscience, or faith unfeigned (l)*, we forfeit the protection of God; and by worldliness, or indolence, or levity in behaviour, talk or appearance, (for gross vices I put out of the question) lose, as we assuredly shall, the reverence of mankind: there will be no foundation left for us to stand upon. Our legal establishment will shake and sink under us, if once it can be said we do the public little service, and much sooner if we are suspected of disquieting it. Wicked people will attack us without reserve: the good will be forced to condemn and give us up: and well would it be for us, if this were the worst. *It is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment: He, that judgeth us, is the Lord (m).* But while we teach the genuine truths of the Gospel, and evidently feel the truths we teach; and are more anxious about the souls of men, than our own profit, or pleasure, or power; while we submit ourselves dutifully and affectionately, (as we never had greater cause) to the King and those *who are put in authority under him: lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty (n)*; and join with our piety and loyalty and virtue,

but

(i) Phil. iii. 9.

(k) Heb. xiii. 22.

(l) 1 Tim. i. 5.

(m) 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

(n) 1 Tim. ii. 2.

but a common share of prudence: we shall, in spite of enemies, through his mercy, who hath promised to be *with us alway* (o), not fail of being upheld. The religious will *esteem us very highly in love for our work's sake* (p): the *wise in their generation* (q), though not religious, will perceive our importance: the vicious and destitute of principle will be awed by us: and the seed of the word, however trampled under foot by some, will spring up and bear fruit in the hearts of many. Let us think then seriously, what depends on us, what it requires of us, *and give ourselves wholly to it* (r). God hath placed us in a station of difficulty and labour, at present also of reproach and contempt from great numbers of men. But still, if we only learn to value our function justly, and love it sincerely, we shall be unspeakably happier in discharging the duties of it, than we possibly can be in any thing else. The things, in which the world places happiness, are very trifles. We may plainly see them to be such now, if we will: and we shall see in a little time, whether we will or not, that the only real point of moment is, to have approved ourselves *good and faithful servants* (s) to our great Master. Let us all therefore bear in mind continually, how matters will appear to us then: and heartily pray and earnestly endeavour, *so to pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal*. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for *Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord* (t).

(o) Matth. xxviii. 20.

(p) 1 Theff. v. 13.

(q) Luke xvi. 8.

(r) 1 Tim. iv. 15.

(s) Matth. xxv. 21.

(t) Coll. 4th Sunday after Trinity.



A
C H A R G E

DISTRIBUTED TO THE
CLERGY of the DIOCESE

OF
C A N T E R B U R Y,

In the YEAR 1762,

The ARCHBISHOP being hindered by Illness from visiting them
in Person.



Reverend Brethren,

¶ T having pleased God that I should live to come amongst you
I a second time, I think it my duty to proceed with the same kind
of exhortations, which I gave you at first. For though many
subjects of instruction might be proper, there is a peculiar propriety in
those, which relate more immediately to your conduct: and though I
might very justly give you, in general, praise instead of advice, yet they
who deserve the most of the former, will be most desirous of the latter,
knowing how much need of it the best of us have. And I hope the free-
doms which I shall take with you in this respect, will the rather be par-
doned, as I both permit and intreat you to use the same with me, when
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occasion requires it; being sincerely disposed, if I know myself, to set you an example of docility.

I began with your obligation to residence; and the appointment of curates, either to supply your absence when you could not reside, or to assist you when the work was too heavy for you. And then I entered a little into the common duties of incumbents and curates, in which I shall now make some further progress: more solicitous about the importance of directions, than the accuracy of method; and using no other apology, if I should happen to repeat what I have given you in charge already, than that of the Apostle: *To say the same things, to me is not grievous, and for you it is safe (a).*

The same Apostle's admonition to Timothy is, *Take heed unto thyself, and to thy doctrine (b).* The main point is what he begins with, the care of our temper and behaviour. For without that, our preaching will seldom be such as it ought, and scarce ever bring forth its proper fruits. Now a Christian temper consists of various parts: but the first impression, which a genuine faith in the Gospel makes on the soul, and the ruling principle, which it fixes there is a deep sense of love to God and our fellow-creatures, producing an earnest desire, that we and they may be for ever happy in his presence. Whoever therefore is destitute of this feeling, ought not, though free from gross vices, to become a Clergyman: and without obtaining it from the Giver of all good things by fervent prayer, no man is qualified to fill the place of one. For notwithstanding that he may preserve some *form of godliness*, without which he would be mischievous and shocking in the highest degree: yet not having the reality and *power thereof (c)*, he must profess, and seemingly attempt, to make others what he is far from being himself. Consequently his endeavours out of the pulpit will be infrequent, reluctant, faint: and in it they will at best be unnatural and ungraceful, whatever pains he may take in his compositions, or whatever vehemence he may affect in his delivery: Hence he will be dissatisfied within, detected and disesteemed by the judicious part of his hearers, and of little use to the rest, if he is not even hurtful by misleading them. Or whatever his case may be amongst men, his inward want of the piety, which he outwardly pretends to, must render him uncommonly guilty in the sight of God. Heaven forbid, that I should have need to enlarge on such a character in this audience.

But have we not most of us cause to apprehend, that our religious principles, though sincere, are not sufficiently exerted; and therefore produce not the fruit, which they might? Do we not rather take it for granted, that we approve ourselves to be duly in earnest, than find on impartial examination, that we do? No man should rashly say or surmise this of another: but every one should search home into it for himself. And we should attentively read the Scriptures, and the treatises written by wise and good men concerning the duties of God's ministers: to see if we are such as they describe, and stir up ourselves to become such as we ought.

Good inclinations, thus excited, will not fail, through the assistance
of

(a) Phil. iii. 1.

(b) 1 Tim. iv. 16.

(c) 2 Tim. iii. 5.

of Divine grace, of directing us into a suitable conduct. And were a man, who confessedly means well, to overdo a little sometimes, the rightness of his intention would plead his excuse very strongly. However we should carefully avoid extremes, even on the better side: not give uncommanded demonstrations of our Christian zeal, when they will probably serve no good purpose, and be deemed ostentation, or turned into ridicule, or provoke ill humour; but restrain, according as times and places and company may require, the sentiments which else we could be glad to utter. Only we must do this in such a manner, as not to tempt the most rigid professor of religion to imagine, or the most profligate enemy of it to suggest, that we have little or none: but shew our concern for it on every fit occasion, with full as much diligence, as we decline unfit ones. And here, I conceive, it is, that we of the Clergy are chiefly apt to fail. We do not always appear in the common intercourses of life, sufficiently penetrated with the importance of our function, or sufficiently assiduous to promote the ends of our mission.

Too possibly a great part of our people may like the lukewarm amongst us the better for resembling themselves, and giving them no uneasiness on comparison, but seeming to authorize their indifference. But then, such of us can do them no good. Our example can teach them nothing beyond a little decent regularity, in which they will fancy they need not quite come up to us neither. Our sermons, and reading of prayers, they will consider only as matters of form: and finding in us hardly any thing at other times of what we express at these, they will presume, that our inward regard to it is not very great, and that they are not bound to have more. Therefore if they are pleased with us, if they esteem us, while we continue to be of this turn, it must be for something foreign from our office, something of a middle, or it may be a blameable nature, not as teachers of the Gospel: a character which they take us to lay aside as much as we well can. And so the better they think of us, the more lightly they will think of our ministry; till at length they join with those avowed Infidels. who boldly affirm, though often against their own consciences, that we believe not what we preach, else it would have more influence upon us.

Then, at the same time, the right dispositions of well inclined persons will languish and decay, for want of that countenance and assistance in serious piety, which they should receive from their pastors. For if the tokens of our piety be confined to the church, they will be of little service either out of it, or in it. Or if some good people suffer no harm themselves from our defects, they will see with great sorrow, that others do: all of them will be much readier to think the clerical order in general careless and light, if those are so, of whom they see most: their ears will be open to the invectives, which artful or heated men are daily pouring forth against us: they will easily be led to undervalue and misconstrue the best instructions of those, with whom they are disgusted; and run after any teachers, who have the powerful recommendation, for it will always, and no wonder, be a very powerful one, of seeming more in earnest. The irregularities and divisions which have prevailed so lamentably in our church of late, are greatly owing to an opinion, that we are usually indifferent about vital inward religion. It is true, the

spreaders of this imputation, which hath been monstrously exaggerated, will have much to answer for : but so shall we also, unless we take the only way to silence it, by cutting off hereafter all occasion for it.

Now the first necessary step to seem good is to be so ; for mere pretence will be seen through : and the next is, to *let your light shine before men (d)*, in the faithful and laborious exercise of your function. Living amongst your parishioners, or as near them as may be : inquiring frequently and personally concerning the welfare and behaviour of those, with whom you cannot be statedly present ; reverent and judicious reading of the prayers and lessons in your churches, instructive and affecting sermons delivered with discreet warmth, readiness to take extraordinary pains for the occasional assistance of your brethren, diligence in forming the youth to a sense of their Christian duty, in bringing your people to the holy communion, and where it can be, to week-day prayers : all these things will tend very much both to your usefulness and your credit. Relieving or obtaining relief for such as are distressed in their circumstances : hearing your people willingly and patiently, though perhaps low in rank or weak in understanding, when they would consult you upon any difficulty, and answering them with consideration and tenderness : disposing them to be visited when sick, praying by them with fervency, exhorting and comforting them with fidelity, compassion and prudence ; and reminding them strongly, yet mildly, after their recovery, of their good thoughts and purposes during their illness ; will be further proofs, very beneficial and very engaging ones, of your seriousness : which however you must complete by going through every other office of religion with dignity. I will specify two.

One is that of baptism : which, especially when administered in private houses without necessity, is too often treated, even during the administration, rather as an idle ceremony than a Christian sacrament : or however that be, is commonly close followed by very unsuitable, if not otherwise also indecent levity and jollity. Now in these circumstances it is highly requisite, that the minister should by a due mixture of gravity and judgment support the solemnity of the ordinance ; and either prevent improprieties in the sequel, or if it be doubtful whether he can, excuse himself, with a civil intimation of the unsuitness of them, from being present. The other instance is, that of saying grace over our daily food : which many, if not most, of the laity have, with a profaneness more than Heathenish, laid aside : and I am sorry to add, that some of the clergy hurry it over so irreverently, in a mutter or a whisper, scarce, if at all, intelligible, that one might question, whether they had not better lay it aside too, which yet God forbid, than make it thus insignificant ; and expose to contempt an act of devotion, and themselves along with it, as doing what they are ashamed of.

Indeed far from authorizing any flights of this sort by our example, and as it were our consent, we must through our whole conversation steadily and resolutely, though with mildness and modesty, always keep up the honour of religion and our order, which is inseparable from our own : never speak a word, or use a gesture, which can with the least colour be interpreted, as if we had small regard to our profession, or exercised

exercised it chiefly for a maintenance : never repeat, never hear, discourses of an irreligious or immoral turn, without expressing a plain disapprobation, briefly or at large, as the case may require : yet be on all occasions courteous, and on proper occasions cheerful ; but let it be evidently the cheerfulness of serious men. *Foolish talking and jesting are not convenient (e)*, not becoming any person : but those least of all, who should know best, that *every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof*, according to its tendency, in the day of judgment (*f*). Unseasonable or excessive mirth fits peculiarly ill upon him whose office must or ought to bring before his mind so frequently, the afflictions of this mortal state, the holiness of God's law, his own grievous imperfections, the deplorable sins of many others, and the final sentence, that awaits us all. Doubtless we should endeavour to make religion agreeable ; but not to make ourselves agreeable, by leading our company to forget religion. We should *every one of us please his neighbour for his good (g)* : but not so please men, as to fail in the character of servants of Christ (*h*). We should be made, in a fitting sense and measure, *all things to all men, that we may by all means save some (i)* : but we shall lose ourselves, not save others, if we are quite different persons in the pulpit and out of it : nor can we act a more incongruous part, than to chuse raising and promoting the laugh for our province in conversation, instead of duly restraining our own liveliness and that of others. *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh (k)* : and our hearts ought to abound with better things. I own, both affected and excessive restraint, will do harm. But if we are sincerely pious, and endeavour to be prudent, we shall combine useful informations and reflections with harmless entertainment : our *speech will be with grace, seasoned with salt, that we may know how we ought to answer every man (l)* : we shall prove that we have the end of our ministry constantly in view, by drawing profitable lessons, frequently, but naturally, out of topics of indifference ; and bringing back the discourse, if it goes astray, from exceptionable or unsafe subjects, to innocent ones ; yet if possible without offensive reproof, and perhaps imperceptibly. *For the servant of the Lord must not strive*, that is, roughly and harshly, *but be gentle unto all men (m)*, even the worst. Yet on the other hand servile obsequiousness, or *flattering words (n)*, even the best, are far remote from *having our conversation in simplicity and godly sincerity (o)*.

Talking with great earnestness about worldly affairs, or with great delight about diversions and trifles, betrays a mind overmuch set upon them : and numbers will represent the case, as worse than it is. Nay, our being only in a very peculiar degree good judges of such matters, or of any that are unconnected with our office, will, unless we have some especial call to them, be commonly thought to imply, that we have studied and love them beyond what we ought, to the neglect of our proper business.

(e) Eph. v. 4.

(g) Rom. xv. 2.

(i) 1 Cor. ix. 22.

(l) Col. iv. 6.

(n) 1 Theff. ii. 5.

(f) Matt. xii. 36.

(h) Gal. i. 10.

(k) Matt. xii. 34.

(m) 2 Tim. ii. 24.

(o) 2 Cor. i. 12.

business. For we are not to expect very favourable constructions from mankind: yet it greatly imports us to have their good opinion; which we shall not secure, unless in whatever other lights they may see us occasionally, the worthy clergyman be the predominant part of our character. If practical Christian piety and benevolence and self government, with constant zeal to promote them all upon earth, are not the first and chief qualities, which your parishioners and acquaintance will ascribe to you: if they will speak of you, as noted on other accounts, but pass over these articles; and when asked about them, be at a loss what to say, excepting possibly that they know no harm of you, all is not right: nor can such a clergy answer the design of its institution any where; or even maintain its ground in a country of freedom and learning, though a yet worse may in the midst of slavery and ignorance.

Actually sharing in the gaieties and amusements of the world will provoke censure still more, than making them favourite subjects of discourse. I do not say, that recreations, lawful in themselves, are unlawful to us: or that those which have been formerly prohibited by ecclesiastical rules, merely as disreputable, may not cease to be so by change of custom. But still *not all things lawful are expedient* (p), and certainly these things, further than they are in truth requisite for health of body, refreshment of mind, or some really valuable purpose, are all a misemployment of our leisure hours, which we ought to set our people a pattern of filling up well. A minister of God's word, attentive to his duty, will neither have leisure for such dissipations, public or domestic, nor liking to them. He will see, that pleasure, or rather a wretched affectation of it, is become the idol of mankind; to which they are sacrificing their fortunes, their families, their healths, their reputations, their regard to God, to their social duties, to the state of their souls, to their future being. Now what are the clergy to do in this case? If we but seem to go along with them, who shall call them back? For as to the pretence of keeping them within bounds by our presence, it is visibly a mere pretence. Or were it not, the older and graver of us would surely think such a superintendency no very honourable one: and few of the younger and livelier could be safely trusted with it. Indeed we none of us know, into what improprieties of behaviour, at least what wrongness of disposition we may be drawn by the *evil communications* of these assemblies: whether, if happily they should not otherwise *corrupt* our *good manners* (q), we may not however grow inwardly fond of them; come to think our profession a dull one, and the calls of it troublesome; throw off as much of the burden as we can, and perform with reluctance and cold formality the remainder, which we must.

At least it will be suspected, that we cannot greatly disapprove the customs in which we voluntarily join, the persons with whom we familiarly associate, or indeed any thing said or done where we delight to be: that if we do not go the utmost lengths, yet we should, if for shame we durst: for these things are our choice, not the duties of our ministry; which therefore declaimers will say we are not sincere in, or however unfit for. And even they, who plead our example as a precedent for themselves, will usually honour us much the less for setting it.

Still

(p) 1 Cor. vi. 12.

(q) 1 Cor. xv. 33.

Still I do not mean, that we should be four and morose: condemn innocent relaxations, and provoke men to say, that we rail out of envy at what we have absurdly tied up ourselves from partaking of: but express our dislike of them as mildly as the case will bear; slight with good humour the indulgences, in which others falsely place their happiness; and convince them by our experience as well as reasoning, how very comfortably they may live without them. It is true, paying court to the gay and inconsiderate by imitation of them, may often be the shorter, and sometimes the surer way to their favour. But the favour of the fashionable world is not our aim: if it be, we have chosen our profession very unwisely. And though we should succeed thus with such persons in point of interest, we must not hope even for their esteem. For they will both think and speak with the lowest contempt of the complying wretch, whom yet for their own convenience or humour they will caress, and now and then prefer.

Our predecessors, that their abstaining from indiscreet levities might be notorious, wore constantly the peculiar habit of their order. And certainly we should be more respected, if we followed their example in this more universally. They complained of no inconveniencies from it: nor did I ever, in a course of many years, find any worth naming. In the primitive and persecuting times indeed Clergymen wore no peculiar dress: and long after were distinguished only by retaining a greater simplicity of garb than others. But gradually superiors discerned reasons for enjoining a different sort: and surely others may well pay them so far the obedience promised to them, as always to shew by some evident and proper marks, (for nothing more is expected) of what class of men they are. If you do not, it will be said, either that you are ashamed of your cause, or conscious of your unskilfulness to defend it, or that you conceal yourselves to take occasionally unfit liberties. Indeed some external restraints of this kind, merely as an admonition against unseemly discourse and conduct and company, would, though not prescribed, be very advisable for young Clergymen: amongst whom they, who dislike them the most, might sometimes perceive, that they have the most need of them. And we that are older, should keep up the custom for their sakes, though unnecessary for our own. Besides, we may all prevent, by such notification of ourselves, a great deal of unbecoming talk and deportment in others: and so escape both the disagreeableness of reproving it, and the impropriety of not reproving it. Or if after all it cannot be prevented, they who are offended with it, will immediately see in us a refuge from it.

But then a habit, visibly a Clergyman's, must be such in every part as befits a Clergyman: have no look of effeminacy or love of finery in it (r). For we had better put on the lay dress intirely, than disgrace the clerical one. And it is doubly contemptible, first to shew what a fondness we have for things utterly beneath us, and then how poorly we are able to indulge it. Therefore let us be uniform: and as our character is a truly venerable one, let us think we do ourselves honour by wearing the ancient badges of it. I need not add, that our whole demeanor should be answerable to our cloathing: that softness and delicacy of manner, skill in the science of eating (s), and the perfection of liquors, in

short

(r) *Hieron. ad Nepotian.* §. 9.

(s) *Ibid.* §. 6.

short every approach to luxurious gratification, is strangely out of place in one, who hath devoted himself to *endure hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ* (t).

Still we ought to judge very charitably of those, who take greater liberties, than we dare: never blame them more, seldom so much as they deserve; and confine our severity to our own practice. Only we must watch with moderate strictness over our families also: not only keeping up the joint and separate worship of God in them, which I hope no Clergyman omits, but forming them to every part of piety and virtue and prudence. St. Paul requires, that not only *deacons*, but their *wives* be *grave* (u): and that the higher Clergy be such, as *rule well their own houses, having their children in subjection with all gravity: for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God* (w)? Whence we have all promised at our ordination, to *frame and fashion our families*, together with ourselves, *according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make them, as much as in us lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to his flock*. They are naturally the first objects of our care: we have peculiar opportunities of instructing and restraining them. If we neglect them, we shall never be thought to have much concern for others: if we are unsuccessful with them, we shall be deemed very unskilful; and bid to look at home before we reprove the rest of our flock. But exhibiting instances of goodness and happiness, produced under our own roofs by the methods, to which we direct those around us, must needs add singular weight to our exhortations.

For the importance of the rules hitherto laid down, we have the judgment of a most able and subtle and determined enemy, the emperor *Julian*: who designing to re-establish paganism, and accounting, as he declares, the strictness and sanctity, professed by Christians, to be a principal cause of the prevalence of their faith, in two of his epistles gives directions, undoubtedly copied from the injunctions observed by the Clergy of those days, that the heathen priests be men of serious tempers and deportment; that they neither utter, nor hear, nor read, nor think of any thing licentious or indecent; that they banish far from them all offensive jests and libertine conversation: be neither expensive nor shewish in their apparel; go to no entertainments but such as are made by the worthiest persons; frequent no taverns; appear but seldom in places of concourse; never be seen at the public games and spectacles; and take care, that their wives and children and servants be pious, as well as themselves (x). Let not, I intreat you, this apostate put us to shame.

But Clergymen, who are serious in their whole behaviour, and the care of their families also, are often too unactive amongst their people: apt to think, that if they perform regularly the ordinary offices of the church, exhort from the pulpit such as will come to hear them, and answer the common occasional calls of parochial duty, they have done as much as they need or well can, and so turn themselves to other matters: perhaps never visit some of their parishioners; and with the rest enter only into the same sort of talk, that any one else would do. Now St. Paul saith, he *taught* the Ephesians both *publickly and from house to house, testifying*

(t) 2 Tim. ii. 3. (u) 1 Tim. iii. 8, 11. (w) 1 Tim. v. 4, 5.

(x) Ep. 49, ad *Arsac.* p. 430, 431. *Fragm. Ep. p. 301—305.*

testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (y); and ceased not to warn every one day and night (z). He also commands Timothy to preach the word, and be instant, in season and out of season (a); at stated times and others: not forcing advice upon persons, when it was likelier to do harm than good: but prudently improving less favourable opportunities, if no others offered. Thus unquestionably should we do. And a chief reason, why we have so little hold upon our people is, that we converse with them so little, as watchmen over their souls. The pastors of the foreign protestants outdo us greatly in this respect, and are honoured in proportion. The Romish priests have their laity under their hands, on one account or another, almost continually, and acquire by it an absolute dominion over them. Both the old dissenters from our church, and those who are now forming new separations, gain and preserve a surprising influence amongst their followers by personal religious intercourse. Why should not we learn from them? At first such applications may by disuse appear strange; and both have their difficulties and their dangers. But the most apprehensive of them will be the safest from them: and all will improve their talents by practice. On young persons you will be able to make good impressions by discourse with them before confirmation: these may be renewed in private exhortations afterwards to receive the sacrament: and the spiritual acquaintance thus begun, may be continued ever after. Other means may be found with grown persons: on the first settling of a family in your parish; on occasion of any great sickness, or affliction, or mercy; on many others, if you seek for them, and engage worthy friends to assist you. Even common conversation may be led very naturally to points of piety and morals; and numbers be thus induced to reading proper books, to public, to private, to family devotion, to sobriety, justice, alms-giving and Christian love. When once you are well got into the method, you will proceed with ease and applause; provided your whole character and conduct be consistent, else you will fall into total disgrace; and particularly provided you convince your parishioners, that you seek, not their's, but them (b).

A due measure of disinterestedness is one main requisite for the success of a Clergyman's labours. You will therefore avoid all mean attentions to small matters: never be rigorous in your demands of them; never engage in any disputes about them, unless a part of your income, too large to be given up, depends upon them. In all disputes you will prefer discreet references to proceedings at law: and when the latter become necessary, carry them on in the fairest, the least expensive, the friendliest manner. You will be very tender in your demands upon the poor, and very equitable towards the rich; though you will conscientiously preserve all the material rights, with which you are intrusted, for your successors. If you find room and reason to improve your income, you will do it within bounds: and prove, that no wrong motive induces you to it, by living with decent frugality, providing for your families with moderation, and going as far as ever you are able in acts of good-natured, and especially of pious, liberality; which are the most valuable in themselves, the most incumbent on you, and the most overlooked by others. For

nothing

(y) Acts xx. 20, 21. (z) ver. 31. (a) 2 Tim. iv. 2.

(b) 2 Cor. xii. 14.

nothing gives greater or juster offence, than to see a Clergyman intent upon hoarding, or luxurious, or splendid, instead of being charitable.

Few indeed of our order have much to spare: and many have cause to wish for a more plentiful subsistence. Yet even these, and much more the better preferred, if they are earnest seekers and importunate solicitous for promotion, lower their characters grievously: and such as use indirect means to obtain it, are often providentially disappointed; or though they succeed, always dishonour themselves, and never do much good to others: whereas the lowest of their brethren will be justly respected, and may be highly useful, if he submits contentedly to God's good providence, and labours to live within the compass of his income: exceeding which, without visible necessity, will bring some imputation even upon him, and deservedly a much heavier one such as enjoy an ampler provision.

However inoffensive we are, we must expect to receive, from time to time, injurious and provoking treatment, as the Scripture hath forewarned us. We shall hurt both our own cause and that of religion dreadfully, if we return it: and do honour to both, if we behave under it calmly, *with such meekness of wisdom (c)*, as may tend to bring our adversaries over, if not to our sentiments concerning the matter in question, whatever it be, yet to a good opinion of our meaning and temper; or may at least, if we fail of success with them, engage more impartial persons to countenance and protect us. Indeed we ought, if possible, to keep not only ourselves, but others, out of all angry contests. We solemnly promised at our ordination, to *maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in us, quietness, peace and love among all Christian people, and especially among them that are or shall be committed to our charge*: and by so doing we are bound never to raise or foment personal, family, parochial, political or ecclesiastical animosities, but do all in our power to compose and extinguish them: nor will any thing conduce more to our credit or to our usefulness. The political party-spirit is, God be thanked, of late years much abated. Let us guard against the return of it: shew, in word and deed, becoming respect, as we have great cause, to our excellent King, and all who are put in authority under him: *not exercise ourselves in matters too high for us (d)*, but *be quiet and do our own business (e)*; let our moderation, even where are concerned to meddle, *be known unto all men (f)*, exercising it even to those who have least of it; and always remember, that neither patriot love to our earthly country, nor loyal attachment to our earthly sovereign, will be accepted by our heavenly Father, without uniform obedience to the whole of his Gospel.

Another point of great importance to Clergymen is, that they be studious. This will keep your money from being spent unwisely; and likewise your time from being thrown away hurtfully or unprofitably, or hanging heavy on your hands. It will procure you reverence too, as persons of knowledge: whereas the idle will, even by the ignorant, be thought deficient. And, which is the main thing, this alone will enable you to understand the business of your station, and perform it well. But then you must apply to such things chiefly, as will fit you most to answer the

(c) James iii. 13. (d) Psal. cxxxi. 2. (e) 1 Thess. iv. 11.

(f) Phil. iv. 4.

the great end of your employment; and *determine* with St. *Paul* to know nothing, comparatively speaking, *amongst* your people, *save Christ Jesus and him crucified* (g). The concern of a parish minister is, to make the lowest of his congregation apprehend the doctrine of salvation by repentance, faith and obedience; and to labour, that when they know the way of life, they may walk in it. If he doth not these things for them, he doth nothing: and it requires much consideration to find out the proper methods of doing them, and much pains and patience to try one after another. Smooth discourses, composed partly in fine words which they do not understand, partly in flowing sentences which they cannot follow to the end; containing little that awakens their drowsy attention, little that inforces on them plainly and home what they must do to be saved; leave them as ignorant and unreformed as ever, and only lull them into a fatal security. Therefore bring yourselves down to their level; for what suits the meanest Christian will suit the highest: examine if they take in what you say, and change the form of it till they do. This I recommend for your first study: and be assured, you will improve yourselves by it no less than your hearers. But so far as you have opportunity consistently with this, apply to any part of Science, to every part you can, that is connected with your profession: only learn, by weighing carefully the judgments and reasonings of others, to think modestly of yourselves; avoid, in the outset of your inquiries more especially, drawing hasty conclusions: be at least as much on your guard against fondness of new opinions, as prepossession for established doctrines: and beware of being misled, either by the positiveness of vehement writers, or the false colours of artful ones.

You will doubtless cultivate peculiarly those branches of knowledge, which the circumstances of the times, or of your parishes, peculiarly point out to you. God hath permitted us, for our sins, to be attacked in a remarkable degree, by infidels on one hand, and by maintainers of innumerable strange notions on the other. And we have need, that every one, who is able to qualify himself well, should assist in defending his part of the common cause. For there are too many unanswered books abroad in the world, and more appearing daily, written against christianity and morals and the doctrines of our church. Nor have we of the Clergy, for some time past, born so large a share, comparatively with persons of other communions, in vindicating what we teach, as might be expected from us. I hope you are not often obliged, in this Diocese, to encounter unbelievers from the pulpit: and you will certainly not chuse to alarm your people, by refuting, in form, objections to which they are strangers; though it may be useful to obviate them briefly, and if possible without naming them. But as, probably enough, some of you will at one time or another in company meet with such persons, or hear of their talk, I would give you a few directions in relation to them.

If any of them are virtuous in their conduct, and backward to offend in discourse, they should not be unreasonably provoked, but treated with respect. If any of them build their unbelief on serious argument, which plainly very few do, they should be directed to the books or the learned men, that are best fitted to answer them: and the less able should

prepare for combat with them, but not engage too far in it prematurely. If they cannot at present be convinced of the falsehood of their tenets, they should be shewn however, in a gentle manner, the pernicious effects of promulging them. But if they will obstinately persist to sacrifice every thing valuable amongst men to their own vices, or their own vanity, we must openly withstand them, and warn others against them. Yet even this ought to be done without passion or bitterness, otherwise all the blame will be laid on us: especially without personal incivilities, even to the worst of them, else they will become still worse than they were. But then we must never assist the very best of them in gaining influence and growing dangerous; nor bring our own sincerity into question by intimacies with them, which they will usually represent, and sometimes believe, to proceed from our inwardly thinking as they do. Much less should we ever condescend to the shocking meanness of paying court for private ends, either to them, or to wicked wretches of any kind, though not infidels; but connect ourselves with worthy persons; engage their support, and excite their endeavours to repress profaneness and immorality.

It is peculiarly unhappy, that while we are employed on one side in defending the Gospel, we are accused on another of corrupting it. I have not now in my view either the Church of *Rome*, or the Protestants who broke off from us a century ago. The methods of dealing with both have been long since prescribed, and I repeat them not: but intreat your attention to the movements of each, especially the former, if you have any of them in your parishes. But I mean to speak of persons risen up in our own times, and professing the strictest piety: who vehemently charge us with departing from the doctrines and slighting the precepts of our Religion: but have indeed themselves advanced unjustifiable notions, as necessary truths; giving good people groundless fears, and bad ones groundless hopes; disturbed the understandings of some, impaired the circumstances of others; prejudiced multitudes against their proper ministers, and prevented their edification by them; produced first disorders in our churches, then partial or total separations from them; and set up unauthorized teachers in their assemblies. Where these irregularities will end, God only knows: but it behoves us to be very careful, that they make no progress through our fault.

Now it would not only be injurious, but profane, to brand, with an opprobrious name, Christians remarkably serious, merely for being such: and equally imprudent to disclaim them as not belonging to us, to let a sect gain the credit of them, and labour to drive them into it. Surely we should take, even were they wavering, or actually gone from us, the most respectful and persuasive means of recalling such, and fixing them with us. Nay, supposing any persons irrecoverably gone, we should not be hasty to condemn, even in our thoughts, either them or their party, as enthusiasts or hypocrites: *whatsoever they are, it maketh no matter to us* (b). And much less ought we to say of either worse than we are sure they deserve. When we are undoubtedly well informed of any extravagant things, which they have asserted or done, it may be useful to speak strongly of them: but not with anger and exaggeration; which will

will only give them a handle to censure our uncharitableness, and confute us: but with deep concern, that when so few persons express any zeal for the Gospel, so many of those, who do, run into extremes, that hurt its interests. Nor will ridicule become our character, or serve our cause better than invective. It may please those very highly, who are in no danger of being proselyted by them. But what shall we get by that? Persons negligent of religion will at the same time be confirmed in their negligence: and think, that all they need to avoid is being *righteous overmuch* (i). Tender minds will be grieved and wounded by such ill-placed levity: and crafty declaimers will rail at us with success, as *scoffers* (k), *denying the power of godliness* (l). But if we let fall any light expressions, that can be wrested into a seeming disrespect to any scripture doctrine or phrase, we shall give our adversaries unspeakable advantages: and they have shewn, that they will use them without mercy or equity. Therefore we must guard every word, that we utter, against misrepresentations: be sure to express, in public and private, our firm belief of whatever evangelical truths border upon their mistakes: and certainly be as vigilant over our behaviour, as our teaching: encourage no violence, no rudeness towards them; but recommend ourselves to them by our mildness, our seriousness, our diligence: honour those, who are truly devout and virtuous amongst them, much more on that account, than we blame them for being injudicious, and hard to please; and be full as ready to acknowledge the good they have done, as to complain of the harm: yet beware, and counsel others to beware, of being drawn, by esteem of their piety, into relishing their singularities, and patronizing their schism.

Acting thus, we shall not only *cut off occasion from those who desire occasion* (m) to speak evil of us, and be able to remonstrate with authority and effect against their excesses and wildnesses; but, which is the chief point, we shall become better ministers of Christ for their harsh treatment of us. And we should always labour, that every thing may have this influence upon us: think with ourselves, if others go too far, whether we do not fall short; ask our consciences, whether we really do all that is in our power to reform and improve our people; whether the small success of our endeavours be, in truth, as it ought, a heavy grief to us; whether we have carefully searched out, and try incessantly to overcome the difficulties that lie in our way to making them better. These things, if we are in earnest, we shall chiefly have at heart: and if we are not in earnest, *we are of all men* the most guilty, and *the most miserable* (n).

In giving you my advice thus largely and freely on these several heads, I no more suppose you culpable in relation to any of them, than you do your parishioners, when you exhort them to any particular duties, or warn them against particular sins. On the contrary, to use the apostle's words, *I am persuaded of you, brethren, that ye are full of goodness, replenished with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, if I may presume to adopt, with due abatements, the subsequent words also, I have spoken somewhat boldly unto you in part, as putting you in*
mind,

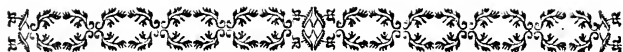
(i) Eccl. vii. 16. (k) 2 Pet. iii. 3. (l) 2 Tim. ii. 15.

(m) 2 Cor. xi. 12. (n) 1 Cor. xv. 19.

mind, because of the grace which is given me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to you (o), as you are to your respective congregations. And let us all pray for ourselves and each other daily, that we may so feed the flock of God which is among us, and be ensamples to it, that when the chief shepherd shall appear, we may receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away (p).

(o) Rom. xv. 14, 15, 16. (p) 1 Pct. v. 2, 3, 4.





A

C H A R G E

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY of the DIOCESE,

OF

C A N T E R B U R Y,

In the YEAR 1766.



Reverend Brethren,

HAVING distributed amongst you, above three years ago, when
H sickness prevented me from visiting you in person, a printed dis-
course, in which I exhorted you, as *St. Paul did Timothy, to take*
heed unto yourselves; I proceed now to add, as he did, and to your doc-
trine (a).

To instruct persons in religion is the leading part of a Clergyman's duty. And though he will do it in a very useful degree by the example of a Christian behaviour on all occasions; yet he will do it more especially in the peculiar discharge of his office. When he is only to use the forms prescribed him, he may, by using them with due reverence and propriety, greatly promote both knowledge and pious dispositions in his hearers.

(a) 1 Tim. iv. 16.

hearers. Therefore we ought to watch diligently over ourselves in this respect: and then it will be easier to convince our people, that they may and should learn a great deal from the exhortations, the prayers, the praises, the portions of scripture, of which our liturgy consists; that therefore, even when there is no other service, they should come to church for the sake of these far more constantly, and attend to them far more carefully, than the generality of them do; indeed should have them in much higher esteem, than the mere products of our private thoughts.

But I shall confine myself to the instructions, which you give of your own; speaking of them chiefly with a view of suggesting such advice to the younger part of you, as I hope the elder will approve, and enforce.

And here I must begin with repeating, what I need not enlarge upon, for I have done it already, that the foundation of every thing in our profession is true piety within our breasts, prompting us to excite it in others. Even heathens made it a rule, that an orator, if he would persuade, must be a good man: much more must a preacher. When a bad one utters divine truths, we shut our ears, we feel indignation. Form yourselves therefore thoroughly, by devout meditations and fervent prayer, to seriousness of heart, and zeal for the eternal welfare of souls: for then every thing else, that you are to do, will follow of course.

You will earnestly labour to complete yourselves in all proper knowledge: not merely the introductory kinds, which unhappily are often almost the only ones, taught the candidates for holy orders; but those chiefly, which have a closer connection with your work. And though, amongst these, the science of morals and natural religion is highly to be valued, yet the doctrines and precepts of the gospel require your principal regard beyond all comparison. It is of the gospel, that you are ministers: all other learning will leave you essentially unqualified; and this alone comprehends every thing, that is necessary. Without it, you will never *approve yourselves to God, as workmen that need not to be ashamed* (b), nor *make your hearers wise unto salvation* (c). Therefore you must diligently peruse the holy scriptures, and as much as you can of them in the original; that, as the office of ordination expresses it, *by daily reading and weighing of them ye may wax riper and stronger in your ministry*. And you must not grudge the expence, which may surely be well spared in some other things, of procuring, according to your abilities, the assistance, both of such commentators, as will best shew you the true sense of holy writ; and of such also, as will best direct you, how to draw from it needful instructions. General systems of theology, and particular treatises on points of moment, will enlarge your stock of matter: and the most noted sermons will be patterns to you of composition.

For I suppose the discourses, even of those who have the lowest qualifications, to be, in a great measure at least, of their own composition. Else they will seldom either sufficiently suit the congregation to which they are delivered, or be delivered in the manner which they ought. Besides, if persons decline taking this trouble, they will probably also decline that of fitting themselves in other ways for parochial usefulness, and throw away their time unwisely, if not worse. That will soon be observed to their disadvantage; and if once it be suspected, that through inca-

incapacity or idleness they steal what they preach, they will have small influence, if any. I do not mean, that no use ought to be made of the labours of others: for indeed I have made no little use of them in what I am saying, and about to say. I would have young Clergymen, especially, make very great use of the works of able divines: not inconsiderately and servilely transcribe them; but study, digest, contract, amplify, vary, adapt to their purpose, improve if possible, what they find in them. For thus it will fairly become their own; mix naturally with what proceeds altogether from themselves; and preserve their youthful productions from the imputation of being empty and jejune. In the choice of such authors you will consider religious and judicious friends, always joining your own experience. Those writers, whom you find the most effectual to enlighten your understandings, convince you of your faults, animate you to good resolutions, and guide and support you in the execution of them, will best help you to produce the same effect on others. These therefore imitate: but with judgment. If, amidst their excellencies, you observe mistakes, defects, redundancies, flights indiscreetly high, despicably familiar condescensions, fallies over-vehement; beware of adopting any of them. And remember too that a very close imitation, of singularities above all, will both betray you, and be disgustful.

When you go about to prepare an instruction for your people, first consider carefully of a proper subject and text: begging God to direct your choice, and dispose you to treat them in a proper way. Chusing a text, without need, that will surprise, or a seeming barren one, to shew what your art can extract from it, will appear ingenious perhaps to some, but vanity to most with good reason. Chusing one, that requires much accommodating to your purpose, is but mispending pains and time: and so is labouring to clear up a very obscure one, unless it be of great importance. And giving a new translation or sense of a text, unless the present hath considerable inconveniences, will only puzzle your audience, and tempt them to doubt, whether they understand the rest of their bible. Such a text is most convenient, as will branch out of itself into the main parts of your discourse: but at least you should make it appear to be the ground-work of your discourse, and not an after-thought.

Plan your method in the beginning of your composition; but change it afterwards, if you see cause. Never run the matter of one head into another, nor digress to any thing foreign: for every subject, well considered, will afford you enough. It is usually best to propose your general heads together, before you proceed upon them separately, and to give notice when you come to each. Subdivisions also assist the memory of the hearer, if they are not too many: and passing from a former head to the next by an easy transition, is graceful. But a disposition may be very orderly, without mentioning in form the several members, of which it consists: and sometimes that formality prevents a discourse from flowing with freedom and spirit. After the explanatory part, proofs from reason and scripture take the next place: then inferences, if any useful ones follow peculiarly from what hath preceded; and lastly exhortations to suitable practice, which can hardly ever be omitted, and ought to be such as may leave a durable impression. The length of sermons, though it should always be moderate, may be very different at different times.

Only give no room to think, that in a short one you have said but little ; or in a long one have either said any thing which was not pertinent, or dwelt upon any thing beyond what was needful.

An indispensable point throughout is to preserve attention : for if that be not paid, all your labour is lost. And persons are singularly apt to be inattentive to preachers. Our subjects are, and ought to be, the most common and trite of any. And hence, unless we use a little honest art to prevent it, our people will think, will many of them find indeed, that they know beforehand most of what we shall deliver to them, and so will soon grow weary of minding us. Coming to church, the bulk of mankind, even still, consider as a duty : but hearing as they ought, they partly neglect, and partly experience to be difficult. Therefore we must not only admonish, but assist them. For this end we must shew them from first to last, that we are not merely saying good things in their presence, but directing what we say to them personally, as a matter which concerns them beyond expression. More general discourses they often want skill to take home to themselves ; and oftener yet inclination : so they sit all the while stupidly regardless of what is delivered. Therefore we must interest them in it, by calling upon them to observe, by asking them questions to answer silently in their own minds, by every prudent incitement to follow us closely. But then we must make them understand, that in preaching against sin we never preach against such or such a sinner ; but mean to amend and improve all, who want it : wishing every one to apply as much as possible of what he hears to his own benefit, but nothing to the reproach of his neighbour.

Still you will press them in vain to pay attention, unless you win them to it by what you have to say. And one principal contrivance for that purpose is to make your sermons extremely clear. Terms and phrases may be familiar to you, which are quite unintelligible to them : and I fear this happens much oftener, than we suspect. Therefore guard against it. Your expressions may be very common, without being low : yet employ the lowest, provided they are not ridiculous, rather than not be understood. Let your sentences, and the parts of them, be short, where you can. And place your words so, especially in the longer, that your meaning may be evident all the way. For if they take it not immediately, they have no time to consider of it, as they might in reading a book : and if they are perplexed in the beginning of a period, they will never attempt going on with you to the end : but give up the whole, as out of their reach. Avoid rusticity and grossness in your style : yet be not too fond of smooth and soft and flowing language ; but study to be nervous and expressive ; and bear the censure of being unpolished, rather than uninfluencing. Never multiply arguments beyond necessity ; for they will only tire : abstain from weak ones ; for they will discredit the strong. Employ no arguments to prove things, which need not be proved : for you will only make them doubtful. Employ no long or subtle arguments to prove any thing : but rest your assertions on the dictates of plain good sense. Never express yourselves on any point, as *having dominion over the faith* (d) of your hearers ; but lay before them the best evidence, of which they are capable. In matters too high for them, let
them

them know, in a modest manner, that you speak the sentiments of the more learned, in which providence hath by their station directed them to acquiesce : in others, reason more at large, in the spirit of St. *Paul*, when he told the Corinthians, *I speak as to wise men : judge ye what I say (e)*.

You might perhaps give more entertainment, and procure more applause, by disregarding some of these directions. But your business is, not to please or be admired, but to do good : to make men think not of your abilities, attainments, or eloquence, but of the state of their own souls ; and to fix them in the belief and practice of what will render them happy now and to eternity. For this purpose (observe further) it will by no means suffice to teach them outward regularity and decency ; and let them fancy they have religion enough, when they come to church pretty constantly, and live as well as their neighbours : though, in some respects, ill, and, scarce in any, well from a principle of conscience. Or be they from a sense of duty ever so honest, and sober, and chaste, and beneficent ; another indispensable part of morals is the discipline of the inward man. And affectionate piety is full as necessary, as morals can be : and gospel piety no less than natural.

Here then lay your foundation : and set before your people the lamentable condition of fallen man, the numerous actual sins, by which they have made it worse, the redemption wrought out for them by Jesus Christ, the nature and importance of true faith in him, their absolute need of the grace of the divine Spirit in order to obey his precepts. This will be addressing yourselves to them as Christian ministers ought to Christian hearers. The holy Scriptures will furnish you with matter for it abundantly. Short and plain reasonings, founded on their authority, will dart conviction into every mind : whereas if your doctrine and your speech be not that of their bibles ; if you contradict, or explain away, or pass over in silence, any thing taught there, they who are best contented with you, will learn little from you ; and others will be offended, and quit you when they can. We have in fact lost many of our people to sectaries by not preaching in a manner sufficiently evangelical ; and shall neither recover them from the extravagancies, into which they have run, nor keep more from going over to them, but by returning to the right way : *declaring all the counsel of God (f)* ; and that principally, *not in the words, which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth (g)*.

Yet the obscurer of scriptural passages we shall do well to omit : or, if there be need, illustrate them, as far as we can, briefly : not to aim at minute explanations of mysteries ; but urge the belief of them from decisive passages of God's word, quoted according to its real import, and leave them as that hath left them. For by attempting to throw in more light, than our present state admits, you will only dazzle and blind those, who saw before as *through a glass darkly (h)*.

You are debtors indeed both to the wise and to the unwise (i). But remember, the ignorant are by far the greatest number : and unnecessary knowledge, if you could communicate it to them, is of small use. But you will never be able to enlarge on abstruse and difficult points to the edification

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(e) 1 Cor. x. 15. (f) Acts xx. 27. (g) 1 Cor. ii. 13.

(h) 1 Cor. xiii. 12. (i) Rom. i. 14.

fication of the generality : whereas you may dwell on the plainest to the satisfaction and improvement of the most learned. It is true, declining to shew reading or acuteness may be to some a painful self-denial ; but able judges will easily perceive, both that you could shew them, and why you do not. Therefore enter but little, if at all, into matters about which your hearers are not likely to err, at least dangerously. Yet suffer not either the evidence or the fundamentals of Christianity, or the honour of the Protestant religion, or of the established church, to want a due support, when you are any way called to the defence of them. At such times demonstrate your zeal ; but be sure to do it with Christian temper ; *in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves (k)* : at others, avoid a controversial manner, and confine yourselves to brief instructions on these heads.

It may possibly sometimes be necessary in our sermons to vindicate our rights, and *magnify our office (l)*. But this must be done very sparingly and cautiously ; so as to cut off all pretence, that we *take the oversight of God's flock*, either *for filthy lucre*, or from a desire of *bring[ing] lords over his heritage (m)*. We must never set up an undue, never a suspicious claim : but confess, that the *treasure* of the Gospel is committed to us entirely for the sake of others, not our own ; and that *we have it in earthen vessels (n)* ; are liable to continual imperfections and frailties. Such humility is no less our wisdom, than our duty. For that Clergyman will always acquire the greatest respect, who shews the most care to deserve it, and the least eagerness to demand it.

Every part of your discourses must preserve the gravity and the earnestness, which is inseparable from subjects of a religious nature. If you can speak of these lightly and negligently, your auditors will suspect you have little concern about them : they of course will have less in hearing you : their thoughts will wander to the ends of the earth, or their attention to every thing be buried in sleep. But though languid in no part, you will however be comparatively cool in expositions of Scripture, in doctrinal, in casuistical points, reserving your chief warmth for the great articles of Christian practice. There your very utmost endeavours will be needful to produce in your people a due sense of guilt and unworthiness, fervent desires of pardon, love to him who hath loved them, resignation to God's pleasure, firm purposes of obeying his laws ; to caution them effectually against profaneness, lukewarmness, formality, resentment, hard-heartedness, unjust love of gain, fondness of unlawful indulgences ; to inspire them with good-will towards all men, with proportionably kind regards to those who stand in nearer relations to them, diligence to be useful in their several stations, reasonable indifference towards the things of this life, pious longings for a better. Their degree of knowledge, rank and circumstances of life, their prevailing notions and customs, will afford you much further employment, to make your sermons local, if I may so express it ; calculated to promote the virtues which they are chiefly called to exercise, and guard against the sins, of which they are chiefly in danger. For what perfectly suits one congregation may be extremely foreign from the exigences of another. And

(k) 2 Tim. ii. 25. (l) Rom. xi. 13. (m) 1 Pet. v. 2, 3.

(n) 2 Cor. iv. 7.

further still you must not only urge them to do their duty, but to use the means of doing it; which must be pointed out to them: avoiding temptations, keeping clear of bad company, contracting friendships with serious and prudent persons, employing themselves in proper business, reading good books, forming pious, yet prudent, resolutions, and begging, in private prayer, *grace to help in time of need* (c): not strictly confining their devotions to any forms, though forms are very useful, but varying them according to their spiritual condition. These are the things, on which you must insist with your whole force: *not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts* (p).

Yet, while you take without reserve all requisite freedom, you must also take care not to provoke, instead of reforming them; but shew, that you sincerely wish well to them; and think as well of them as you can: you must praise them when you have opportunity; give them cautions oftener than reproofs, and never reprove harshly; but express a fatherly concern, rather than anger, at their faults. Represent no fault as worse than it is: and carry no injunction to an extravagant height. If you do, they will either think you unreasonable, or themselves incapable of becoming good; or will run into some absurdity by attempting it. And for their encouragement, along with the duties, lay before them, in a strong light, the comforts also, present and future, of religion.

It is but too possible, that sometimes you must excite your people to virtues, in which you are, more or less, deficient yourselves. For it would be heinous unfaithfulness to omit or explain away necessary precepts because you are imperfect in the practice of them. And lamentable is our case, if there be any Christian obligation, on which we dare not for shame speak freely: yet still worse, if we harden our consciences, till we venture boldly to enjoin what we habitually transgress. For in that case, not only our credit will be utterly lost, but our amendment almost absolutely hopeless. Therefore correct your own hearts and lives in the first place by the discourses which you compose: become in all points good men; and then you may fearlessly speak on all points like such.

Yet even good men must observe a difference. Those of less knowledge must express themselves with less positiveness, those of less gravity and discretion with less authority and strictness, than their betters. And every one should consider, what his age and standing, reputation for learning, prudence and piety, will support him in saying; that he may not take more upon him, than will be allowed him. Yet all must assiduously take pains to acquire, and preserve, such esteem, that they may say with propriety whatever their function requires. For how unhappy would it be to disqualify yourselves from usefulness by levity or indiscretion!

But even the best qualified to exhort must keep within due bounds; convince the judgment before they attempt to warm the passions; rise gradually into what deserves the name of vehemence; and be sure neither to rise any higher, nor continue in that strain any longer, than they are likely to carry their auditors along with them. For if they are cold, while the preacher is pathetic, the impression made upon them will be
very

(c) Heb. iv. 16.

(p) 1 Thess. ii. 4.

very different from what he wishes. And our nation is more disposed, than most others, to approve a temperate manner of speaking. Every thing, which can be called oratory, is apt to be deemed affectation : and if it goes a great length, raises contempt and ridicule. But were the most serious emotions to be raised by mere mechanical vehemence, they would be unfairly raised : and what is beyond nature will usually soon subside ; perhaps with scorn, upon reflection, of what was admired when heard. Or supposing such admiration to continue, bad effects may as possibly follow as good : whereas warmth of affection, excited to a proper degree by the rational enforcement of solid arguments, promises to be durable, and will never do harm. The faculty of moving hearers thus, is a most valuable blessing. And such, as have but little of it, may considerably improve it, by labouring to affect themselves deeply with what they would say : and thinking, what methods of saying it will be most persuasive. But they must not attempt to force an unwilling genius too far. If they do, what it produces will be so ungraceful and unsuccessful, that they had much better content themselves to do as well as they can in their own way.

Your delivery must in the first place be such, that you can be heard ; else you preach in vain : besides that speaking too low argues indolence and indifference ; whereas an audible exertion is a mark of earnestness : and the common people are peculiarly pleased, when their minister appears to take pains about them. But then you must neither be precipitately quick, (for if your words be understood, your meaning will not) nor tediously slow ; nor sink any one part of your sentence under its proper level, especially the concluding part. Distinctness will do much to supply want of strength in speaking : which however it is very material that you should try to remedy gradually, as many have done, by a prudent exercise of your voice. Yet straining beyond your due pitch will give your hearers pain, make you in some degree inarticulate, and produce a singing sort of cadence and tone. This last indeed hath been sometimes known to please weak persons : but it cannot possibly make them either wiser or better : and it offends the judicious extremely. Many learn in their childhood a provincial dialect ; which they cannot lay aside easily ; and yet should endeavour it, especially if they settle in a different part of the nation. Some acquire uncouth accents one knows not how : some bring them from the school or the college : and now and then one seems to hear a theatrical pronunciation ; which hath been condemned even by heathen writers upon oratory ; and is the very worst, that a Christian orator can adopt. It reminds his hearers, greatly to his discredit, where he must probably have learnt it : he will also appear by means of it to be only acting a part, and be regarded accordingly. Indeed all remarkable imitation, in delivery as well as composition, though of a person in your own profession, and one justly admired, will be disliked. You will never attain to an advantageous resemblance of his manner : but, by a mistaken or overdone mimicry, turn what perhaps may be graceful in the original, into oddness. Or could you avoid that, you would lessen your weight and influence : which must arise from speaking in your own character, not personating another. Every man's voice and utterance, as well as his face, belongs to himself alone ; and it

is vain to think either of looking or talking like such or such a one. Therefore preserve what is native to you: free it from adventitious faults: improve it, if you can: but remember, that you may deprave it by the endeavour; and certainly will, if you change it essentially. Speak to your people, as you would in conversation, when you undertake to inform or persuade a friend, in a concern of great moment; only with more deliberateness, more strength and energy, in proportion to the numbers: and vary both your stile and your elocution, as in conversation you always do, suitably to your matter. For monotony both absolutely prevents emotion, and soon deadens attention. It is worst indeed, when uniformly unnatural, by degenerating into a kind of chant. But merely to be uniformly inexpressive, be it through heaviness, or effeminacy, or insignificant lightness, is either very blamable, or, if it cannot be helped, very unhappy. And perhaps a little even of injudicious variety is better than a wearisome sameness.

In public speaking, persons commonly fall into errors, and sometimes great ones, without perceiving it, though they can observe small ones in others. Therefore you will act prudently in desiring some well-wisher, on whose judgment and frankness you can depend, to advertise you of any thing wrong in the conduct of your voice, or in your action; and you will shew your gratitude and good sense by studying to amend it.

We of this nation are not given to use or to admire much action, either in ordinary discourse, or even in popular harangues. And, were it for this reason only, a preacher should be moderate in it. But besides, in the nature of the thing, you had far better have none, than what is unbecoming, or unmeaning, or unsuitable to what you are saying, or repeated at certain distances, whatever you are saying. Yet somewhat of gesture, appearing to be artless, and regulated by propriety, may be very useful, especially in the warmer parts, of exhortation, reproof, or even argument. For to be altogether motionless, when the subject is animating, and our language perhaps vehement, seems an inconsistency; and may raise a doubt, whether we are in earnest. But still defect in action is better than excess. And a great deal cannot well be used by those who read their sermons.

This is one objection against reading them: and there are several besides. Persons, who are short-sighted, have peculiar reasons to avoid it. Indeed almost all persons are accustomed from their early years to read in a different tone, from that in which they speak at other times: and we seldom correct it thoroughly. Or if we did, what we say in such manner as to make it seem the present dictate of our own hearts, will much better make its way into the hearts of others, than if our eyes are fixed all the while on a paper, from which we visibly recite the whole. It will ordinarily be uttered too with more disengaged freedom and livelier spirit. The preacher also will be abler to enforce his words by significant looks: to perceive from the countenances of his hearers, what they comprehend, and by what they are moved; and may accordingly enlarge on that head, or proceed to another, as he finds cause. He may likewise oppose with success irregular itinerant declaimers, who affect and gain popularity by this method: and as their credulous followers are apt to think it a supernatural gift, he may undeceive them by imitating

in this case the practice of *St. Paul* in another, which he describes thus: *what I do, that I will do; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we* (q). But then there must be a long and diligent preparation to do this well: some will scarce ever attain sufficient presence of mind, and readiness of expression: others will acquit themselves handsomely in a good flow of spirits, but meanly when these fail them: and though little inaccuracies will be observed by few, yet hesitations will by all, and every other considerable fault by sensible hearers, to the preacher's great disgrace. Or if such do get the faculty of being always able to say something plausible, it will tempt them to neglect the improvement of their understandings and their discourses; and to be content with digressing, whenever they are at a loss, from their text and their subject, to any point, on which they can be copious: to utter off hand such crudities, as they could not bear to write down; and think the meanest of extempore effusions good enough for the populace. Now on the contrary, previously studying and writing sermons tends to fill them with well digested and well adapted matter, disposed in right order: especially, if you will carefully revise them every time you preach them; supply deficiencies, blot out repetitions, correct improprieties, guard against misapprehensions, enlighten what is obscure, familiarize what is too high, transpose what is wrongly placed, strengthen the weak parts, animate the languid ones. Your composition needs not be at all the stiffer, but may be the freer, for the pains thus employed upon it. You may frame it purposely to be spoken as if you were not reading it: and by looking it over a few times when you are about to use it, you may deliver it almost without being observed to read it. The more you acquire of this art, the more you will be liked, and the stronger impression you will make. But after all, *every man*, as the apostle saith on a different occasion, *hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner, another after that* (r): let each cultivate his own; and no one censure or despise his brother. There is a middle way, used by our predecessors, of setting down, in short notes, the method and principal heads, and enlarging on them in such words as present themselves at the time. Perhaps, duly managed, this would be the best. That which is, or lately was, common amongst foreign divines, of writing sermons first, then getting and repeating them by heart, not only is unreasonably laborious, but subjects persons to the hazard of stopping disagreeably, and even breaking off abruptly, for want of memory. Or if they escape that danger, there still remains another, of saying their lesson with ungraceful marks of fear and caution.

Instead of taking a text, which comprehends within itself the whole subject, of which you would treat, it may often be useful to chuse one, which hath a reference to things preceding and following it, and to expound all the context. This will afford you a variety of matter, and give you opportunities for short unexpected remarks; with which persons are frequently more struck, than with an entire discourse; for of the latter they foresee the drift all the way, and therefore set themselves to fence against it. Thus also you may illustrate the beauties, at the same time that you shew the practical uses, of large portions of scripture at once: for instance, of a parable, a conversation, a miracle, of our blessed Lord;

or

or a narration concerning this or that other memorable person, whether deserving of praise or blame. For scripture histories and examples are easily remembered, and have great weight. In proportion as we overlook them, we shall appear less to be ministers of God's word: and our people will have less veneration for us, or for it, or for both. You may also in this method, as you go along, obviate objections to passages of God's word without stating them in form, at which otherwise many may stumble, if they read with attention: and if they do not attend, they will read with no profit. Several things in holy writ seem to be strange; hardly consistent one with another, or with our natural notions. Of these difficulties, which must always perplex persons, and may often deliver them over a prey to infidels, you may occasionally remove one and another; meddling with none, but such as you can overcome: and from your success in these, you may observe to your auditors the probability, that others are capable of solutions also. Perhaps they will forget your solution: but they will remember that they heard one, and may have it repeated to them, if they please. By these means you will teach your people, what is grievously wanting in the present age, to value their bibles more, and understand them better; and to read them both with pleasure and profit, drawing from them useful inferences and observations, as they have heard you do. Formerly courses of lectures on whole books of scripture were customary in churches; and they were doubtless extremely beneficial. It would not be easy, if possible, to revive these now: but the practice, which I have been proposing to you, is some approach towards them.

I would also advise you to instruct your parishioners, amongst other things, from some proper text or texts, in the daily and occasional services of the church: not with a view to extol either immoderately, much less to provoke wrath against those who dissent from us; but mildly to answer unjust imputations upon our liturgy, and chiefly to shew the meaning, the reasons, the uses of each part; that your congregations may, as the apostle expresses it, *pray with the understanding* (s). In all compositions, there will be some things, which to some persons want explaining: and, were the whole ever so clear, men are strangely apt both to hear and to speak words, that are become familiar to them, with scarce any attention to their sense. And so by degrees a bodily attendance and worship becomes all that they pay: and they return home almost as little edified, as they would by devotions in a tongue unknown. Convincing them of this fault, and assisting them to mend it, must greatly contribute to the promotion of true piety amongst them. Nor will it be a small benefit, if, in the course of your liturgical instructions, you can persuade the bulk of your congregations to join in the decent use of psalmody, as their forefathers did; instead of the present shameful neglect of it by almost all, and the conceited abuse of it by a few.

But a fervent desire of being useful will teach you more than any particular directions can, upon every head. Without this desire, you will either be negligent; or if you would seem zealous, you will be detected for want of uniformity and perseverance. Therefore make sure first that all be right within, and out of the good treasure of the heart you will bring forth

forth good things (*t*), naturally and prudently, and, through the grace of the holy Spirit, effectually. It is not easy indeed even to instruct the willing; much less to convince the unwilling, and reform the wicked. But still these are the purposes, for which we are God's ambassadors: and we must try with indefatigable perseverance every way to execute our commission. We must study human nature in our own breasts, and those of others: we must acquaint ourselves, by all innocent means, with the opinions and practices of the world, especially of our hearers, that we may lay their hearts and lives open to their view, and make them feel what we say. We must consider all the while we compose, and reconsider as we preach and afterwards: "Is this adapted sufficiently to the capacities, the state of mind, the circumstances of the poor people who are to hear it: will this part be clear, that home enough, a third well guarded against mistakes: will they go back as much better disposed than they came, as it is in our power to make them?" Perhaps one or more ways of representing a necessary doctrine or duty have failed. We must think, whether a more likely may not be found, or a less likely in appearance prove more successful.

If you have preached a considerable time in a place, and done little or no good; there must, in all probability, be some fault, not only in your hearers, but in you or your sermons. *For the word of God*, when duly dispensed, is to this day, as it was originally, *powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword* (*u*). Inquire then, where the fault may be. Never despair, nor be immoderately grieved, if your success be small: but be not indifferent about it: do not content yourselves with the indolent plea, that you have done your duty, and are not answerable for the event. You may have done it as far as the law requires: yet by no means have discharged your consciences. You may have done it conscientiously, yet not with the diligence or the address that you ought. And as we are seldom easy in other cases, when we fail of our end; if we are so in this, it doth not look well. At least consult your hearts upon the point. And if you have been deficient, beg of God pardon, grace and direction: endeavour to do more for your people: consult your brethren about the means. Conversation of this nature will much better become Clergymen when they meet, than any which is not relative to their profession, or only relative to the profits of it. But especially ask the advice of the most able and serious.

I am very sensible, that in all the particulars before-mentioned I have been far from observing sufficiently myself the rules which I have now recommended to you: but hope I shall make some amends, though late, to the church of Christ, by exhorting and directing others. It was my purpose, after speaking of stated instructions, to have proceeded to occasional ones: a very important and sadly neglected part of the pastoral care. But my strength will not suffice: and I have detained you already too long. If God spare me to another like occasion, that shall be my subject. If not, as is most probable, I shall endeavour to leave behind me some admonitions to you concerning it (*w*). At present I can only intreat you to consider very seriously, what numbers there are in most parishes,

(*t*) Matth. xii. 35.

(*u*) Heb. iv. 12.

(*w*) Nothing of this kind hath been found among his Grace's papers.

parishes, and therefore perhaps in yours, whom you cannot think to be in a state of salvation; and how greatly it imports you to use with them, as you solemnly promised at your ordination, not only *public* but *private* monitions, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given. The eternal welfare of many poor creatures may depend on this: and your own is deeply concerned in it, as God himself hath declared: who will certainly expect, that what he requires you to do, be done to the very utmost of your ability. *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. But if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul (x).*

(x) Ezek. iii. 17, 18, 19. xxxiii. 7, 8, 9.





INSTRUCTIONS


GIVEN TO

CANDIDATES

FOR

ORDERS,

After their subscribing the ARTICLES.



Gentlemen,

YOU have now made the subscription by law required. And
Y as, in so doing, you have acknowledged the liturgy and articles
of the church of England to be agreeable to the word of God ;
I hope you will think yourselves bound, as you are, to be careful, that
the instructions which you give, and the doctrines which you maintain,
in public and in private, be agreeable to that liturgy and those articles :
that you neither contradict, nor omit to inculcate and defend, on proper
occasions, the truths, which they contain.

In the next place I exhort you to spend a due share of the remainder of
this day in what, I trust, hath employed not a little of your time already ;
weighing diligently the nature and importance of the undertaking, in
which you are about to engage ; forming suitable resolutions ; and ear-
nestly

neftly begging that grace of God, which alone can *make you able minifters of the New Testament* (a).

Nothing is better fitted to affift you in this good work, than the office of ordination, of deacons or priests, as you are refpectively concerned. You muft certainly have read it over, before you offered yourselves. Since that, you have been directed to read it again. But I defire you to perufe it once more this afternoon with your beft attention, that you may join in it to morrow with a greater degree of rational ferioufnefs; and particularly, that you may answer, on more deliberate confideration, the questions, which will then be put to you. For there can hardly be a cafe, in which either infincerity, or even thoughtleffnefs, would carry in it heavier guilt.

And that you may be in no perplexity concerning the meaning or fitnefs of any part of the office, it may be ufeul to go through fome parts of it along with you beforehand, proceeding as they lie in the book.

The firft thing, which Candidates, both for deacons and priests orders, after they are prefented, are required to do, as diftinct from the reft of the congregation, is to take the oaths of allegiance and fupremacy. For, as you are to be minifters of the church eftablifhed by law in this nation, it is evidently reafonable, that the civil government, eftablifhed by law, fhould be affured of the fidelity and affection of perfons to whom it gives and fecures privileges and profits; and who are intrufted with the care, amongft other matters, of making men good fubjects. Now thefe oaths bind every perfon, who takes them, to *honour the king* (b), and by confequence all that are put in authority under him, both in word and deed; and to *lead, in fubjection to them, quiet and peaceable lives* (c). That thefe things may with a good confcience be promifed and performed there is no juft caufe of doubt. But if any one thinks there is, he ought to apply for fatisfaction: and till he receives it, he ought to abftain from taking the oaths. *For whatever is not of faith, is fin* (d): and in this cafe it would be no lefs, than perjury. Nothing is a plea fufficient for committing any fin, much lefs one fo heinous: not even all the force, that can be ufed. But here is no fhadow of force. You are come voluntarily to offer yourselves, well knowing that the oaths muft be tendered to you: that is, you have made it your choice to take them.

But by your fubfcription you have entered into a further obligation: to ufe the liturgy in all your public miniftrations (e): and therefore, to pray for the king by name, for his long life and prosperity, for his obtaining victory over all his enemies. God forbid, that any one, who doth this, fhould be difaffected to the government, under which we live. And if we are friends, it is both our duty and our wifdom to fhew that we are. For thus we fhall ftrengthen an eftablifhment, on which, under God, the fafe enjoyment of our religion intirely depends; we fhall procure the fupport, which we cannot but be fenfible, that we want; and we fhall filence, or at leaft confute thofe, who love to fpeak defpitefully againft us on this head.

After

(a) 2 Cor. iii. 6.

(b) 1 Pet. ii. 17.

(d) Rom. xiv. 23.

(c) 1 Tim. ii. 2.

(e) Can. 36.

After the oaths, Candidates for deacons orders are asked: *Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration?* A solemn question: and which ought to be well considered, before it is answered. Observe then: it is not said, *Do you feel*; have you an immediate perception of such an impulse from the Holy Ghost, as you can distinguish from all other inward movements by its manner of impressing you: but, *Do you trust*; are you on good grounds persuaded? What then are the proper grounds of such persuasion?

In the first place, if he hath not moved you effectually to live *soberly, righteously, and godly (f)*, you may be sure he hath not moved you to assume the office of a minister in God's church. Examine yourselves therefore strictly on this point: a most important one to all men; but to you, if possible, above all: and before you presume to officiate in his house, ask your hearts, *Do you transgress, do you omit, no duty, wilfully or knowingly?* Have you a genuine practical faith in Christ? Are you, on the terms of the Gospel covenant, intitled to everlasting life? But supposing that you are, more is requisite in the present case: and what more, the latter part of the question points out. *To serve God, for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his church.* This then being the design of the office; if, so far as you know your own hearts, this is your motive to desire it; and if, so far as you can judge of your own abilities and attainments, they are equal to it in some competent degree: then you may safely answer, that *you trust you are moved by the Holy Ghost to take it upon you.* For we can have such trust to Godward only through Christ, who hath sent us the Spirit: *we are not sufficient to do or think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God (g).* Together with this principal motive, of *serving God by edifying his people*, you may allowably have the subordinate one, of providing a decent maintenance for your own support, and for those who may belong to you: but if you are indifferent or cool about the former, and attentive only or chiefly to the latter: since you cannot think that such dispositions are approved by the Holy Spirit, as proper for the ministry, you will be guilty of *lying to him (h)*, if you affirm, that he hath moved you to enter on it with them. Therefore inspect your souls thoroughly; and form them, by the help of Divine grace, to be duly influenced by the right principle, before you venture to answer this question: which is very wisely made the leading one; because your inducement will be the rule of your behaviour, and probably also the measure of your success.

The next question, put to those who apply for deacons orders, and the first to such as have received them, and desire to be admitted priests, is, *Do you think, that you are truly called, according to the will of Christ, and the due order of this realm, to the ministry of the church?* That is, are you conscious neither of any defect in body or mind, nor of any other impediment, which may, for the present, if not for ever, be, according to the laws of God or man, a just obstacle in your way? Such things may escape our knowledge or memory. Therefore we call upon you to inform us. And you are bound to answer with sincerity.

It

(f) Tit. ii. 12.

(g) 2 Cor. iii. 4, 5.

(h) Acts v. 3.

It is not requisite, that I should enlarge on every question ; though it is, that you should weigh every one seriously. That, which recites the duties of deacons, may seem to have some difficulty in it : as it assigns to them occupations, which the Acts of the Apostles do not, in the history of their appointment (*i*) ; and as they are but little employed now in the single business, there allotted to them. But that passage of Scripture plainly was intended to set forth, only the immediate and urgent reason of ordaining them, not the whole of what was, then or soon after, given them in charge. For we find in the same book, that *Philip* the deacon both preached and baptized (*k*). And the qualifications, required in deacons by *St. Paul* (*l*), intimate very clearly, that more things must, even then, have been incumbent upon them, than administering to the relief of the poor. Accordingly, from the primitive ages downwards, they are described as performing occasionally most of the same offices, which they do now ; and being, what their name denotes, assistant and subservient to priests in all proper employments (*m*). And the less they are engaged in their chief original one, the more opportunity and the more need they have, to shew diligence in the other good works, belonging or suited peculiarly to their station.

The next question is common to Candidates for each order : *Will you fashion your own lives, and those of your families, so far as in you lieth, to be wholesome examples to the flock of Christ?* This extends to avoiding in your own behaviour, and restraining in theirs, follies, levities, mean and disreputable actions, as well as crimes and vices. The Apostle enjoins deacons, and their wives, to be grave (*n*) : much more then ought priests. He enjoins every Christian to abstain from all appearance of evil (*o*). And our blessed Lord enjoins all his Disciples to be wise, as well as harmless (*p*). Therefore govern yourselves and yours by these rules : and consider frequently, whether you observe them well. For without it you will neither gain esteem, nor do good.

The last question. put alike to the whole number of Candidates, is, *Will you reverently obey your ordinary, and them to whom the government over you is committed?* You would be bound to this, though you were not to promise it : for both reason and Scripture demand it. Still more firmly you will be bound, when you have promised it, though it were of small importance. But it is of very great, not only to the dignity and ease of your superiors, but to your own interest, and the benefit of the whole church. Our Saviour both commands, and prayed for unity amongst his followers in the most expressive terms (*q*). Without union there cannot be a sufficient degree either of strength or beauty : and without subordination there cannot long be union. Therefore obey, as the Apostle directs, them that have the rule over you (*r*) ; and promote their honour, their credit, their influence. This will make us abler to serve the

(*i*) Acts vi.

(*l*) 1 Tim. iii. 8—13.

(*n*) 1 Tim. iii. 8, 11.

(*p*) Matth. x. 16.

(*q*) John xiii. 34, 35. xvii. 11, 12, 21, 22, 23.

(*r*) Heb. xiii. 17.

(*k*) Acts viii. 5—13, 26—44.

(*m*) See *Bingham's Orig. Eccl.* l. 2. c. 20.

(*o*) 1 Thess. v. 22.

the cause of religion, and protect you. And God forbid that, so far as we are able, we should ever fail to be willing and zealous.

In the office for the ordination of priests, after a pious and awful charge, which I recommend to your most serious attention, follow several questions of the greatest moment, your answers to which, I hope, you will remember to the last day of your lives. In these answers, besides what hath been already mentioned, you promise, that *the doctrine and discipline of Christ, as contained in Scripture, and received in this church and realm, shall be the standard of your teaching and acting; and every thing contrary to them be faithfully opposed by you: that you will use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your cures; and that, as frequently and fully as need shall require, and occasion be given. You promise also, that you will be diligent in prayers and reading the Holy Scriptures; which by the preceding exhortation evidently appears to mean, private prayer and reading; and in such studies, as help to the knowledge of Scripture; laying aside the study of the world and the flesh: that is, not making, either gross pleasures, or more refined amusements, even literary ones unconnected with your profession, or power, or profit, or advancement, or applause, your great aim in life; but labouring chiefly to qualify yourselves for doing good to the souls of men, and applying carefully to that purpose whatever qualifications you attain. Further yet, you promise, that you will maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace and love among all Christian people; and especially among them, that are or shall be committed to your charge. By this you oblige yourselves, never to raise or promote personal, family, parochial, ecclesiastical, political, or any other, animosities; but to discourage, and, if possible, compose and extinguish them; than which you cannot perform a more Christian part, or one more conducive to your honour and your usefulness.*

But, besides pondering well beforehand these answers, which you are to make, I earnestly beg you, to read and think them over often afterwards: and particularly, at each return of the ember weeks to examine yourselves, as in the presence of God, whether you have made good the engagement, into which you entered at your ordination. So far as you have, this practice will afford you the greatest possible comfort: so far as you may have failed, it will suggest to you the most useful admonition.

After these questions, a short silence is appointed to be kept for the secret prayers of the congregation, that God would enable and incline you to do what you have undertaken: which blessing, I hope, you will ask at the same time for yourselves very earnestly. Then follows a hymn of considerable antiquity: and to be repeated with much reverence, on account of the important petitions and doctrines comprized in it, though it be altogether void of ornament in that old translation, which we still retain. Next to this, follows a very proper address to the Throne of Grace, pronounced by the Bishop alone, in the name of the whole assembly: which is instantly succeeded by the act of ordination.

The first words of that, *Receive the Holy Ghost*, were used by our Saviour to his Apostles, immediately after he had said, *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you (s). God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him (t):*

and

(s) John xx. 21, 22.

(t) John iii. 34.

and he was able to bestow what measure he pleased, both of spiritual gifts and graces, upon others. He meant however by this benediction to confer only the ordinary ones: for the extraordinary, you know, were reserved till after his ascension. Far be it from the Bishops of his church to claim, even in respect of the former, the powers which he had. But still these words in our mouths, when spoken over you, properly express, in the first place, the communication of that authority, which proceeds from the Holy Ghost. For we read, that *the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work, whereunto I have called them (u)*: and that the latter of these exhorted the elders of the church of Ephesus, *Take heed to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (w)*. They also express, in the second place, our earnest request to the Father of Mercies, that you may at all times enjoy such proportions, both of the graces and gifts of the Spirit, as will be needful for you: which request, if it be not your own fault, will prove effectual; because having, in the common course of his Providence, appointed us, though unworthy, to act in this behalf, he will assuredly be ready to own and bless our ministrations.

It follows very soon: *whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained*. These again are the words of Christ to his Apostles, immediately after the former. But he did not grant to them the power, either of retaining the sins of penitent persons, or of forgiving the impenitent. Nor do we pretend to grant, by uttering them, all the powers, which the Apostles had in this respect. They had *the discernment of spirits (x)*: and could say with certainty, when persons were penitent, and consequently forgiven, and when not (y). They were able also to inflict miraculous punishments on offenders; and to remove, on their repentance, the punishments, which had been inflicted. These words will convey nothing of all this to you. But still, when we use them, they give you, first, an assurance, that according to the terms of that Gospel, which you are to preach, men shall be pardoned or condemned: secondly, a right of inflicting ecclesiastical censures for a shorter or longer time, and of taking them off; which, in regard to external communion, is retaining or forgiving offences. This power, being bestowed for the edification of the church, must be restrained, not only by general rules of order, but according to the particular exigencies of circumstances. And our church wishes, with much reason, for circumstances more favourable to the exertion of it (z). But how little soever exerted, the power is inherent in the office of priesthood. And though we are no more infallible in our proceedings and sentences, than temporal judges are in theirs; yet our acts, as well as theirs, are to be respected, as done by competent authority. And if they are done on good grounds also, *whatever we shall bind or loose on earth, will be bound or loosed in heaven (a)*. Nor will other proofs of repentance be sufficient in the sight of God, if submission to the discipline of the church of Christ, when it hath been offended, and requires due satisfaction, be obstinately refused, either from haughtiness or negligence.

To

(u) Acts xiii. 2.

(w) Acts xx. 28.

(x) 1 Cor. xii. 10.

(y) Acts viii. 21, 23.

(z) Office of Communion.

(a) Matth. xviii. 18.

To these words is subjoined the concluding charge: *and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of his holy sacraments.* This then is the stewardship committed to you. And you cannot but see, in what a profane and corrupt age it is committed to you: how grievously religion, and its ministers, are hated or despised; how lamentably both they, and and its other professors, are degenerated and divided. Your business will be, each within the sphere of his influence, to prevent these things from growing worse; which, bad as they are, they still may; and, if possible, to make them better; or at least, to recover or preserve such, as you can, from the general depravity. But you will never succeed in your attempts for this purpose, either by bitterness against Infidels, Heretics and sectaries, or by contempt and ridicule of enthusiastic or superstitious persons. The only right method is a very different one: diligent study, to fit yourselves more completely for teaching and vindicating the truths of Christianity: Scriptural and rational instruction, assiduously given, with zeal and mildness duly tempered, and suited to the capacities and condition of your hearers: a willing and devout and affecting performance of all sacred rites, whether in the church or elsewhere: but above all, a behaviour, innocent, humble, peaceable, disinterested, beneficent, abstemious, discreet, religious.

Take heed therefore to your steps: and walk in the present evil days with such piety and caution, that, as the office exhorts, *you may neither offend, nor be occasion that others offend*; but may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion (*b*) against you; that *they who are of the contrary part, and falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ, may be ashamed* (*c*) of themselves; or however, that your Master and Judge may not be ashamed of you (*d*) at the great day, but pronounce over each of you, *Well done, good and faithful servant*; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord (*e*).

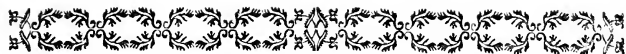
(*b*) 2 Cor. xi. 12.

(*c*) Tit. ii. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 16.

(*d*) Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 26.

(*e*) Matth. xxv. 21.





A
T R E A T I S E
CONCERNING THE
C A U S E S
OF THE
PRESENT CORRUPTION
OF
C H R I S T I A N S.



P R E F A C E.

WE have reason to wonder at the great corruptions that at present are to be found among Christians. The religion they profess, does chiefly tend to sanctify men, and to purge the world from corruption and vice; and one would think it should produce that effect, since it affords such a clear light, such powerful motives, and such effectual helps to holiness. Notwithstanding all this, whoever enquires into the notions and manners of Christians, must have no great share of sincerity or judgment; if he does not acknowledge, that religion has but little influence upon their minds, and that there is an amazing contradiction between their lives and the rules of Christianity. This corrup-

tion is so evident and so generally confessed, that I need not stand to prove it.

Taking it then for granted, that Christians live in a great neglect of their duties; it is natural to enquire into the *Causes* of this corruption, and to consider what remedies should be applied to it. This is what I intend to do in this Treatise, in hopes that such an enquiry will not be altogether useless.

For first, it may contribute to maintain the honour, and the truth of the Christian religion, and to confute Infidels and libertines, who are apt to despise it, because it's precepts are little practised. If religion, say they, be true and divine, How comes it to pass, that it has so little efficacy, and that there appears so much disorder, and licentiousness among the professors of it? To undeceive such men, and to infuse into them a greater respect for religion, it is of very great importance to discover the causes of the decay of piety; and to shew, that if men are corrupted, it is not because Christ's religion is insufficient to introduce virtue and order into the world; but that this evil flows from some other cause, and that if Christians did what they might and ought to do, true piety would not be so uncommon as it is amongst them.

A second advantage which may be reaped from this enquiry; is this; it will appear by it, that how great soever the corruption may be; it is not however, as many imagine, past remedy. Which imagination, is a most dangerous prejudice; while men look on it as impossible to stem the tide of corruption, and to re-establish order and purity of manners in the world; they do not so much as attempt it, they let things go on at the same rate; and so the disorder increases and spreads farther. It cannot be denied, but that the corruption is great, general and inveterate; but God forbid, we should look upon it as an incurable disease. The fountains of it may easily be discovered; and it is not impossible to stop them. I hope this will be acknowledged by those, who shall attentively, and without prepossession consider, what is proposed in this work.

Thirdly, There is no means more likely to remove this corruption, than to cut off the occasions of it: that is the surest as well as the most compendious method. One of the main reasons, why so many excellent books designed to inspire men with a love of religion and piety, have not all the effect that might be expected from them; is, that the authors do not sufficiently observe the general causes of the depravation of manners. It is to little purpose to deplore the corruption of the age, to exhort men, and to give them fine lessons of morality: the work of reformation cannot be much advanced, as long as the evil is not taken in its cause, and as long as such principles and abuses continue among Christians, as are, and will always be, obstacles to the progress of the Gospel.

Lastly, I considered that this matter had not yet been thoroughly handled by any author, at least that I know of. Of those who have touched upon it in their books; some have confined themselves to considerations purely moral, and others to theological reflections, upon the errors which are in vogue, or upon the controversies which divide Christians; but they have omitted many things which seem essential; no
a
doubt,

doubt, because they did not intend to treat this subject purposely, or because they did not take a view of the whole extent of it.

As these considerations have made me wish for a long while that among so many able men who write about religion, some might undertake so important a subject; so they have determined me to publish these Essays upon the Causes of Corruption; hoping that others will apply themselves to the full discussion of those matters, which are here but imperfectly hinted at.

But that the scope of this Treatise may be the better understood; and that no body may expect that in it, which according to the scheme I formed to myself, ought not to have a place here; I shall acquaint the Reader with one thing, which he may perhaps have foreseen, from what has been already said.

I do not propose to myself to handle this matter in the way of the divinity schools. No man therefore ought to wonder, if I say nothing of the state in which all men are born; nor of that inclination to vice which is observed in them. For tho' this is the first original of corruption; yet certainly this corruption would be much less, if Christians did use the means which God affords them, to overcome it; and if there were not other sources which feed and strengthen that vitious propensity. Besides, I do not consider corruption in general, as it is common to all mankind, but I enquire into the Causes of the Corruption of *Christians* in particular. Neither do I design to write a moral treatise; so that it must not be expected, that I should discourse of self-love and pride, and of all the other passions, which are the ordinary occasions of mens sins; or that I should trace out all the particular causes of every sin. This would carry me too far; and such things have been often examined. I therefore apply myself only to the *general Causes*; and I manage the matter thus.

I divide this Work into two parts, because the Causes of Corruption may be of two sorts. I shall call those of the first sort, particular or internal; because they are within us, and to be found in every particular man that lives ill. Those of the second sort, which are more general, I name external, because they proceed rather from certain outward circumstances, and from the unhappiness of the times; than from the fault of particular persons.

The *Causes* I shall treat of in the *First Part*, are no other, but the ill dispositions in which most Christians are, and which hinder their applying themselves to piety: and of these I shall observe nine.

- I. *Ignorance.*
- II. *Prejudices and false Notions concerning Religion.*
- III. *Some Opinions and Maxims which are used to authorize Corruption.*
- IV. *The Abuse of Holy Scripture.*

- V. *A false Modesty.*
- VI. *The Delaying Repentance.*
- VII. *Mans Sloth and Negligence in Matters of Religion.*
- VIII. *Worldly Business.*
- IX. *Men's particular Callings.*

The *Causes* to be considered in the *Second Part* are these seven.

- I. *The State of the Church and of Religion in general.*
- II. *The Want of Discipline.*
- III. *The Defects of the Clergy.*

- IV. *The Defects of Christian Princes and Magistrates.*
- V. *Education.*
- VI. *Example and Custom.*
- VII. *Books.*

I declare here that in discoursing upon these sources, I do not mean to tax all Christians without exception: so when I speak of ignorance, and of prejudices commonly received; knowing and learned men are excepted: and when I observe certain defects in the state of the church and of religion, in discipline, in clergy-men, or in Christian magistrates; I suppose those faults obtain more in some places than in others. In short, whoever should apply what is said in this Treatise, to all sorts of persons and churches, would certainly mistake my design.

And now I must desire those who may chance to see this Book, to examine seriously what I propose in it. No lover of truth or religion, can refuse his attention to a subject of this nature. But I hope it will be more particularly welcome to church-men and divines; who are called by their function, to set themselves against corruption, and to endeavour all they can to promote piety and the glory of God.

To conclude; I heartily implore his Blessing upon this Work, who put it into my hand to set about it, and who is my witness with what design and intention I publish it.

P A R T I.

C A U S E I.

Ignorance.

WHEN a man thinks of the Causes of that Corruption which over-runs the Christian world; the first which offers it self to his mind, is Ignorance, and therefore I shall begin with that.

Our notions and knowledge, are the first principles of our actions. We can never love a thing, or adhere to it, when it is not at all, or when it is but imperfectly known to us: supposing then that men are ignorant, or very little instructed in religion, there is no wonder that they should be corrupt; for they must of necessity be so. On the other hand, when they appear to be extremely corrupt, we may conclude, that they want instruction. I do not deny, but that corruption proceeds sometimes from the wickedness of the heart, which resists the light of the understanding; and that men frequently act against their knowledge. But it may safely be said, That if Christians were well instructed, they would not be so corrupt, and that wherever an extraordinary corruption is visible, there is likewise a great deal of ignorance.

This is confirm'd by the Scripture, and by God's conduct in the establishing the Christian religion. When the Apostles speak of those disorders,

orders, wherein the Heathens lived before their conversion, they ascribe them to the darkness of their minds. * *The Gentiles* (says St. Paul) *have their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.* The same Apostle calls the times which preceded the coming of Christ, *the times of Ignorance.* And the first thing which God did to change the face of the world, and to rescue it from Corruption; was to dispel the clouds of their ignorance, and to enlighten them with the knowledge of himself, by the preaching of the Gospel.

Although Christians cannot be charged with so gross an Ignorance as that of the Heathens; yet they fall very short of that knowledge they ought to have, and it must be confessed, that for the most part, they live in shameful and deplorable Ignorance. This is the reason why piety is so much wanting among them, and why they are so depraved and vicious; which is the thing I will endeavour to make appear.

In order to this; as the Christian religion may be reduced to these two heads,

First, The Knowledge of the Truth.

Secondly, The Practice of Holiness.

It is fit to enquire, Whether with respect to these, Christians are furnished with necessary information? I shall make it appear that they are very little instructed.

I. In that which concerns the truths of religion. And

II. In what relates to manners, and to the duties of Christianity.

The reflections I shall bestow upon both these heads; will I hope, clearly prove, That among those vast multitudes of men, who profess themselves Christians, there are very few, who are well acquainted with their religion. From whence it will be natural to conclude, That they must needs be very corrupt.

I. To begin with the Knowledge of the Truths of Christianity; we must distinguish two sorts of truths in religion: the general, and the particular truths. The General Truths, are those, upon which the whole of religion is founded; such as these, That there is a God, That the Bible is a divine book, and That the Christian religion is true. By Particular Truths, I mean the various doctrines which religion contains, and which are the parts of it; but which at the same time, depend upon the General Truths, as upon their principle. The doctrine of the sacraments, of justification, and many others, are of this number. Now let us consider the Ignorance of Christians in reference to these two sorts of truths:

1. Every man who makes use of his reason, may easily apprehend, That the General Truths are the most important; that they are those of which one ought chiefly to be persuaded; and that without these General Truths, the Particular ones would be useless, nay, would not be so much as Truths. To enquire, Whether there be any sacraments, or how a man can be justified; one must believe first, That there is a God, and a religion: for if I am not convinc'd of the existence of God, and of the truth of religion, it would signify little to me, whether or not there

there were any sacraments, and all the time I should employ in the prosecution of this enquiry, would be lost.

This first reflection does already discover to us an essential and capital defect. A great many Christians want instruction concerning the principles and foundations of Christianity; they do not sufficiently consider the certainty and importance of it. Their knowledge of religion, does seldom go further than the particular truths of it, and does not reach the general. This is so common a fault, that it may be observed even in those whose profession it is to study religion and to teach it to others. Some have spent the best part of their lives in the study of divinity, or in expounding the Scripture, who never seriously examined the arguments for the truth of Christianity, or the divinity of the Scripture. Some are masters of the principal controversies which divide Christians, who would stand mute if they were called back to the first elements of religion, and if they were to maintain against an Infidel, that there is a religion, or that the Christian religion is true. The people enter yet less than the divines into the examination of the general truths; and there are very few who either attend to them, or indeed believe them as they ought.

And yet the whole of religion depends upon a firm persuasion concerning the principles of faith; it is that which renders the particular truths effectual to salvation, and which begets piety and the love of virtue. When a man is persuaded that religion proposes nothing but what is certain, he immediately receives with reverence whatsoever it teaches; he feels an inclination in himself to observe its precepts, and he believes a judgment and another life, as if he saw them before his eyes. Such is the efficacy of a true faith, and of a steady persuasion about fundamental truths. But without this persuasion it is very hard, not to say impossible, to adhere sincerely to religion, and to perform the duties of it. And this is the constant source of the Corruption of Christians.

It may perhaps be objected, that all Christians receive the general truths of their Creeds, and that these are not questioned but by Pagans and Atheists. Upon which I shall make two reflections.

1. It is but too true, that in the point of religion, there is at this day a great number of persons who entertain very loose opinions, and that do at least border upon Atheism. These pernicious tenets are spread wider than some people think. Not only the Libertines are infected with them, but even the common people. All the prophane men and Deists are not to be found at courts, in armies, or among the learned; there are some in towns, among the vulgar, and even among country clowns. If we examine a little the discourses and apprehensions of men, especially of those whose life is irregular, if we do but begin to reason with them and press them, we may soon perceive the principles of incredulity and Atheism in many of them. It will be found that they are not thoroughly persuaded that there is a God, and another life; or that if they do not proceed to that degree of impiety which attacks directly the very foundations of religion, they harbour at least this fancy, that God doth not narrowly observe mens deportment; that he will not be so severe as to damn them for some sins they have committed, and that there is no such great harm in gratifying one's passions, and living at the usual rate of the world.

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These and the like sentiments are general enough, and yet they lead the straight way to Deism, and tend plainly to the subversion of religion. It would be therefore highly necessary, in order to root out such dangerous errors, carefully to establish these great truths; That there is a God, that this God speaks to us in his word, and that whatever the Gospel tells us of another life, is most certain. This I say would be altogether needful, if it were but for the instruction of those I have now mentioned, and their number is greater than is commonly imagined.

2^{ly}. We may take notice, that tho' Christians profess to believe the truths of their religion, yet that belief is not lively and strong enough in them all. It is beyond all question, that most Christians are so only because they were engaged by their birth in the profession of Christianity; but that after all, they know very little of the truth and divinity of it. They would in like manner have been Jews or Pagans, if they had been born in Judaism or Paganism; so that properly speaking they cannot be said to have faith; for faith is a persuasion; to believe, is to be persuaded; and 'tis impossible to believe a thing right without reason or examination. That which is called faith is commonly nothing else but a confused and general opinion, which makes but very slight impressions upon the heart and mind; but true faith is a greater rarity among Christians, than we are aware of. Now as faith is the only principle of piety, so a bad life does chiefly spring from want of faith and from incredulity. And there are two sorts of Infidels; some deny and reject Divine truths; others do not quite deny them, but they doubt and believe but weakly. The Infidels who deny the fundamentals of religion, are not many, but the number of those who doubt, and are not well persuaded, is very great.

This discovers to us the reason why men who are acquainted with the Divine truths and profess to believe them, do yet act quite contrary to the dictates of faith and religion. There seems to be in their proceeding a manifest contradiction: it is a thing wondered at; that people who believe a God, and a religion, should live as if there was neither God nor religion; upon this we are apt to say, that sinners are not consistent with themselves; and as if it were impossible to reconcile their practice with their belief, we cry out, that the depth of man's heart is unsearchable. But there is no such wonder in the case, and the proceeding of bad Christians, is not always so contradictory, as it seems to be. I confess that men sin sometimes against the convictions of their own consciences, and that some who want not knowledge, do yet live very ill.

This may proceed from inconsideration, from the violence of their passions, from too great a regard to their temporal interest, from the flattering hope of pardon, or some such principle. But for the most part, men act consonantly and suitably to their belief, and it is but seldom, that in the conduct of their lives, they behave themselves contrary to the sentiments and principles that possess them. We suppose that bad Christians believe the truths of religion, and in that we are mistaken. Many of them want faith, and are not fully convinced of those truths. Is it to be imagined, that so many persons who live in sin, who make conscience of nothing, and who violate every minute the rules of their du-
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ty; should be thoroughly persuaded, that there is a God who sees them, and to whom they are to give an account? From all this, I conclude, That the Ignorance of the General Truths of religion, is one of the principal sources of Corruption.

Some will say, That these truths need not be proved, and that they are of the number of those first principles, which are taken for granted, because they are imprinted on the hearts of all men. But this objection is easily answered by what has been said just now. I own that the ideas and principles of religion, carry in them a natural evidence, inasmuch as they are demonstrable from reason and conscience; and because there are principles in men by the help of which, they may arrive at the knowledge of the truths of religion. But these principles and ideas have been in some measure stifled in many, either thro' ill education, or worldly business, or vice, or some other cause; so that they feel the force and evidence of them but imperfectly; and some have no sense at all of them.

Upon this account it is necessary to excite and enlighten those ideas, to explain and establish those principles. I acknowledge further, That some parts of those proofs upon which religion is built, lie open to all mens eyes; but yet the ignorant, and those who are taken up with other objects, do not observe them: they should therefore be made to attend to them: just as we make stupid and heedless people take notice of the beauty of a palace, or the skill of an artist in some curious workmanship, which would otherwise pass unobserved by them. However the opinion of those who pretend that the General Truths ought not to be proved, is contrary to the Holy Scripture; which teaches us to reason upon the principles of religion, and to search into the proofs of them; where in order to convince men that there is an Almighty and Infinitely good God, it proposes to them, the beauties and wonders which shine in his works, and exhorts them to the consideration of them. This may be seen in the book of *Job*. In the XIX. and CIV. *Psal. Rom.* 1. 19, 20. and in many other places.

3^{ly}, It may further be said, That the proof of General Truths, is too difficult for the common people, and that the learned only are capable of such a discussion. I grant that all sorts of persons are not able to comprehend all that has been writ upon these matters. And therefore I do not pretend, that it is impossible to have a true faith without entering into the detail of all these proofs, and without following with the utmost strictness, all the deep and abstracted reasonings, which have been used to prove the existence of God, or the truth of the Christian religion. I think rather those matters ought to be treated with great discretion, especially in sermons. It would be a great piece of imprudence, to muster up in a publick discourse, all the objections of Atheists, or the subtilties of Libertines; these ought to be referred to private conferences. Those who speak to the people, must take heed, lest by disputing and speculating too much, they render the fundamental truths problematical, and raise scruples in mens minds. They ought to build upon this principle, That men are carried by a common and natural inclination to believe the existence of God, to acknowledge a difference betwixt good and evil, and to own Providence, and the other truths of religion; but for
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all that, it may be very useful and necessary to confirm those truths, to set them in the clearest light, and to convince the people of them.

As to what is said, That the proofs of the principles of religion are not suitable to the peoples capacity: I answer, That most of those proofs are such, that there is no need of being either learned, or a divine, to be affected with them. We ought to suppose here, that the more important any truth is, the clearer and the easier the proofs of it are. I do not speak of all truths; there are some that are most certain, whose proofs are difficult, and above the reach of common understandings; such are many metaphysical truths, and mathematical demonstrations; but at the same time, the knowledge of those truths is not necessary, and a man without danger may be ignorant of them. I speak now only of those truths which it concerns every person to know, and which are of general usefulness and necessity. These are always clear and easily proved. And this, by the by, ought on the one hand, to make us admire the wisdom and goodness of God, who has so well provided for the necessities of men; and on the other hand to set bounds to our curiosity, and to fortify our faith against those doubts, which might start up in our minds, by reason of so many things which we are ignorant of.

As therefore of all truths, none are of greater consequence, or of a more intire certainty than those, which religion depends upon; so the proof of those truths ought to be simple, evident and suited to all mens capacity. Thus when in order to prove the being of a God; we alledge, for instance, the state and order in which the world subsists; when we shew that the world cannot be eternal, and that things had a beginning; when we establish the inspiration of Scripture by the prophecies it contains, which were undoubtedly written before their accomplishment: when we prove the truth of the Christian religion by the truth of matters of fact and history, and demonstrate that if the facts upon which religion is founded, are not certain, there is no such thing as certainty in the world, in respect of things that are past; and that if the testimony of the Apostles is rejected, there are no witnesses or historians, who may not be rejected upon better grounds: when we confirm the Sacred History, by the concurring testimony of Pagan writers, and by the most ancient, and the most unquestionable monuments, which past ages can afford: when we reflect upon the manner in which the Christian religion was planted in the world, and upon the alteration it has made in it: when we insist upon the characters of truth, sincerity and divinity, which are observable in the Scripture: in short, when we take religion to pieces, and make men see and feel, that its doctrines, its precepts, its promises, and its threatnings, have nothing in them that is absurd or bad, or contrary to our natural apprehensions; nothing but what perfectly agrees with sound reason, and the sentiments of our own consciences; and nothing but what is advantageous to particular persons, and to societies: When I say, we urge these proofs and others like them, and have the art of proposing them in a clear and judicious method, it is certain that they contain nothing that is very difficult. These are the clearest and the strongest proofs that can be used, in a subject of this nature; and the arguments which are made use of to establish these proofs, are for the most part so natural, and so conform to the ideas of our minds, and to the principles

principles of common sense, that there are few even of the vulgar who may not apprehend them; if not perfectly and in their whole extent, which is reserved to men of a larger capacity; yet so far at least as to be sufficiently sensible of their force.

If then difficulties and obscurities are to be met with in the discussion of the principles of religion; it is because this matter is neglected, and the people are little informed. But if the same care had been taken to instruct Christians in the fundamental truths of religion, which was bestowed upon explaining and clearing particular ones; they would have another kind of persuasion than they have of the truth of religion. These great and sublime truths, have without comparison more suitability and affinity with the nature of men and the sentiments of their hearts, than many obscure, difficult and less necessary things, which yet have been effectually taught them.

4b. But against this, experience may possibly be objected: it may be said, That there are Christians, who most certainly have piety, and yet did never meditate much upon the foundations of Christianity. I answer, That it is not conceivable, how a man should be a pious Christian, without being persuaded of the truth of his religion. For at this rate piety would be but meer conceit and enthusiasm; and we must say notwithstanding all that Scripture and reason tells us to the contrary, that men are Christians without knowledge or reason. It cannot be otherwise, but that good men must have been convinced of the truths of the Gospel, and have had a lively sense, that these are the most certain and the most important of all truths. If we enquire what principle it is which produces piety in the hearts of the most simple people, we shall find it is an unmoveable persuasion, That there is a God, a judgment, a heaven and a hell; which persuasion is necessarily founded upon some of the proofs I have hinted at.

I grant, which no doubt will be objected to me, That in many this persuasion is not clear enough, and that it is not the result of a particular examination; but this does not lessen the force of my argument. For though the persuasion of good men should not be so clear and so well grounded as it might be, yet it does not follow but that it is sincere; a man may be convinced of a truth, tho' he does not discover all the certainty and all the proofs of it, and tho' he is not able to answer all the objections against it. So that still it is true, that there is no religion, without the belief of the general truths of it. After all, we must acknowledge, That there are good men, who are not so well instructed upon this head as it were to be wished. And this defect of instruction, this imperfection of their faith, is one of the main causes of the defect and imperfection of their piety. Thus we may frequently observe, in their conduct such weaknesses and opinions as do not agree with the pure light of faith, and with the exactness of the rules of the Gospel. This is part of the unhappiness we lament, and of that Corruption of which we seek the Causes. But no man will dispute, but that if the same persons had more instruction, they would carry virtue much farther than they do. The degree of piety, does ordinarily follow the degree of faith: where there is no faith, there is no piety; and where faith is weak and faint, piety is languid and defective. This is the general state and character

character of Christians at this time ; either downright impiety, or a piety that is both feeble and imperfect.

5thly, In the last place, some will perhaps, object here, That incredulity is the effect, rather than the cause of corruption ; and that Atheism does not produce corruption, but corruption Atheism. To this, I say, that these two things do mutually uphold and support each other. Many fall into Infidelity, because their hearts are vitiated, their licentious way of living takes them off from enquiring into religion, and hinders their believing of Divine truths. But it is not less certain that one of the great causes, of the disorders of Christians, is that either they do not believe at all, or that they believe weakly and confusedly ; and this cannot be reasonably contested.

II. Here is then the first and the principal defect, That men are not sufficiently instructed in the general truths and principles of Christianity. I said that the particular truths and the parts of religion were better known ; which does not imply but that in this respect too, Ignorance is very great and general.

I. I shall not scruple to say, That there are prodigious numbers of people, who scarce have any knowledge at all of the doctrines of religion. If all Christians were obliged to render an account of their faith, if they were examined upon the articles of their belief, or the main facts related in Sacred History ; there would appear in most of them, such an astonishing Ignorance, or such confused and intricate ideas ; that one would hardly think them more knowing than if they lived in the darkness of Heathenism. And what religion, what piety can we look for among such men ?

But besides this grose and palpable Ignorance, there are several defects of instruction to be observed, even in those who have, or fancy that they have more knowledge than others. I shall particularly take notice of these two.

1/2. Those who exceed the ordinary degree of knowledge, have yet often but a false kind of light : either they do not know those truths which they should know, or else they know them not aright. They apply themselves to things which are not essential to Christianity, or which are less considerable than others which they do not study. Thus in all Christian societies, instruction is commonly placed in the knowledge of the doctrines and opinions, particular to every one's own sect and party. Whoever is able to debate those points, and is skilled in controversy, is said to understand his religion. These matters may perhaps have their use ; but there are other things which men are more concerned to know, because they are more conducing to piety ; and yet they are almost constantly neglected. The occasion of this error, is that the various importance of the truths of religion, is not duly weighed, and that religion is not studied in an orderly method. Very few persons distinguish between the more and the less necessary things, between the most useful subjects and those which are of little edification. Most men study religion without rule, and to no purpose, and so run out upon many unprofitable subjects. That which is called learning in divinity or knowledge of religion, is frequently nothing else, but a heap of notions, which have no influence upon piety, or respect to mens salvation. It is but a
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confused medley, wherein the least necessary things, are blended without choice and distinction, with the most important. I do not speak here of the perplex and unaccurate ideas which men often have about these matters; I pass by the false reasonings, which are sometimes used to establish the truths of Christianity, as well as those mists, which the school-divinity has cast upon the Gospel: I do only observe, That the knowledge which most men have of religion, is not very fit to make them sensible of the beauties of it; so that when all is done, it is no wonder that it should seem to many an obscure, crabbed, unpleasant and intricate science, and that it should have so little effect upon mens minds.

2dly, The other fault is, That men content themselves with bare instruction, or with the simple knowledge of the Christian truths, while they are ignorant of their use. If they do but know in an historical manner, what is believed by Christians, and are able to reason about it, and to discern truth from error, they think themselves sufficiently instructed. But these instructions do not reach the heart. Among that small number of persons who have some knowledge, there are but few who consider that this knowledge, is to be directed to a holy life, as to its proper end and intendment; and they are fewer yet who actually direct it to that end, and make it subservient to the reforming of their lives. And so it comes to pass, that a great many of those who are best acquainted with the truths of religion, have yet but an imperfect and barren knowledge of it, and that with all their attainments, they live still in the darkness of corruption and vice.

II. Hitherto we have considered Ignorance with relation to the truths and doctrines, which the Christian faith embraces: let us now view this Ignorance with respect to the duties which Christianity prescribes. Upon this second head we shall discover yet a greater Ignorance than upon the first. For after all, something may be done, when we are only to infuse into men some knowledge of truths and doctrines. It is usual enough to see very ill men, who in this regard are not destitute of light. But it is much harder to instruct them in the duties of holiness. We may apply here these words of our Saviour's; * *Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; for every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.* The maxims of the Gospel and the rules of its morality condemn sinners, and therefore they do not care to be informed about them. Those who love the world and their sins, are glad if they can enjoy the sweets of these without disturbance and interruption: and therefore they will not enquire much into the moral precepts of Jesus Christ; they are loth to come at such a knowledge as would disclose to them the turpitude of vice, and breed disquiet and remorse in them. Ignorance begets security: the more ignorant a man is, the fewer stings he feels in his conscience, the more pleasure he takes in his sin. The very shadow of evil frights a well-instructed Christian; but crime it self does not daunt one who is ignorant: he does not hear within himself those alarms or reproaches, which are either the preservatives against sin, or the remedies of it.

From this it may be judged already, that men are generally very little instructed

instructed in what concerns manners. But that we may the better understand how great the ignorance is in this matter, it must be observed, That whoever will perform the duties of religion, must be persuaded of their necessity, and acquainted with their nature. One cannot imagine how they can be practised by a man, who either does not know them, or does not think them necessary: this is the plain reason why men do so little addict themselves to piety; they know neither its necessity nor its nature.

I. As the foundation of faith is the belief of the truth and certainty of those facts and doctrines which religion proposes; so the ground-work of piety is, to be persuaded of the necessity of the duties which Christianity requires: without this persuasion, it is impossible for men to resign up themselves to the practice of virtue. Now one would think that all Christians should be fully convinced of this necessity. For if there is any certain truth in Christianity, it is this, that the practice of good works is necessary. Good works do so immediately belong to the design and the essence of religion, that it falls to the ground as soon as they are taken away: and in proportion as the necessity of a good life is weakened, so much is the power and beauty of that holy religion which Christ brought into the world lessened. Religion contains doctrines, precepts, promises and threatenings. It does altogether depend upon the existence of a God, and the certainty of another life, and a judgment to come. But if you banish out of religion the absolute necessity of good works, you attack it in all its parts, and you undermine its very foundations. For this makes the knowledge of its doctrines vain and needless; it turns its precepts into bare counsels; the promises of it, which are conditional, and suppose obedience, cease to be promises; the threats which God denounces against sinners, are but empty menaces, which God makes only to fright men, but does not intend to execute. This destroys the chiefest and strongest proofs of the existence of a God, and of another life; it ruins that great argument for religion, which is drawn from the difference between virtue and vice, and from the deserts of both; and it contradicts the necessity, the nature and justice of the last judgment. All this may easily be demonstrated. This necessity of good works might likewise be proved, from the plain declarations of the word of God; and it might be shewn, that there is no truth more clearly and frequently inculcated than this in Holy Writ. But not to engage in these particulars, which do not properly belong to my purpose; I shall take it for granted, that a holy life is absolutely necessary; for either that is true, or there is nothing true in religion.

Yet how clear soever this truth may be, it is but little known, and men are not much persuaded of it. No man indeed, does flatly and without some preamble deny the necessity of holiness; every teacher professes that to be his doctrine; all Christians, in shew at least, are agreed about it. But when they come to explain their meaning clearly concerning this necessity; when it comes to the application or to practice, or when they establish other doctrines, they contradict themselves, they hesitate upon the matter, or they explain it with certain restrictions, which sooth men in security, and dispose them to believe that salvation may be obtained without good works; which overthrows their necessity.

Nay, some frame to themselves such a notion of religion as even excludes good works; this will appear in the following chapters.

If it be said, That though this intire and indispensible necessity of a good life were not supposed, yet this would not presently open a door to licentiousness, since there remain other sufficient motives to holiness, such as those which are derived from the justice and reasonableness of the divine laws, from the gratitude and love we owe to God, from the edification of our neighbour, and from our calling and duty. I answer, that these motives are very just and pressing, and that they necessarily enter into that obedience, which all true Christians pay to the commandments of God. I acknowledge besides, that they would be sufficient to inspire all men with the love of virtue, if they did all govern themselves by the principles of right reason and justice. But these are not the only motives which ought to be urged; God proposes others besides; he promises, he threatens, he declares, ** that without holiness no man shall see his face*, which imports an absolute necessity. And surely as men generally are, there are many of them upon whom those motives taken from decency, justice, gratitude, duty, or the edification of our neighbours, will have very little force. The most honourable motives are not always the most effectual. Man being so corrupt, is so many ways, and by so strong a bias carried towards evil, that it is hard for him, without an absolute necessity, to abstain from it. But how much less will he refrain from sin; if he is persuaded that it is not necessary to controul his inclinations, and to confine himself to a kind of life, which appears unpleasant and melancholy to him? Now as this is the disposition in which most people are, we need no longer wonder, why there is so little religion and piety among men.

2. If it is difficult to practise those duties, which we do not think necessary, especially when they cross our inclinations; it is yet harder to practise them, when we do not know them. It is not possible to do good or to avoid evil, if we do not know the good that we should do, and the evil we ought to shun. Now in this the generality of Christians want instruction. Every body speaks of piety and virtue, but few men know what they are. The common people are little acquainted with the duties of religion or the rules of christian morals. This must be confessed, and the glory of God requires, that we should ingenuously own it. I cannot but enter here into some particulars, to prove this ignorance.

1. There are some essential duties unknown to a great number of Christians, and which were never thought of by an infinity of men. I will alledge for an instance one of the plainest and of the most necessary duties of morality, and that is restitution. Tho' the scripture should not expressly enjoin it, we need but consult reason and natural justice to be convinced, that he who has done an injury to another man by taking from him any part of his property; is bound to make up that damage, by restoring to him whatever he has wronged him of. There is every day occasion enough to make restitution; nothing being more common, than for one man to appropriate to himself by unlawful means, what belongs to another; and yet in many places restitution is a thing without president.

precedent. But this we ought not to wonder at, considering that there are thousands of Christians who never heard a word of this duty. This matter is so little known, and the people are so little instructed about it; that a treatise concerning restitution, written by Mr. *la Placette*, having been published some years since; it has been read as a very singular book, the subject whereof was new and curious. Nay, some have gone so far as to censure this doctrine of restitution, pretending that it was novel and too severe; such a pitch of ignorance are men arrived at in matters of morality. And this is not the only duty which is not understood; there are many others besides, either among those which are common to all men, or among those which are particular to every calling, and which it does not appear that men were ever taught or ever made the least reflection upon. Now a man must needs neglect the duties that he does not know.

2. There are divers sins, which are not commonly ranked among sins, or which men do not think to be damning sins. Of this number is lying and insincerity, either in discourse or in dealings. Among these we may also reckon luxury, sloth, a soft and voluptuous life; many indirect practices to grow rich, which are established and authorized by custom; drunkenness, which in some countries is not esteemed a vice, and all those sins which are only committed by our thoughts. Christians now a-days think themselves innocent, so they do not do things manifestly criminal. They conceive that murder is a crime, but they do not think themselves guilty for passing a rash judgment upon their neighbours, or taking up unjust suspicions of them. They believe uncleanness to be a sin, tho' even some are very indulgent to themselves upon this head; but impure thoughts or sensuality go for nothing with them. Thus there are many sins which men are not instructed about, and what wonder is it then, if they commit them without scruple, and if there is so much corruption in their manners.

3. There are some general maxims in morality without the knowledge of which, it is impossible to have a solid piety; and yet these are almost universally unknown; especially these two, which describe to us the characters of true holiness. The first is, That a habit of sin is an infallible token of a corrupt man; and that any one habitual sin which a man does not forsake, especially when he is warned of it, is enough to shut him out of heaven. This maxim is understood but by very few people. Most men are engaged in vicious habits; such as praying without attention, swearing, falling into a passion, or the like: These habits grow stronger with age, men live and die in them, and yet they think, they die in a state of salvation. The other maxim which is neither less important nor better known; is, That there is a vast difference, between sin and sin, and between sinners and sinners; that the frailties of good men are one thing, and the great and wilful sins of bad men, another thing. If men do not apprehend this difference, they will confound virtue with vice, and good men with impious wretches; and yet this is little observed. It is commonly believed that all men being sinners, they are all upon the matter in the same condition, and do all sin alike, so that there is no great odds between them. Such notions must needs make way for libertinism.

4th, If Christians have some knowledge concerning the duties of morality; yet that knowledge is too general and superficial. They know perhaps in the main, that some sins are to be avoided, and some virtues to be practised; but that they only know confusedly, they content themselves with some general ideas, which for the most part prove useless and insignificant. The design of morality, is to regulate mens actions, in all the circumstances they may be in, and to teach them how they ought to behave themselves, in all the different cases and emergencies of life. Now as these cases and circumstances are infinitely various, it is necessary that men should know their duty with some exactness, and that they should have rules at hand applicable to all particular cases, by the help of which they may discern, what is lawful from what is not. For here superficial knowledge and general ideas, will not serve the turn; because they do not determine particular cases.

The principles of morality are clear, but it is requisite to make a just application of them, and to draw right consequences from them. Every body acknowledges, that wrong is not to be done to any man, but few know what the doing of wrong is. There are innumerable ways of violating justice in relation to our neighbours, or of getting money, which are sinful; and yet these are made use of every day, and people think that there is no harm in them; and so they are guilty of cheating, extortion and injustice, and they do not know it. Whence does this proceed but from ignorance, or from those general and superficial notions which I have mentioned? This is one of the reasons why some books and discourses of piety produce so little effect, they handle things only in the lump; they treat of virtues and vices, of temperance, of covetousness and injustice; they exhort and threaten; but they usually go no further than generallities, and they seldom descend to those particulars, which are so necessary to inform and direct the conscience.

5th. Men are no less ignorant concerning the degrees, than they are concerning the parts of holiness. Christians are not only obliged to the practice of many virtues; but they ought besides that to practice them in the most perfect manner. Our Saviour does not require in his disciples a mean and ordinary degree of holiness; but he calls them to perfection. He demands that they should carry virtue much farther, than either the heathens or the Jews did, that they should practice charity, even to the loving of their enemies; that they should be so patient, as to think it their happiness to suffer; so humble as cheerfully to bear contempt and injustice; so pure, as to banish all uncleanness from their very thoughts; and so of all the other virtues. But an infinite number of Christians, are strangers to these ideas of perfection. They never knew the extent of the duties of Christianity; they have neither tenderness of conscience, nor elevated sentiments about morality. They think they do much, if they observe that which is most simple and easie in every virtue; they confine themselves to that, and aim at no other perfection; so that sublime virtue and piety are not to be sought for amongst them.

6th, Lastly mens ignorance does not only appear in that they do not know their duty; but it does likewise discover it self in this, that they do not know themselves. The knowledge of one's self is a capital point in religion. For it is not enough to be informed of ones duty; every shallow

one must know besides, whether he observes it or not, whether he really has religion and piety; for upon this depends the judgment he is to make of himself, and of his own condition: now people are as much in the dark about this article, as about the others I have mentioned. The greatest part of men live without reflecting upon themselves, and in a prodigious unconcernedness about their spiritual state. They do not trouble themselves to inquire, whether they are of the number of good or bad men, whether they are in a state of grace, or of damnation or not. Or, if at any time they take this into consideration, they most commonly flatter themselves, by pronouncing too favourable a judgment upon their own condition. There are many who boldly rank themselves among good men; and yet are not able to give a solid reason of that opinion they have conceived of their own probity and virtue; nay they are perhaps actually engaged in vice and impiety. If they are but free from noisy and scandalous sins, if they feel now and then some good motions, if they have some good qualities, or an inclination to some virtues, or an abhorrence of some vices; that is enough to fill them with a good opinion of themselves. Now when men are thus blinded by self-love, and do not know themselves; there is but little hope of them, and they will undoubtedly fall into a state of security.

These considerations plainly shew, if I am not mistaken, that men for the most part live in very great ignorance. But I think my self bound to answer an objection, which may be offer'd against what has been said. Some will think no doubt, that it is very difficult for men, to be so well instructed as I suppose they ought to be; and that the people are not capable of such an exact knowledge of morality.

To satisfy those who make this objection, and to clear this matter fully: I observe first; that by all I have said, I do by no means pretend, that all Christians can, or ought to be equally instructed. I know that there are degrees of knowledge, and that in morality, as well as in doctrines, divines and men of parts, go a great way beyond the bulk of mankind. It is sufficient for every one to be instructed, according to his capacity and his condition. But after all, it must be granted, that the knowledge of the principles of morality, is necessary to every body; or else we must strike several precepts out of the Gospel; unless that we imagine that those precepts, are intended only for a small number of learned and subtil men; which is directly opposite to our Saviour's words, who said, that his doctrine is designed for all mankind, for the *little ones* and the simple, rather than for * *the wise and prudent*. There is no Christian but ought to be a *spiritual man and taught of God*. When St. Paul says, *prove all things, hold fast that which is good. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise think on these things.* When St. Peter exhorts Christians. *to add to their faith all Christian virtues, to grow and abound in all these virtues*; such exhortations do belong equally to all the professors of Christianity.

It must not be said, that there are men in the world of very dull and
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* Matth. xi. 25. 1 Cor. x. John vi. 45. 1 Thess. v. 20.
Phil. iv. 8. 2 Pet. ii. 5; 6, 7, 8.

shallow capacities, and that country people and mechanicks cannot comprehend all these maxims of morality. This is not so difficult as it is imagined. The duties of morality are clear, they presently affect a man, because they are consonant, to the common notices and sentiments of conscience. Chuse what part of morality you please, and you may with due endeavours, make either a handy-crafts-man, or a day-labourer apprehend it; so you confine your self to the knowledge and practice of those duties which are necessary to such people in their several callings. Is there any thing more subtil or difficult in the rules of morality, than there is in a hundred dexterities and shifts, which are practised in the affairs of this life; and which common people can attain too without any great pains? If therefore mens understandings are so gross and stupid in moral matters; it is not because these matters are above their reach; but because they were never taught them, or never applied themselves to them. We ought not to judge of what men might be by what they are. The best ground becomes barren, when it is not cultivated. If things were well ordered among Christians, in relation especially to the instruction of the people, and the education of children; the generality of them would not be so stupid and ignorant as they are. We may therefore conclude, That ignorance is one of the general Causes of Corruption. Christians being ill informed of the truths and duties of their religion; and wanting instruction both as to faith and manners, they must needs live in a great neglect of religious matters.

It may be asked, Whence does this Ignorance proceed? I shall observe three principal Causes of it. The first is Education; the way in which children are bred up, does infallibly lead to Ignorance. The second is the want of means to get good instruction, and particularly the defect of those instructions which are delivered to Christians, in sermons, catechisms, and books. The third is the sloth and carelessness of men, who will be at no pains to acquire necessary knowledge. We might bestow very weighty considerations upon every one of these three heads; but since they will come again in our way, in the sequel of this Treatise, it is enough to have pointed at them in this place, as the three main sources of Ignorance. In truth, if men are ill educated, if they are destitute of the necessary means of instruction, and take no care about it; whence should they have sufficient knowledge? unless they were instructed by miracles, by revelations, and inspirations, they cannot but be ignorant and corrupt.

But now if Ignorance be the first Cause of Corruption; it is plain that the first remedy to be used against Corruption, is the removing that Ignorance. It is that we are to begin at, if we would bring back Christians, to a life worthy of the religion they profess. Exhortations, censures, and all other such methods will signify nothing, as long as mens minds are not prepared by proper instructions.

From all that has been said in this chapter, it may be gathered, That the right way to instruct men, is before all things to convince them of the truth of religion; and to make them sensible that there is nothing more certain, or of greater consequence in the world, than the principles of Christianity. The belief of the General Truths, ought especially to be well fixed in their minds; as that there is a God, a Providence,

dence, a judgment and another life. After this we must proceed to the Particular Truths of the Gospel, and as we go on in explaining them, we ought to shew, what influence those truths have upon holiness and salvation.

But the most important thing of all, when these truths are settled; is to shew, that the bare knowledge of the Christian doctrines, is not able to make men happy; that the scope of religion, is to make men truly good; and that without piety and good works there is no salvation.

It will not be sufficient to recommend sanctification in general, but the nature of it must besides be distinctly explained; it must be shewed which are the general and particular obligations of a Christian life, and what sins are contrary to these. And here those whose business it is to instruct the people, ought to be as particular, as possibly they can; shewing upon each virtue and vice what the nature of it is, and what are the several characters, kinds, and degrees of it; and proposing likewise the motives which should discourage men from those vices, and prompt them to the practice of the opposite virtues; as also the directions which may facilitate the performance of all these duties. When teachers shall go thus to work, they will soon perceive some amendment; God's blessing will accompany the use of those means which he has appointed. Christians being rightly informed, will of their own accord apply themselves to virtue; Corruption will lessen by degrees; and Christianity recovering its ancient lustre, will begin to appear with another face than it does at this day.



C A U S E II.

Prejudices and false Notions concerning Religion.

NOW ignorant and corrupt soever men may be, they cannot live absolutely without religion; very few at least can go so far. If they are hindered by their Corruption, to know and practise pure Christianity; yet a remnant of light and conscience within them, does not suffer them to run themselves wholly into irreligion, and to lay aside all thoughts of salvation. But to reconcile these two principles, of which one draws them off from religion, and the other leads them to it; they form to themselves such ideas of religion, as are agreeable to their inclinations, and flatter their security; and being possessed with those ideas, they confirm themselves more and more in their Corruption. These false Notions and Prejudices are worse than Ignorance, and prove a greater obstacle to the reviving of virtue and piety. It is better to deal with men who are simply ignorant, than with people who have wrong apprehensions, and are full of prejudices. The former being not prepossessed, may more easily be reclaimed; but it is much harder to prevail upon pre-engaged persons, especially in point of religion; because while they maintain their errors, they fancy they defend the truth, and that they

promote the glory of God. False Notions and Prejudices in Religion, are therefore one of those Causes of Corruption, which it concerns us most to take notice of. I shall endeavour to point at the chief of them in this chapter.

I. The first I shall name, is the opinion of those, who think that religion is intended only to comfort men, and to render them happy. And it is no wonder that men should commonly resolve all religion into this. The desire of happiness is natural to men; and as they are sensible upon serious consideration, that perfect happiness is not to be obtained in this world, if it were for no other reason but that they must die; they seek in religion some consolation and remedy, against that fatal necessity, of quitting all the pleasures and advantages of this present life. Indeed the sense of their Corruption should restrain them from flattering themselves with the hopes of salvation; but they rely upon the assurances of the Divine Mercy, which religion gives to men; and they persuade themselves, that their sins will not obstruct their felicity. This is properly the Notion which men entertain of Religion, and that which they think it is good for. But that religion should indifferently oblige men to fear God and to live well, and that without this, there is neither true religion, nor happiness; is that which is not commonly believed.

There is no question but that the design of religion is to comfort men, and to lead them to happiness. This was God's purpose in sending his Son to redeem the world. But this is not the only end of religion; it is intended besides for the glory of God and the sanctification of men; and it does properly consist in the service and obedience which are paid to God. Salvation is a consequence of this service, and a gratuitous reward, which God is pleased to bestow upon those, who honour and fear him. Nothing therefore is more absurd than the conceit of those, who look only upon that side of religion, which promises comfort and salvation; and nothing is more dangerous or more apt to make men remiss and careless in their duty; yet this imagination is very common, and if I was to define religion, by the ordinary apprehensions which men have of it, I would say; that it is nothing else, but a mean to bring sinners to heaven, and to make men eternally happy, whatsoever their course and manner of life may be.

II. But men would not so easily promise themselves salvation, if they had not very mean and imperfect ideas of religion. I shall therefore observe,

Secondly, That men commonly place Christianity, either in bare knowledge, or in an external profession, or in confidence. But holiness does not make a part of their Notion of Religion, or at best it makes but a very inconsiderable part of it.

It is not to be denied but that knowledge is essential to religion, and that as it holds the first rank in it, so it is the foundation of it all. Nay it is impossible to engage men to holiness, without laying first in them the foundation of good and sound doctrine. This I have proved in the first chapter of this Treatise. An outward and publick profession is likewise essential to religion, for one cannot be a Christian without it. And further, it is beyond all doubt, that religion inspires confidence, peace and joy. The knowledge of Christ, and of the salvation he has procur-

ed for us, must naturally produce these effects. Knowledge, profession, and confidence, are therefore included in the idea of religion, but as necessary as they are, yet they are not sufficient.

Knowledge is not the whole of religion, since the Gospel as well as experience teaches us, that it may be found in the worst of men; it is not therefore a saving knowledge but when it produces piety and charity. The definition which St. *Paul* gives of the Christian religion, is that it is * *a knowledge of the truth according to godliness*. We may read what the Apostle tells us concerning that knowledge which is void of charity, *1 Cor. xiii.* As for an outward profession, it is altogether useless without sanctity. A hypocrite may live in the church, and perform even with applause, the external duties of piety. This we may likewise learn from Scripture and daily experience. Lastly, all confidence which is not supported by piety, is vain and deceitful. The bare persuasion that one shall be saved, gives no man a right to salvation. A very wicked person may without any ground rely upon God's mercy, and this is what divines call presumption and security.

But tho' all this is very plain, both from Scripture and good sense, yet men entertain opinions contrary to it. A great many think themselves Christians, because they know the truths and doctrines of Christianity. I do not enquire here, Whether all those who think they know religion, do really know it? But howsoever this knowledge true or false, makes many judge most favourably of themselves; it does so puff them up, that they look on themselves as the stays and supporters of religion. Others, of whom there is an infinite number, imagine that so they profess the true religion, they need not fear any thing concerning their salvation; especially if this outward profession is attended with some apparent zeal, and some assiduity in the publick exercises of religion. Lastly, it is believed by many, that God requires nothing else of men, but confidence, and that if they are in that disposition they cannot come short of salvation. They think that in order to salvation, it is enough to acknowledge that they are miserable sinners, and to trust in the Divine mercy, and in the merits of Jesus Christ.

This last Prejudice which reduces Religion to acts of confidence, is perhaps the commonest of all. And yet if we were to determine which of these three, *viz.* knowledge, profession, and confidence, is the least essential to religion; we must say, that it is confidence. It is a thing unconceivable and contradictory, that a man should be a Christian without knowing and without making publick profession of his religion: but a man may be a Christian and a good man too, and yet want confidence. For as it frequently happens that a bad man is animated with a false confidence; so a good man may have a timorous conscience, and be possessed with groundless fears. Sometimes melancholy, or a want of knowledge, or of force of mind, or even constitution, may throw good men into a state in which they feel no comfort. But without insisting upon this; it is visibly an error as common as it is pernicious, for men to pretend, that knowledge, profession, or confidence, are sufficient to salvation, when they are separated from the practice of holiness.

It may perhaps be objected, that no man has these opinions, and that

every body acknowledges, that religion obliges men to be holy. I grant that no man does expressly exclude holiness; it is confessed by all, that the practice of it is necessary. But yet I maintain, that it is look'd upon as the least necessary thing in religion. And to prove this; I need but alledge the difference which is made between knowledge, profession, and confidence; and the practice of good works. The three first are generally pressed and recommended in another manner than the last.

As to knowledge, it is not without reason represented as absolutely necessary; it is said, That a man must know and believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and whoever denies any one of them, is excluded from salvation. This necessity is extended to many doctrines, which is not of the same importance with fundamental truths; many questions are determined, and all these decisions are made articles of faith. If any one raises any doubt about them, he is treated as a Heretick, and people cry out as if religion was upon the brink of ruin. So that upon this head extreme severity is used, every fault is capital, and no allowance is made for humane infirmity.

As to outward profession; the necessity of it is openly maintained, and not without just cause. In this point man's duty, and the precepts of the Gospel are rigorously pressed. The least dissembling of a man's belief, the least act of unlawful worship, is called Apostacy. It is declared, That men are bound upon pain of damnation, to forsake and suffer all; rather than do any thing against their conscience. In relation to this nothing is remitted or softened, and the weak and timorous, are no ways indulg'd.

As to confidence, it is spoken of in such manner, as makes people conceive, that it is the more effectual to salvation, the firmer it is, and the more removed from doubt. The greatest sinner relies boldly upon the mercy of God, and does not question but that he has a right to apply to himself all the promises of the Gospel, provided he believe; that is to say, as it is meant, so he has but confidence enough.

But when the practice of good works is discours'd of the declarations of the Gospel are not pressed with the same rigor. That zeal which upon all other heads hearkens to no accommodation, becomes here very tractable; and a great deal of remissness appears as to this article. The doctrines are pressed, publick profession is strictly enforced, and confidence is highly recommended; but it is said, That moral duties must not be so severely urged, and that something is to be allowed for humane frailty. And yet it seems that as the Scripture inculcates nothing so much, as the necessity of a good life; so it were necessary to insist as much at least upon this point, as upon any other, and that it should not be rank'd as it is, in the lowest degree, and among the least necessary things. One would think likewise, that the pressing sanctification, is to require nothing of men, but what is as easy, if not more, than certain other duties, which are absolutely impos'd on them, upon pain of damnation; such as the forsaking all that is dear to them in this world, and the suffering of death in time of persecution. But without enlarging upon this subject, it is evident, that the generality of Christians, do not believe, that holiness is so essential a part of religion, as it really is; and that

that they do not well understand the nature of Christianity ; from whence it necessarily follows, that they must neglect the practice of holiness.

III. But there are some Prejudices, which do yet more directly attack piety, and they are those which people entertain concerning piety and morality it self. I shall instance this first in the opinion of those, who pretend that morality, is not of such great moment in religion, who speak of it with contempt, and cry it down ; and who unreasonably setting faith in opposition to good-works ; maintain, that it is enough to believe, and that those who insist upon morals do not apprehend the nature of the Gospel. Now one would think that such absurd and unchristian imaginations, should be universally rejected ; but because whatever gratifies corruption is usually welcome to men ; these opinions have their advocates, even among divines, as might easily be shewn from the printed works of some authors, who seem to have had a design to disparage good-works, and to oppose the necessity of sanctification. This Prejudice overturns the foundations of morality, by destroying its necessity, and rendring it contemptible. I only give here a hint of it, because I am to shew in other places, that it is the height of extravagance, thus to set up faith against morality, to ascribe all to the one, and to speak but very slightly of the other.

IV. And yet some people do not stop here. They think it is dangerous to insist so much upon morality ; nay, some have proceeded so far, as to say, This was one of the characters of Heresy. I confess, this opinion is not very common. It ought not to be imputed to the people, nor even to the Libertines. None but a few conceited divines have had the face to maintain it, which by the by increases the scandal, that is occasioned by such propositions. I am willing to believe that those who advance them, qualify them with some restrictions, and that they are not sensible of the terrible consequences which flow from them ; but that they have been betrayed into the speaking or writing of such things, either through some Prejudice, or through the heat of dispute. But after all, if these propositions were strictly taken ; and set out in their true colours, they could not but be looked upon, as false, rash, scandalous, and capable of producing most dismal effects, especially, being asserted by divines : and if we did not judge charitably of the intentions of their authors, we might justly say, That those who dare disparage morality, and insinuate, that the pressing it is a mark of Heresy ; do themselves publish, a most pernicious Heresy. Can it be a mark of Heresy to insist upon that, which our Saviour has so vehemently pressed ; which is the only thing he inculcates in his sermon upon the mount ; which the Apostles perpetually * urge in their epistles, † and declare to be the end of our whole religion, and the character whereby the children of God are discriminated from the children of the Devil ; and without which, both Christ and his Apostles assure us, ‡ that no man shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ?

By this, the truth of religion is as much struck at and injured as piety it self. It gives one an indignation to see, that the honour of defending virtue and piety, should be yielded up to Hereticks. To say that for the

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* Matth. v. 6, 7.

† 1 Tim. i. 5. 1 John iii. 8.

‡ Matth. vii. 21. Heb. xii. 14.

most part, Hereticks are strong upon the head of morality, is in a manner to give up the cause; it is the ready way to confirm them in their errors; and it does basely to ascribe that to Heresy, which belongs to true religion, and is the glory of it. It would be to no purpose to alledge, that some Hereticks have writ upon morality with good success. For granting this to be true, it is not a token of their Heresy; on the contrary, so far they are orthodox. Some orthodox Christians have recommended morality as much and better than the Hereticks, because they have established it upon the foundations and motives, which pure doctrines afford. On the other hand, there have always been Hereticks, who did subvert and ruin morality; as for instance, those who are described by St. *Paul* in the second to *Timothy*, and by St. *Peter* in his second epistle. It is then very unreasonable to say, That a thing which neither agrees to all Hereticks, nor to Hereticks alone, is a mark of Heresy. There is much more reason to charge those who speak so injuriously of morality; with maintaining a Heresy, which comes very near that of the *Gnosticks*, who were opposed by the Apostles, and condemned and detested by the whole church, as corrupters of the morals of the Gospel.

V. But tho' the greatest part of Christians, reject the opinions I have now mention'd, and acknowledge the excellency of morality; yet they form to themselves too easie a notion of the duties of it. This is another Prejudice, which does not a little contribute to that neglect of piety they live in. The notion of those who think, that the practice of piety is easy, is true in the main; * *God's commandments are not grievous: † And Christ's yoke is easy, and his burthen light.* We should therefore always suppose, that it is not difficult to lead a good life, and to work out one's salvation. But the error lies in imagining, too great an easiness in this, and in not considering aright, the nature and the extent of the duties of morality. There are but few whose notions in this matter, come up to the standard of the Gospel, and to that perfection which Christians are to aim at. Few understand to what degree the practice of virtue is to be carried: as for the purpose; what sort of justice, equity, honesty, disinterestedness, purity, or charity becomes a professor of Christ's religion? Instead of rising up to that high and sublime pitch of morality which the Gospel demands; and instead of being acted by noble views and designs worthy of Christianity; men commonly take up with mean and slight apprehensions of it. According to the general opinion, a very extraordinary and elevated virtue is not requisite, in order to be a good man. It is enough for a man if he is not a notorious villain, or a profligate wretch; and if he observe some of those duties which have a shew of sanctity. Thus holiness is reduced to the lowest degree of virtue, or rather, to the least degree of sin; it is brought to very little, and yet that little is often neglected; for men never go so far in practice as they do in speculation; they always do less than they think themselves bound to do; so that their actions still fall short of the idea which they form of their duty.

VI. What judgment then are we to make of Christians now a-days? Tho' they should act suitably to their notion of piety and morality; yet they

* 1 John v. 3.

† Mat. xi. 30.

they would discharge their duty but very indifferently, because that notion is but low and defective. But yet as mean and imperfect as it is, their practice does not reach it. They frequently allow themselves in things which are against their own conscience; and tho' they violate the clearest and the easiest rules of virtue, yet they fancy those to be sins from which no man is free, and which will however be forgiven. At this rate Corruption must needs be very great.

But as men often form to themselves too easie a notion of piety, so they have sometimes too severe an idea of it. It may perhaps seem at first sight, that it is not very necessary to remark and confute this Prejudice. The general depravation of manners seems to make it evident, that the notions which prevail at this time are not the rigid ones, and that men do not much trouble themselves about the rules, of too austere a devotion or morality. But yet it is usual enough for men to run into this other extrem; and such an excessive severity is not so inconsistent as it may be thought, with the corruption of manners. For tho' many frame to themselves too hard and rigid a notion of piety; yet they do not think themselves bound to live according to it, but they leave those maxims to the devout, and they imagine that so much piety is not necessary; so that they fashion to themselves a commodious religion, and such a morality as has nothing that is troublesome or difficult in it.

Howsoever there are many who look upon piety as an austere thing; they conceive it to be an enemy to all joy, and that it debars men of all pleasure, so that it produces nothing but sadness, and melancholy. And they are besides possessed with this error; that the practice of it is uneasy and difficult, or even impossible. But why do men judge of piety with so much prepossession and injustice? This proceeds from two Causes.

The first is their carnal disposition. They are incapable of relishing any other pleasures, but those of the body or of this present life, because they are accustomed to be governed only by their senses; and that is enough to represent piety to them as sower and distastful; not only because it does not procure to them those gross pleasures; but because it does likewise in many cases oblige them to renounce them.

The second reason why men entertain this Prejudice against piety, is that it is not represented to them in its true shape. And here first, there is a great deal of hurt done by the false pretenders to devotion; who affect a mournful and severe outward appearance, and whose behaviour is often intollerably stern and savage. In the next place, profane men contribute to this mischief; for as they neither know nor love religion, so they make odious pictures of it, and they take a delight in carrying the notions of devotion too far, that it may appear ridiculous.

Thirdly, there are several well-meaning persons, whose zeal being not regulated and softened, by a discreet and prudent knowledge, gives an occasion to those unfavourable judgments, which the world passes upon piety. Such people think that it is the duty of a devout person, never to be seen but in an austere appearance, and with a dejected look; they are continually censuring and never pleased; their zeal is either superstitious, scrupulous, or ignorant, sharp, or unseasonable; and so it is extremely apt to alienate mens minds from devotion and piety.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, some divines and moralists confirm this Prejudice, by their way of recommending the practice of piety, both in their publick discourses and in their books. Religion and its duties, are often proposed to the people from the pulpit, in such a severe and frightful manner, as is not very fit to make it appear lovely to men, who for the most part, have already a Prejudice against it. We find too rigid a morality, and several strained maxims in many sermons and books of devotion. And it may perhaps be of some use, to give here some instances of this kind.

When worldly-minded men are told, that salvation is a most difficult thing, and that whoever will obtain it, ought to spend his life in perpetual mourning; this is no great attractive to gain them to the love of religion. Such maxims may be true in some respect; but they are false and extravagant, when they are proposed without distinction or explication. By the descriptions which are sometimes made of the vanity of the world, and of devotion; one would think, that a man cannot live like a Christian; without laying aside all secular concerns and business, and giving up himself to solitude and retirement. Now this is what few men are capable of; and besides it is against the order of Providence, which has placed us in the world, to live and labour in it, and to enjoy the good things which the Divine liberality has provided for us.

That which is asserted by some moralists, concerning the love of God, and their zeal for his glory; supposes that men are obliged, to think actually upon God at all times, and to have a positive intention to promote his glory in all the actions of their lives. But such morality to say no more, is absurd, and impossible to be reduced to practice. It is not possible for a man to have God always in his thoughts, and to make pious reflections upon every step he takes, or every word he speaks. And there are such actions in life, which cannot without profanation be referred to the glory of God by a direct intention. *St. Paul*, indeed enjoins us, * *to do all things to the glory of God*; but this rule is not to be taken in the utmost strictness, nor extended to all particular actions. It is enough to have a sincere and general intention to procure God's glory, and to do one's duty upon all occasions. In order to which, these four things are necessary. 1. That we should not fail to think of God actually, in all those actions that require it. 2. That if by reason of the present state we are in, we cannot think on God at all times, and in all our actions; we should at least think often upon him, and make frequent reflections upon our own conduct. 3. That in indifferent actions, we should not abuse our liberty, but demean our selves according to the rules which the Gospel prescribes; and that we should especially have a great regard to the edification of our neighbour; it being particularly in that sense that this commandment of *doing all things to the glory of God*, is to be understood. 4. That we should love God above all things, and that it should be our chief care and endeavour to obey him, and to advance his glory to the utmost of our power.

How many scruples have been infused into mens minds, by straining the sense of this declaration of our Saviour's, † *Men shall give an account*

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at the day of judgment of every idle word that they shall speak. What inferences have not been drawn from this place, to fill good men with dread and terror? It is expounded as if all discourses, which neither contribute to the glory of God, nor to the edification of our neighbours, nor to the promoting of our own salvation; were those *idle words*, of which men are to give an account to God. And yet it does not appear that words purely idle, are always sinful, or that they deserve the severe threatening which our Saviour denounces here. We cannot forbear talking every day, of many indifferent things, and holding several discourses which do neither good nor harm. Indeed if this should grow into a habit, if we should for the most part speak only of trifling and frivolous things; it would be a sin. But I do not apprehend what hurt there can be, in talking now and then of news, of rain, or of the weather. Certainly these are not the words which are meant in this declaration. The place where we find it, and the terms in which it is conceived; do manifestly shew, our Saviour's meaning to be this; That men shall give an account at the day of judgment, of all the wicked and impious words which they have spoken; and that the *Pharisees* particularly should be answerable to God, for the blasphemies which they uttered against his miracles.

These strain'd maxims produce very pernicious effects. They expose piety to the flouts and contempt of libertines; and they discourage great numbers from it. Young people especially, are by this means disgusted with religion, and they take up an aversion to it, which they seldom shake off afterwards. They accustom themselves in that age which is so sensible of pleasure, to look upon piety under an austere and melancholy form; whilst on the side of the world and of their passions, they see nothing but sweetness and charms. Between these two objects; one of which is so enticing, and the other so disgustful; it is easy to imagine which side they will chuse. They run into the embraces of the world with the full swing of their affections. But as to religion they must be urged and driven; and it is much if they can be brought to make some steps towards it. Even good men being discouraged by this excessive severity; do not make that progress in sanctification, which otherwise they might. Their consciences are disturbed with troublesome scruples and continual fears. It is therefore very necessary to remove this prejudice; by representing virtue and piety, under that easy and agreeable shape which is natural to them; and by proposing such ideas of religion, as may neither on the one hand, produce security, and lull mens consciences asleep, nor on the other hand, involve them in groundless scruples.

VII. But if men are averse to things austere and painful; they are wont likewise to despise those, who they think have somewhat in them that is mean and ridiculous. And there are many who have such an opinion of piety: which proceeds first from the ignorance and corruption of men; who because they are not well acquainted with religion, or are possessed with false notions of honour; look with contempt upon every thing, which does not agree with the prevailing customs and maxims of the world. And then we may take notice besides, that libertines do sometimes observe either in that religion which obtains in the society wherein they live; or in the deportment of those who have the reputation

reputation of being devout, several things, which lead them into this opinion. With relation to doctrines, they find certain articles which men of good sense cannot digest, and they perceive manifest abuses in the worship; they see the people amused with childish devotions, which favour of nothing else but superstition, credulity or bigotry. Some of those who do profess devotion seem to them to hold opinions, contrary to sound reason, and to have some odd and ridiculous ways with them. They perhaps, observe in the ministers of religion several whimsies, ignorances, and weaknesses; they do not always find the best sense in discourses of piety, neither do they think the idea which is given them of religion and it's duties, to be true, rational, or satisfactory. From all this they conclude, that to give themselves up to it, would be a disgrace to them; that it is calculated only for the vulgar, and for weak minds; and that the being neither pious nor devout, argues a strength and a greatness of soul. This certainly is a most false and unjust prejudice. There is nothing more serious, nor more worthy of esteem and respect than religion, and it is the highest pitch of injustice, to take an estimate of it by the errors and weaknesses of men. But yet this prejudice is very common.

VIII. Lastly, we are to rank among the prejudices and false notions of men concerning religion, the opinions of those who are infatuated with mystical piety and fanaticism. And it is the more necessary to caution men against those opinions, because they are grown of late years, to be very common. Fanaticism spreads very much, and there is scarce a country in *Europe*, where it does not obtain under various denominations, and where it has not occasioned some disturbance.

It would be difficult to give here an exact account of mystical piety and fanaticism. It is a subject upon which we cannot speak very clearly, because we can hardly have perspicuous and distinct ideas of it; besides, that the *Mysticks* are not agreed among themselves: they are a sect which is sub-divided almost to infinity; for not to mention the *Anabaptists*, the *Quakers*, the *Quietists*, and all those who come up to the height of fanatical extravagances; there are many particular sects which would scorn the name, and yet are wholly, or in part, possessed with the principles of the fanatics. But in the main here is their character.

They are almost all agreed in one thing; which is, that they make but very little account of outward means, and of those acts which concern the *exterior* of religion; such are the order of the church, government, discipline, preaching, liturgies, and the publick exercises of devotion. All these, if we believe them, are to be considered, as the first elements of piety, which are useful only to imperfect Christians. They have no great esteem neither for those labours and studies, by which men endeavour to acquire knowledge. They reason little about religion, and for the most part, they alledge no other arguments for the articles of their belief, but the inward sense they have of them. They do not condemn morality and good-works, but among themselves, they speak but feebly of them, and in such a strain, as lessens considerably their usefulness and necessity. They say, that our works are nothing but desilement and abomination; that God does not look upon works, and that man ought not to judge of his condition by them; but that all depends upon faith,
and

and an union with God.' Hence it is that those books, which lay a great stress upon the practice of Christian virtues, do not relish best with them. They prefer contemplations, meditations and inward recollections, before an active life and the practice of morality. Nay there are some who think, that all the care which men use, and all the efforts that they make to advance in piety, signifie but little. According to them, the way to perfection and solid virtue, is for a man to be in a state of *inaction*, to go out of himself, to *annihilate* himself; to have neither thoughts, nor desires, nor will, but to be as it were *dead* in the sight of God; for thus they express themselves in figurative and mysterious words. Under pretence of ascribing all to God, they assert, that man is a meer nothing, and an *abyss* of misery; that in order to be happy, it is enough for us to be sensible of our *nothingness*, and to wait in *silence* and *tranquility*, till God is pleased to work his will in us; and that when the soul is thus in the state of *inaction*, and intirely abandons it self to God, then it is, that God speaks to, and operates in it. What they say concerning man's *nothingness*, does not hinder but that most of them pretend to be in a state of perfection, and look upon the rest of Christians, as carnal men, who are yet in darkness, and who never tasted that which they call the *heavenly gift*. I might relate here their refining upon divine love and upon prayer; but what I have said is sufficient, to discover the spirit and character of fanaticism.

I am far from charging all those who hold these opinions, with hypocrisy and impiety; I am persuaded that there are good men amongst them, who are not sensible of their errors; so that I cannot but blame the severity which is used towards them in some places, and the odious imputations that are cast upon them in order to vilify them all, without distinction. If they err, it is for the most part, thro' weakness and prepossession, rather than thro' malice.

Nay it may be said in their behalf, that these illusions would not have grown so common, if there had not been a general, and in some measure an incurable corruption in the world. But they saw every where a prodigious decay of piety, and little hope of amendment. For what may we not say of the present state of Christianity? There is in many places an ignorant and superstitious Clergy and people; whose whole religion consists, in ceremonies, and in devotions, which are merely external, and often ridiculous; above all, there appears in those places a deluge of immorality. Is it then to be wonder'd at, that quietism and fanaticism should rear up their heads in such places? These gross abuses do not indeed prevail every where; but generally speaking, there is but little of true piety among Christians, there is scarce any order or discipline left amongst them; men live as they please; the sacraments are profaned; the precepts of the Gospel are trampled under foot; charity and honesty are almost entirely banished. No man sets about the redressing of these disorders; church-men make it their capital business, to maintain their disputes and their tenets, and they apply themselves but faintly to the reforming of manners. Religion being upon this foot, many who had good intentions, could not but perceive that this was not true and genuine Christianity. But because they saw no likelihood of things being brought to a better posture; or because they wanted capacity to find out the occasions

casions and remedies of so great an evil; or lastly; because they were men of weak parts, they hearkned to those who proposed to them this mystical piety.

This is the cause of the progress of fanaticism, and the reason why some persons of virtue and piety are engag'd in that party. And therefore the true way to reclaim them, would be to re-establish order in the church, and to labour for the reformation of manners. As long as these are neglected, all the precautions and methods used against fanatics by the clergy, or by the magistrate, will either prove unsuccessful, or be found contrary to the spirit of Christianity.

But after all, this spirit of fanaticism is highly pernicious. For first it opens a gap to all manner of licentiousness. Not to mention the mischiefs which may redound from thence upon civil society; mystical piety is a large fountain of illusions; it leads men into endless errors, and it is apt to turn all religion upside down; for as it is lodged only in inward sentiments it cannot happen otherwise, but that vast numbers of men who either want knowledge or strength of parts, will take the wandrings of their own fancies for divine inspirations. I know that some of those contemplative men, acknowledge the Scripture for the rule of their faith, and read it carefully; but the mischief is, that thro' their prejudices, they fix a wrong sense upon it, so that what they read does but confirm them in their errors. Their expositions are very singular; they do not affix to words the same ideas which other men do; they forsake the literal sense, to run after mystical explications suitable to their preconceived notions; they reject or make very light of those helps which the knowledge of languages, history, and the scope of sacred writers, afford; and it is one of their principles, that women, mechanicks, and the most simple people, are able to understand the Scripture as well, if not better, than the most learned doctors.

2. Fanaticism is an evil which is hardly to be remedied: a heretick, or a prophane person, may sooner may be undeceived, than a man intoxicated with mystical devotion; for these will reason, but the other will hearken to no reasoning; so that he is proof against all the arguments which can be offered to him. It is in vain to dispute with people, who look on all those who are not of their mind, as ignorant men; who think themselves illuminated above the rest of mankind, and who return no other answer to the objection urged against them; but that they are otherwise persuaded in their minds. There is no good to be done upon them; either by reasoning or by sense, of which they make but little use; or even by the Scripture, wherein they seek nothing less, than the literal meaning.

3. Tho' mystical men profess a sublime piety; yet their principles favour corruption more than one may be apt to imagine. How can we reconcile those maxims concerning *contemplation*, *inaction*, and *silence*, with that activity, zeal, and fervour which the Scripture recommends? If a man is a meer nothing, if he is to wait patiently till God works his will in him, and speaks to his soul; it is in vain to exhort men, and it would be to no purpose for them to use any endeavours on their part. Besides, that contempt of outward means which the *Mysticks* express, makes way for a total neglect of devotion, introduces disorder and licentiousness, and is directly opposite to God's design, who thought fit to prescribe

prescribe the use of those means. I might add, that the principles of fanaticism are commodious enough for sinners, so that I do not wonder, that some of them should go over to that party. A devotion which consists in acknowledging a man's own *nothingness*, or in *contemplation* and *silence*, is much more acceptable to a corrupt person, than an exact *morality*, which obliges a man, to do acts of repentance, to put his own hand to the work, and to set about the reforming of his life, and the practising of Christian virtues.

Upon the whole matter, fanaticism, makes religion contemptible; because the men of the world confound true with mystical piety. They fancy that a man cannot be devout, without being something visionary and enthusiastical; and that devotion does not well agree with sense and reason.

The prejudices I have mentioned in this chapter, are not the only ones which foment and cherish corruption; some others might have been added, but they may more conveniently be ranged under the titles of some of the following chapters. What I have said in this, does yet farther shew the necessity of good instruction; which may conquer these prejudices, and give men true notions of religion and piety.



C A U S E III.

The Maxims and Sentiments which are made use of to authorize Corruption.

✠✠✠ It has been shewn in the two preceding chapters, that men are
✠ I ✠ generally involved in ignorance, and that they entertain such
✠✠✠ notions concerning religion and piety, as must of necessity maintain corruption in the world. But they are likewise possess'd with divers particular maxims and sentiments, which lead directly to libertinism. A modern author very well observes; **That people are not only very little acquainted, with the extent of that purity which the Gospel requires; but that they are besides full of maxims, incomparably more pernicious, than errors of pure speculation.* These maxims do the more certainly produce corruption, because they are used to authorize and countenance it. And in fact, men's blindness and licentiousness are come to that pass; that not being contented with the practice of vice; they do besides plead authority for an ill life. They proceed so far as to defend the cause of corruption; they dispute with those that condemn them, and they vent such maxims and sentiments, as (if we believe them) will justify, or at least excuse all their disorders. I could not omit here the examining of those maxims, since their effect is so pernicious; I shall therefore observe them as the third cause of corruption.

The maxims and sentiments which favour corruption are of two sorts. Some are visibly profane and impious; such are a great many maxims of the libertines, which go for current in the world: but there are others which

* *New Moral Essays*, Tom. I. in the preface.

which men pretend to draw from religion. I shall insist particularly upon the latter, because as they are taken from religion it self, they are by much the more dangerous. When profane people undertake to defend vice with maxims which are manifestly impious, we stand upon our guard against them, and we may confute them by the maxims of religion. But when they employ religion and the truths of it, in the defence of vice; the danger of being seduced is infinitely greater.

I shall reduce the maxims which are made use of to authorize corruption to these four orders.

I rank those in the *first* order, by which men endeavour to prove, that holiness is not absolutely necessary.

The *second* order contains those which tend to shew, that the practice of holiness is impossible.

The *third* comprehends those which insinuate, that it is dangerous for a man to apply himself to good-works.

The *fourth* and the *last* includes those which are alledged to excuse corruption.

But as it is not less necessary, to know the remedies against corruption, than to discover the causes of it; I shall not only mention, but as I go on confute those maxims.

I. Although nothing is more clearly asserted in the Gospel, than the necessity of good-works; yet Christians entertain many opinions which destroy this necessity, and which consequently open a door to licentiousness. The necessity of good-works cannot be overthrown but one of these two ways; either by saying, that God does not require them; or else by maintaining, that tho' God requires them, yet a man may be saved without the practice of them.

1. In order to prove that God does not require sanctity and good-works, as a condition absolutely necessary to salvation, these two maxims are abused. 1. *That we are not saved by our works.* And 2. *That faith is sufficient to salvation.* The first of these maxims is intended to exclude good-works; and by the second men would substitute another mean for obtaining salvation. I refer the discussing of these two maxims to the next chapter, because they are drawn from the holy Scripture.

II. Men endeavour to persuade themselves, that tho' they neglect holiness, yet for all that, they shall not be excluded from salvation. And that which contributes most to flatter them in this imagination, is first, the notion they have formed to themselves of the mercy of God. *God, say they, is good, and will not judge us with the utmost rigour.* This is said every day, and it makes every body hope for salvation. The Divine mercy indeed is without question, the only ground we have to hope for salvation. But the vilest affront we can offer to that mercy, is to make it an occasion of security. Because God is good and merciful, must not we therefore endeavour to please him? May we freely offend him, because he is good, and we hope he will forgive us?

Those who reason at this rate, understand very little what the Divine mercy is. They must suppose that it extends indifferently to all men without any regard to their obedience or disobedience. But this supposition is evidently false, and contrary to the holy Scripture. The effects of God's mercy, are promised only to those who fear him and depart from
evil;

evil; and by consequence, it is a false and pernicious maxim, to say, *So much holiness is not necessary; God is good, and he will not mark severely what is done amiss.* This is to ascribe to God an easiness and a connivance, utterly unbecoming the sovereign Judge of the world.

It is said besides, *That God will not judge us rigorously.* That indeed, is true; God is indulgent towards us, and the Gospel is a covenant of grace, in which God has a great regard to our present condition, and weakness. But it is likewise certain, that God will judge us according to the rigour of the covenant of grace; and that no salvation is to be had for those who do not fulfil the condition of the Gospel; now this condition, is a true faith, inciting us to holiness. This must be granted, and we must acknowledge the necessity of performing this condition, and of leading a holy life; or else the Gospel is but a jest; and we must say, that God does not speak seriously in it; that indeed he prescribes certain conditions, that he commands and threatens; but that nothing of all this is to be strictly understood; so that tho' a man does not comply with the conditions which God requires, yet he shall feel the effects of his clemency. If this is true, there is an end of the Christian religion.

2. It will no doubt be replied, *That provided a man repents, and asks God's forgiveness, he shall be saved.* This is an unquestionable truth; so by repentance we mean that, which the Gospel requires, and which consists in a sincere detestation of sin, in true conversion and amendment of life. But this is false, if by repentance, we mean only a general confession of sins, accompanied with some sense of grief and fear, whereby sinners hope at the hour of death, to atone for all the disorder of a vicious life. I would shew here that this is no saving repentance, but that I am to handle this matter purposely in another chapter.

If men commonly neglect those things, which are not very necessary; they apply themselves much less, to those which they think to be impossible. Now this is the notion which men commonly have of piety. It is said first, *That it is impossible for a man to be so holy, and to do that which God commands.* A great many like the precepts of the Gospel very well, and acknowledge their justice and excellency, *I would to God,* say they, *we could live thus, but we are not able to do it:* and being possess'd with this opinion, they use no endeavour to practise those duties which they own to be just; or to attain to that holiness, to which God calls them. And indeed, what man would attempt that, which he looks upon as impossible.

Now what is said of man's incapacity to do good, is very true, when we speak of man considered barely as man, in the corrupt state of nature. But the question is, Whether those whom God has rescued out of that state, and called to the communion of the Gospel, are incapable to arrive at that degree of holiness, which he requires of them? The Apostles gives us another notion of those who know and believe in Jesus Christ. They represent to us indeed the miserable condition in which men naturally are, and the greatness of their corruption; but they tell us at the same time, that Christ is come to deliver them from that state, ** that a Christian can do all things through Christ, that strengtheneth him: † that he is perfect and thoroughly furnished to all good works: ‡ that he who loves God keeps his commandments, and overcomes the world.* This plainly imports,

* Phil. iv. 13.

† 2 Tim. xi. 21.

‡ 1 John ver. 34.

that we are no longer in that state of corruption and death, wherein man being left to himself, is a slave to sin; or at least that we ought to be no longer in that state, after all that which the grace of God has done for us. It is the greatest injury, that can be done to Christ and his grace, to say, That his coming, his death, his Gospel, and his Spirit, are not able to sanctify men; and that after they are redeemed and adopted by God, it is impossible for them to be good, and to do what he commands.

If this was true, where would be the power of the Christian religion, and what could we think of God's proceeding when he addresses his commandments to us? At this rate, he gives us a law, not that we should keep it; but rather to convince us that we cannot observe it. In this case, what will become of our Saviour's precepts, and what are we to think of those pure and exalted morals which he has left us? Evangelical holiness will be nothing else but an imaginary and unpracticable sanctity. Those ideas of perfection will be but meer ideas, without any reality; like those of that philosopher, who form'd a fine scheme of the best government & a common-wealth; but it was a project which could never be executed. It were to be wished, we might remember, that, thanks be to God, we are no longer heathens; and that men should be encouraged, and not disheartened by extravagant maxims and discourses. Which is the imitating those cowardly spies, who after they had viewed the land of *Canaan*, went about to dispirit the *Israelites*, and to persuade them, that the conquest of that land was impossible.

2. It is not only said, that we are not able to be so holy as the Gospel requires; but it is added besides, *that God would not have us be so; that he makes use of sin to keep us humble, and to make us feel the constant need we have of his grace, as well as to kindle in us, the desire of a better and more perfect life.* This maxim represents corruption as a thing unavoidable, agreeable to the will of God, and in some measure useful. But what can be more false than to pretend, *that God would not have us to be holy?* Why then does he command us to be so? Why does St. Paul say, **This is the will of God, to wit, your sanctification?* What can be meant by these words of St. Peter, *† As he who has called you is holy, be ye also holy in all manner of conversation; for it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy?* If it be said, that God would have us to be holy, but not perfectly holy, as we shall be in heaven: I ask no more, Who did ever pretend that we ought to be as holy in this world, as we are to be in the life to come? Nothing else is required of men, but that they should be as holy, as God would have them to be, and as holy as his grace enables them to be in this life. To alledge against this, *That God would not have us be so holy;* is a ridiculous evasion, which implies a contradiction. Besides, this maxim taken in that sense, which it first offers to the mind, seems to make God the author of sin. For it supposes, not only that God would not have us to be so holy, but which is more strange, that he wills the contrary, that he has his views, designs, and reasons, why he should not permit us, to attain that degree of holiness, to which the Gospel calls us. That is the meaning of these words, *That God makes use of sin, to keep us humble, to make us feel the need we have of his grace, and to make us long for another life.* If it was said only, That God had some reasons to permit sin:

such

* 1 Thess. iv. 3.

† 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

such an assertion would be true; but those who alledge this maxim, to excuse themselves from obeying the Gospel, ascribe to God a positive design; and a direct intention, which renders that obedience impossible; which derogates from his holiness and justice, and which is manifestly contrary to those declarations which he himself has made in Scripture. If it were further said, That our sins ought to humble us, and that they should serve to make us wiser, and more circumspect for the time to come, and to raise in us a longing after a happier state; this would be very reasonable. But it does not follow from thence, that we are to ascribe to God, those views and intentions which this maxim ascribes to him. There is a vast difference between the design which God proposes to himself, and the event of things. These two should never be confounded. Neither ought the natural effect of sin, to be confounded with the consequences of it. The natural effect of sin can be no other but evil; if the consequences of it are not always fatal, and if men reap some advantage from it, that is, as we say, by accident. However God has no need of vice to form us to humility; he has other means to humble us, and to make us feel the need we stand in of his grace; without being necessitated to let us live under the dominion of sin, to produce those dispositions in us. And there remain still even in the very holiest men, matter enough for them to have recourse to the Divine mercy, and to aspire to a better life, notwithstanding all the progress they can make in holiness. This will be fully cleared in the sequel of this chapter.

3. Here is another maxim which is pretty common; it is said, *That this world is the place of corruption, that this life is the time of sin, and that holiness is reserved for heaven.* Men's minds are so infected with this imagination; that we hear it said every day, even by those who have some piety; *That we live in this world only to offend God, and that we do nothing but sin.* But certainly, nothing is more contrary to the doctrine of the Gospel, than this: for tho' it is true, in a sound sense, that this world is the place of corruption, and that sin will never be intirely abolished but in heaven; yet that does by no means excuse us from serving and fearing God, as long as we live here. The first thing a Christian ought to know; is that God has placed him in this world, not to offend, but to to glorify and serve him. The gospel tells us, every where, that this life is the time which God gives us to sanctify our selves in. That this earth is the place where Christian virtues are to be practised; that now is the time to labour, *to walk, to fight, and to sow*, if we intend to obtain salvation; and that whoever neglects these duties shall be shut out of heaven. In the life to come these opportunities will be over, the door will be shut, and the sentence which God shall pronounce at the day of judgment, will be founded upon that which men do in this life.

Nay, we may draw an argument from the nature of holiness it self, to demonstrate, that the practice of it is not referred to another life. The greatest part of the duties which God prescribes; such as repentance, patience, chastity, sobriety, almsgiving, and hope, cannot be practised in heaven. Here then, is the time, the place, and the opportunity, to perform these duties. Let us reflect upon what St. Paul says, in his epistle to Titus, chap. xi. There he declares, *That the grace of God which brings salvation, teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present*

world. That is, in this life, and upon earth; and then he adds, *looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our saviour Jesus Christ.* He makes a distinction between the duty, and the hope of a Christian; between this world and that which is to come. This life is the time, and this world the place, wherein we ought to practise temperance, justice, and godliness. It must not be asked, where the difference then lies, between this life and the other, between grace and glory? For the difference is great and sensible enough in other respects. In the next life we shall be perfectly holy; our holiness will be of another nature than it is here; we shall be like the angels, and as we shall practise no longer a great many duties, which we practise here on earth, so we shall exercise many virtues, which cannot be exercised in this life.

4. I ought not to omit here another maxim, which is not only very common, but is likewise most pernicious, by reason of the use that is made of it. Some say, *That there was always, and that there will always be corruption; that this is the way of the world, that men will always be men, and that the world will not change.* It is necessary to dwell a little upon this maxim, because it is specious, and tends as well as the former, to make men believe that corruption is necessary and unavoidable. It has besides a general influence upon the subject matter and design of this book; for it is to little purpose to descant upon the sources of corruption, if there is no amendment to be hoped for, I have four things to say upon this maxim.

1. The inference which is made from it is absurd. For tho' an evil is general, it does not follow, that it is to no purpose to endeavour to keep our selves free from it; unless it were an evil from which men could not possibly preserve themselves. There have been always and there will always be diseases in the world; and yet no man hitherto has been so weak as to maintain, that the precautions and remedies which are used against diseases, are altogether useless. Thus tho' corruption reigns in the world; yet that does not hinder, but that men ought to use those means which God affords them to that end.

2. This maxim is founded upon a false supposition. For tho' it is true, that there has been always, and there always will be corruption in the world; yet it ought not to be supposed, that this corruption is alike at all times, or that things are always to be in the same state they now are in. This were a false supposition and contrary to experience, as may easily be proved with respect to the time past, the present, and the future. First, when we reflect upon past ages, we cannot say that all times have been alike, in reference to religion. It is not to be denied, but that before Christ's coming, the world was plunged in a general corruption, and that the state of it has been considerably altered by the preaching of the gospel. Can any one deny but that the primitive church was purer, than the church which we find in the ninth or tenth century? At this day, tho' there is a general dissoluteness, yet there is more or less corruption in some places than in others. It is true in fact, that where the gospel is duly preached, and where there is some order and discipline left, there appears more piety and religion than in other places. As for the time to come we must not think it impossible to restore things to a better state, or imagine that the world will always continue as it is, tho' the means

means were used which God has appointed to reform it. For this will no sooner be done, but corruption will abate ; as I hope to make it appear, in the second part of this book.

3. This maxim is directly contrary to the word of God. The scripture often speaks of the corruption of the world, but does it always in such a manner, as gives us to understand that Christians may, and ought to renounce it. St. *Paul* speaks of the sinful courses which the world lies in, *Eph. xi.* But he supposes, that the *Ephesians* did no longer follow those courses after they were converted to the Christian religion. The same apostle commands us, * *not to be conformed to this present world.* And St. *James* when he describes the spirit and character of that † *pure and undefiled religion*, which is acceptable to God, he tells us, among other things, that it consists in a man's keeping himself unspotted from the world.

4. In the last place, this maxim is extremely dangerous. In that sense and design in which it is proposed, it leads to impiety, it robs religion of all its power, and it furnishes libertines with a plea, which does intirely justify them. For in short, either corruption may be remedied, and men may be reduced to a more Christian life ; or it may not. If it cannot be remedied, this maxim is true, and prophane men are in the right. But in that case, I say it again, religion is but a name ; for if no stop can be given to corruption, if things must still go on at the same rate ; why do we talk of religion, or why do we preach the gospel ? We may teach and exhort as long as we please, but for all that, there will be neither more nor less sin ; men will always be what they are, and the world will not alter. What notion must this give us of the efficacy of Christianity, or of the sincerity of its precepts, promises and threatenings ? I grant then, that corruption is great, that the course of the world is very bad, and that in all probability, there will always be wickedness upon earth. But that this corruption should be always the same, so that no reformation can be hoped ; is what cannot be maintained without affronting religion, without introducing fatality and extinguishing all zeal among Christians.

III. By the maxims we have hitherto examined, men endeavour to prove, that the practice of holiness, is either of no great necessity, or that it is impossible. But there are some others, which represent the study of virtue, as dangerous ; so that here vicious men do not stand barely upon the defensive part, but they attack their adversaries, who recommend the duties of holiness.

I. They pretend, that we cannot insist so much upon works, without obscuring the glory of the divine mercy. *We must ascribe all*, say they, *to mercy, and nothing to our own righteousness.* There is no true Christian, but acknowledges, that our salvation is entirely owing to the divine mercy ; and rejects the opinion which attributes any merit to good-works. It is that mercy which gave us Christ for our redeemer, and our salvation is founded upon that redemption. It is that mercy which pardons the sins of those who believe and repent, and which bears with the infirmities of regenerate Christians. And it is from the same mercy, that we expect that glorious and un-merited reward, which is laid up in hea-

ven for good men. All these are so many acts of the pure mercy of God. But as we have shewed that the mercy which saves us, does not excuse us from good-works, so the necessity of good-works, does not lessen in the least the riches of God's mercy. Unless we admit that there are contradictions in scripture; we must acknowledge, that the doctrine of sanctification, does perfectly agree with the doctrine of grace.

And in truth, to say, that God gave up his Son to death, in order to save men, and that he will grant remission of sins, and eternal happiness, to every believing and repenting sinner; is as much as can be said to magnify the divine mercy: except we should pretend, that God would be more merciful, if he did indifferently save all mankind, and reward vice and virtue alike; but this would a horrid thought, and no less than downright blasphemy. Then sinners might say indeed, *Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound.*

Let us suppose that a prince pardons a rebellious subject, and that he is ready to confer the greatest honours and benefits upon him, on condition that this subject, shall accept of the pardon that is offered him, and shall relapse no more into the same crime; would any man be so unreasonable as to say, that the clemency of that prince would be much greater, if he did grant his favours to this rebel, tho' he should persist in his crime? And yet this is the same thing which some would have God do. It is very strange, that any one should think to honour God, by such conceits, as do not only injure his mercy, but his other perfections too. Because God is merciful, must we forget that he is holy, just and good? It is said, *That we must ascribe all to the mercy of God*; what then, must we have no regard to his holiness, his justice and his truth? Must what the scripture tells of these last perfections, be faintly and tenderly expounded, whilst we press and scrue up to the highest pitch, what it says of mercy?

As to what is added, *That we ought to ascribe nothing to our own righteousness*; it is unquestionably true. But do we ascribe any thing to man, when we say, that he is bound to do his duty, and to accept the favour which God is pleased to bestow upon him? Can any man say, that the rebel I mentioned just now, is the author of his own happiness, and that he deserves the pardon granted him by his prince; because he accepts of it, and fulfils the condition upon which it is offered? What reason then has a man to value himself upon his own righteousness, or to arrogate any merit to himself, since he is indebted to the grace of God; both for the beginnings and the progress of his sanctification? In short, we should take heed, that for fear of ascribing any thing to man, we may not rob the divine grace of what belongs to it, by not acknowledging its gifts and power in a regenerate man.

2. Here is another maxim, which is alledged in confirmation of the preceding and which aims at the same mark; it is this, *That we must not speak so much of good-works, lest we inspire men with pride and presumption.* And to support this maxim it is usual, to run out upon mens' inclination to pride; and upon the heinousness of that sin. But this maxim proceeds only from the false and confused notions which men have about religious matters.

Either this maxim has no sense at all, or else it amounts to this; that whosoever applies himself to holiness and good-works, is in danger of falling

falling into pride; and that a neglect of virtue contains a man within the bounds of humility. Which is as much as to say, that a man may be holy without humility, and humble without holiness. Two things which are the most ridiculous and contradictory, that can be asserted. At this rate it would be a dangerous thing to be a good man, and more safe to be otherwise. By pursuing virtue and holiness a man draws near to sin, and to the greatest of sins, I mean pride; and by neglecting holiness, he attains humility, which is one of the chief Christian virtues. If this is true, all that we call vice or virtue, is but an empty sound. It is much that men should not see, that there can be no holiness without humility, nor humility without holiness; that where there is holiness, there is humility, and pride is excluded; and that where pride is, there is no true sanctification. The holier a man grows, he becomes the more humble; and he is so far from coming the nearer to pride by proceeding in holiness, that on the contrary he removes the farther from it. The instance of our blessed Saviour, who was both perfectly holy, and perfectly humble: is a proof, that humility is not incompatible with holiness.

But the nature of humility is not well understood. There are many who conceive no other humility, but that which arises from the disorders of a vicious and irregular life. So that when they would humble good men, they rank them among the vilest sinners; they make them say, that there is nothing but wickedness and abomination in them; and that they have deserved eternal damnation by innumerable sins which they have committed, every moment of their lives, and even by the best actions they have done. The strongest expressions and the most excessive hyperboles, are scarce sufficient to exaggerate the number and greatness of their sins. But there is enough of other inducements and motives to humility, without thus confounding vice with virtue. It would be a pretty sort of humility, for a man to live in sin, to be at defiance with God, to do nothing for his sake, and then with all this to confess himself a miserable sinner.

Pride and presumption should not be encouraged; but yet under the pretence of humbling men, we ought not to turn them into blocks, or to confound a good man, with a profligate sinner. When we inveigh against the pride of man, we ought not to sink his courage; for that would immediately make him incapable of any thing that is good. Under colour of honouring God, we must not dishonour his workmanship, speak slightly of his gifts, and overlook his image, in those who bear it in a double capacity; as they are men, and as they are Christians. It is a piece of pride to arrogate any thing to our selves which we have not, or which does not come from us; but it is a false humility, it is hypocrisy, not to acknowledge the graces of God in us.

It is objected; *That some presume much upon themselves, that man is very apt to flatter himself*, and to this purpose, the *Pharisees* are mentioned, *who trusted in their own righteousness*. To this I reply, that those presumptuous persons are hypocrites, who have no solid piety. I say, that the grace of God, beats down that pride, and that the *Pharisees* had nothing but an external righteousness, a deceitful and hypocritical sanctity. It is therefore without reason, that men cry down holiness, and pretend that the study of good-works begets presumption, because there have been, and

and there still are hypocrites. If we may say where pride is to be found; it is in those wild and extravagant moralists, who make all these objections. Those men ascribe very little to good-works, and yet what opinion do they not entertain of themselves? They fancy themselves God's favourites, and the truly humble men; and all this by virtue of their stock of confidence: and which is yet worse, they judge rashly of those, who endeavour to live better than themselves, and they make bold to call them *Pharisees* and hypocrites. Is not this a most intolerable presumption and boldness?

3. The abettors of corruption insist mightily upon this maxim, *That excess in all things is to be condemned; and that piety, when carried too far, degenerates into superstition and hypocrisy.* It is not only the libertines speak after this manner; many who would be thought wise and rational men, use the same language. They pretend to virtue, they condemn atheism and impiety; but they likewise condemn those who would tie men to the strict practice of the duties of holiness. *In all things, say they, a just medium is to be observed.* The worst of it is, that some moralists give an occasion to these opinions, by the pictures they make of hypocritical and superstitious men. They represent them as men, who carry all the appearances of devout persons; they tell us, that hypocrisy goes beyond true devotion; and they are not aware that by this, they turn religion into ridicule, and render it odious.

This maxim as well as the former, is founded upon the un-accurate notions, which most people have concerning morals; for it will appear to every man who examines this matter with some care. 1. That piety can never be carried too far, and that we can never do too much in obedience to God, and in compliance with our duty. And 2. That piety, and superstition or hypocrisy, are things opposite to one another: so that to imagine, that a diligent and earnest application to piety, leads men to superstition, or hypocrisy, is a monstrous absurdity, and the highest contradiction that can be maintained. It is just as if one should say, that gold or silver by being very much refined might at last degenerate into lead, or earth. How or which way can piety turn to superstition, or hypocrisy? This is a thing that cannot be conceived. As long as men reason upon true principles, they may pursue them with assurance, and without fear of running themselves into false or dangerous consequences. Men will never fall into superstition or hypocrisy, by the practice of virtue. So far from it, that the more true piety a man has, he will find himself at the greater distance from superstition and hypocrisy: and a superstitious person is so far from out-stripping a good-man, that on the contrary he comes infinitely behind him. Solid virtue is always attended with these two characters: first it is sincere and from the heart, and by that it destroys hypocrisy, instead of producing it: and then secondly, it is well-informed and rational, it fills the mind and heart with true notions, with great and elevated views; and so it sets men at an infinite distance from those mean, ignorant, and trifling things which the superstitious are taken up withal. Let us conclude then, that hypocritical and superstitious men, are so far from having too much piety, that they have none at all: if it happens sometimes, as it certainly does; that men who have a sound and honest heart, are somewhat given to an odd kind of devotion,

votion, which in some respects favours of superstition; this does not proceed from piety it self, but from a defect in those that profess it, who may either want knowledge, or force of mind.

IV. Tho' men endeavour to defend corruption, with those maxims I have related; yet as these maxims may easily be confuted, so they are sometimes forced to acknowledge, that the depravation of the age is great, and that the life of Christians is not agreeable to the rules of their religion. But for all this, they do not give up the cause. They betake themselves to various excuses, by which they think to exempt themselves from their duty, or at least to lessen and extenuate the sin of not observing it. These excuses must needs maintain them in security; they are besides very common, and even pass frequently for good and just. Therefore I think it may be proper to refute them too, in this chapter. It would be a difficult task, to reckon up all the excuses which are alledged in the behalf of corruption, and to trace out all the doublings and artifices of man's heart, upon this matter. It will be sufficient to mention those which are most general and ordinary.

I. It is customary to excuse corruption, by saying, *That we are men, and not angels.* This excuse might be destroyed by what has been already said, but yet it may be usefull to dwell a little upon it. It is said then, *That we are men, and not angels*; and that is a most certain truth; but there is no ground to justify or excuse by that the ill lives of Christians. For first, that very thing that we are men, obliges us to the practice of virtue, instead of exempting us from it. *We are men*, and as such, we have a reason which distinguishes us from brutes, and a conscience which discerns between good and evil; we ought then to live according to reason, and the principles of conscience; and to do that which becomes the nature of man. *We are men*, and by consequence mortal, we know we are not to live always in this world; and knowing this, we must either think of another life, or propose to our selves no other end, than that of beasts; which follow their instinct while they live, and then die never to live again. *We are men*, but we are not independent, we have a creator and a master; and as we are endued besides with understanding, we are to give an account of our actions before his tribunal; it is therefore agreeable to the nature of man, to live like a creature that depends upon God, and that must be judged. So that this consideration, *that we are men*, is so far from excusing, that it condemns corruption.

But it may be said *that we are weak men.* This is very true, our nature is frail, and has besides a strong byass to evil. But God speaks to us as to weak men; he commands us nothing but what is proportioned, to that state of imperfection we are in. Besides, this excuse does not at all become Christians. To say, *we are weak men*, is to shew we have but little sense of God's kindness towards us. We are not only men, but we are Christians too, and this quality raises us above the natural condition of men; it makes us new men and new creatures. Why do we then forget the glory to which God has exalted our nature through Jesus Christ? Why would we still lie under the burden of frail and corrupt nature?

It is further said, *that we are not angels.* But neither is it necessary that we should be so, to do that which God commands us. When God gives.

gives us his laws, he knows he gives them to men; and therefore they are admirably suited to our present condition in this world. If we were angels, God would give us quite other laws, the gospel would be abolished, and the world should continue no longer in the state it is in. It is therefore an absurd imagination, to think that one cannot perform the duties of religion without being of an angelical nature.

Let us then no longer pretend, *That because we are men we are too weak to observe the duties which religion prescribes*; this excuse charges God with injustice, as if he did require from us such things, as are not agreeable with our nature and condition; it is injurious to the gospel and to the Christian religion, as well as to the grace of Christ, and the power of his spirit; it is false, since the scripture declares, that grace regenerates and strengthens us, and that it makes us able to overcome the vicious inclinations of our nature, and to free our selves from the dominion of sin: and lastly, it is contrary to experience; for those many saints and good men, who practised the most * sublime and difficult duties of piety, were men as we are, and as the † sacred writers observe, they were subject to the same infirmities with us, and many of them perhaps, had not those advantages which we have.

2. It is often alledged as an excuse, *That no man is perfect, and that every one has his faults*. This is said every day, and some pretend with that saying, to excuse every thing. Excuses for the most part, have something of truth in them. This proposition, *That no man is perfect*, is very true in one sense, and altogether false in another.

No man certainly is perfect, in the strict sense of that word, or as it imports a full and accomplished perfection, free from all defect; such a perfection is to be had no where else but in heaven. But there is a perfection commenced, or begun, of which a man redeemed and sanctified by Jesus Christ, is capable. If it was not so: why should Christ and his apostles exhort us, ‡ *to be perfect*? Why should they tell us, || *that he who is born of God does not sin*? And that a Christian is § *thoroughly furnished to every good work*? If you ask, who these perfect men are? I answer, that they are those who aspire to perfection, in whom sin does not reign, who do not allow themselves in any vicious habit, who sincerely and honestly apply themselves to holiness, and have accustomed themselves to practise the duties of it with delight. Whoever is arrived at such a state, has attained that perfection which is attainable in this life, and to which Christians are called by the gospel; tho' there remain still in him some infirmities inseparable from humane nature, and never totally, to be rooted out, before he gets to heaven. We cannot be perfect in that first and strict sense I have mentioned; but we may be perfect, and God will have us be so, in the second and evangelical sense of that word.

It is therefore a frivolous excuse in the mouth of corrupt men, to say, *That no man is perfect, and that we cannot attain to the perfection, or to the state of the blessed in heaven*; for this is to shift the question, because that is not the perfection which God requires. We ought not to fix a false and absurd sense upon God's commandments, that we may have a pretence

* James v. 17.

† Heb. xii. 1.

‡ Matth. v. 48. Phil. i. 10. 1 Thess. v. 23.

|| 1 John v. 9,

§ 1 Cor. i. 8. 2 Tim. xi. 21.

tence not to obey them. The question is, whether Christians are not bound to do that which God would have them do, and which they are able to do in this world; this is the perfection to which he calls us.

We may apply very near the same answer to that other excuse, *That every body has his faults*: there are faults which do not destroy piety; and God is graciously pleased not to impute such faults to those that fear him; and in this sense, no man is free from faults; but there is another sort of faults, which should not be called bare faults or defects; those are the vices and passions which cannot consist with piety, the great, the reigning, the habitual or deliberate sins. True Christians are free from such faults, and those who are not free from them, are not true Christians. If this maxim, *That every one has his faults*, is not thus explained; we must speak no longer of virtue and vice; for this excuse will serve for all sins, and acquit every body. If a man is given to swearing, if he is revengful, passionate, or false, if he commit adultery, it is but saying, *Every one has his faults, and no man is perfect*. Such language from a man full of vicious habits is unsufferable. What dismal consequences, would not libertines draw from such a principle? We must therefore understand this proposition, in the sense, and with those restrictions I have observed, and then it may be useful to comfort good men, but it will never excuse those who are vicious.

3. Men endeavour to excuse themselves, by laying the sins they commit, upon the great number and the force of temptations. *It is very hard*, say they, *to avoid sin, we are so many ways drawn into it, temptations are so strong and so frequent, that we must go out of the world, if we would preserve our innocence*. Sometimes they impute to the devil the sins which they fall into, and at other times so great is their audaciousness, that they throw them upon God and his providence.

All these excuses are trifling, and some of them are impious. For, to begin with that which is borrowed from the multitude and strength of temptations; it is unreasonable to imagine, that the number of temptations is so great, that their force is irresistible. Temptations are frequent, I confess; but it is an error to think, that there is nothing but snares and solicitations to sin in the world. This would give us a strange notion of God and of his works, and in that case man's condition would be very miserable. It is certain on the other hand, that the opportunities and solicitations to good, are very common, especially in relation to Christians, whom an infinite number of objects and motives call back to God, and to their duty. Even temptations themselves give them occasions of doing good. God supplies them *abundantly with all things necessary to life and godliness*; as we are told, 2 Pet. i. Certainly we are to presume, that if God permits that men should here meet with temptations and opportunities of undoing themselves, he offers them on the other hand, many occasions and inducements to take care of their salvation. So that the great number of solicitations to good, does already destroy the excuse which is taken from the great number of temptations.

Neither is it more reasonable to complain of the strength of those temptations. Such a complaint is very unseemly from Christians, who are appointed to overcome the world, the flesh, and all other temptations. When all things, are well considered, it will appear, that it is
•within

within our selves, in our own negligence, and in the perverseness of our wills, that we ought to look for that which makes temptations so strong and too hard for us. They have no more strength than we give them. St. *James* has decided this question in such a manner as should stop the mouth of those who seek the cause of evil any where else but in their own hearts. * *Every man*, says he, *is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and inticed.*

The devil has no more power over us, than temptations have: for he can but tempt us. But yet we are apt to ascribe to him a kind of omnipotence. According to the vulgar opinion, one would think, that the devil is the author of all the sins that are committed; that he is every where; and that men are but his instruments, which he uses at pleasure. If this was true, men were indeed to be pitied, and it would be some excuse to those who live ill. The Scripture teaches us no such thing.

But the highest pitch of temerity, is to charge God and Providence with our sins. Thus some men are wont to say, *Such a thing comes to pass because God would have it so; and such another thing did not happen because it did not please God that it should.* When this excuse is made with relation to sin, it amounts to the most horrid of blasphemies; it lays upon God all the evil that happens, and makes him the author of it: for either this excuse signifies nothing; or else it imports, that God is the cause of what happens, and not we. This must needs be the meaning of it, because men pretend to excuse themselves with saying, *God would have it so.* In a word, here is no middle way; either the cause of sin is in man, or it is not. If it is in man, he can accuse no body else but himself; he cannot clear himself by saying, God would or would not have it so. If the cause of sin be not in man, he is discharged, and all the evil lights upon God. It is an astonishing thing, that men who believe God to be infinitely holy and just, can entertain such thoughts.

4. Another excuse is often alledged, and it is fetched from common practice, custom and example. That which is generally done is thought to be innocent, or at least pardonable. But the greatness and the universality of corruption excuse no body: custom and example cannot make any thing lawful which is bad. Where there is an express law, it is to no purpose to plead practice to the contrary. Custom or numbers exempt no man from doing that which God commands, and will never protect him at the day of judgment. Custom and example are so far from excusing vice, that on the contrary, this very thing that the custom is bad, ought to make men sensible how necessary it is, to set about a good reformation.

5. But if men think that example and custom excuse them, they fancy themselves yet much more excusable, when they can alledge the examples and the sins of good men. The libertines triumph here. *To what purpose is it*, say they, *to recommend holiness so strictly, and to enforce it with such severe penalties, when we see many good men follow a course quite opposite to those maxims, and to that exact morality?* But they ought to consider that it is extream hard, or rather impossible, to know certainly, whether a man is truly a good man or not. We cannot be assured of this, unless we knew mens hearts, which belongs only to God. This reflection

reflection does already defeat the excuse, which is borrowed from the sins of good men. We frequently imagine the person who sins to be a good man, when he is but an hypocrite, or an atheist. Indeed piety and charity require, that we should think the best of our neighbours, especially of those in whom the marks of solid piety and virtue appear; but neither charity nor piety obliges us to confound vice with godliness, or to call evil good. Sin is sin, and ought to be condemned wherever we meet with it, and more particularly in those, who pass for better men than others. When men who seem to be pious fall into such sins as are inconsistent with regeneration; we ought to think, that those men either give the lye to their character, and are not what we took them for; and then we may apply to them the words of *Ezekiel*, chap. xxxiii. v. 18. *When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby*; or else we must think, that tho' they have some piety, it is but weak as yet, so that they are not what they appear to be; but however, we ought to be positive in this, That the examples and the sins of others, will excuse no man in the sight of God.

6. Another very common evasion, by which men endeavour to excuse the neglect and omission of their duty, is that *they do not profess devotion and piety*. This is the ordinary plea of men of business, of worldlings, of young people, of courtiers, of military men, and of a great many besides in all conditions. *We do not pretend to devotion*, they cry, *we are engaged in the world*. And with this shift, they not only think themselves excusable for neglecting piety; but they fancy they have a right to neglect it, and that they do a great deal, if they observe some of the external duties of it. One can hardly believe, that these persons are in earnest, when they make such an excuse. It astonishes a man to find Christians, who have the confidence to say, That piety is not their business, that they are of another profession, and that they are not at leisure to be devout.

I fancy, there are two things which deceive those who alledge this excuse. 1. That they do not well understand what devotion is; they look upon it as a very austere and singular way of living; from whence they conclude, that but few people are able to apply themselves to it, and so they turn it over to the clergy, to women, or to those who have much leisure. I have observed already the fallaciousness of this prejudice, and shewed that piety is neither singular nor austere. 2. The other cause of their error seems to be this; that they do not consider, that piety is every bodies business, and that such is the nature of it, that it may be practised by all men. Not but that secular occupations and callings, do frequently obstruct piety, and engage men in vice; and therefore a Christian should never be so taken up with the affairs of this life, as thereby to disable himself from performing the duties of Christianity. But after all, a man may live like a good Christian in any lawful calling; and in that sense properly we are to understand the words of *St. Paul*, * *That the grace of God which brings salvation, has appeared unto all men, teaching them to live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world*.

Do those who plead it for an excuse, that *they do not profess devotion*, imagine, that there are two ways to go to heaven, the one for devout, and

* Tit. ii. 11.

and the other for worldly men; the one narrow, and the other broad? Do they think that the commandments of God do not concern all men, that there is respect of persons with God, or that he dispenses with his own laws? How can they prove these distinctions? Are not we all Christians? Have we not all been baptized? Does not God give us all the same laws? Or have some more reason to love God than others? And ought not the great concern of our salvation, to be equally dear to us all?

I grant, that those who have greater opportunities, and more leisure than others; ought to make use of these advantages: but I maintain at the same time; That none stand in greater need of piety, than those who say, *We are engaged in the world, we do not pretend to devotion.* It is because they are not devout, that their condition is very sad; and the more they are engaged in the world, the greater are the temptations and distractions to which they are liable: now he that is exposed to a storm, had need take more care, than he who enjoys a calm.

These are the principal maxims and sentiments, which are made use of to authorize corruption. Whoever takes notice of what is said and done in the world, must needs acknowledge that these and the like maxims are vented abroad every day; so that in order to obstruct the progress of corruption, it is absolutely necessary to undeceive men, in reference to these sentiments, and to oppose that criminal boldness, which shamefully corrupts the truths of religion, and turns impieties into religious maxims, and articles of faith.

C A U S E IV.

The Abuse of Holy Scripture.

IT is a daring piece of confidence to authorize Corruption with maxims borrowed from religion; but it is the last degree of audaciousness and impiety, to turn the holy Scripture to such a scandalous use, and to seek in that divine Book pretences and apologies for vice; and yet the extravagance and temerity of many bad Christians come up to this pitch. Several declarations of the word of God, are made by them as many maxims, under which they think to shelter themselves; and if we believe them, there is nothing either in their practice or opinions, but what is agreeable to the will and intentions of God himself. This abuse of the Scripture, I design to shew in this chapter, to be one of the causes of corruption; and it cannot be too seriously considered.

The passages of Scripture which are abused to this purpose, may be reduced to these four heads. The *First* comprehends the places which are brought against the necessity of good-works. Under the *Second*, we will examine those declarations of Scripture, by which some endeavour to prove, that all men without exception, are in a state of corruption which

which subjects them to sin. In the *Third* place, we shall answer the arguments drawn from the examples of those saints, whose sins are recorded in Scripture. And *lastly*, we shall make some reflections upon those Scriptures, in which the divine Mercy is promised to the greatest sinners.

There are divers passages in Scripture, which being ill understood, lead many into this persuasion, That good-works are not of absolute necessity. And first, nothing is more confidently alledged to this purpose, than what we read in many places ; * *That we are justified by faith, and not by our works*. No doctrine is more clearly and expressly delivered in the Gospel, than that of justification by faith. But it is a perverting of this doctrine to conclude from it, that salvation may be obtained without good-works. This conclusion must needs be false, since the Gospel enjoins good-works as a necessary condition in order to salvation. St. Paul tells us, that † *without holiness no man shall see God*. And does not that import, that none shall be saved without holiness and good-works ? The same apostle teaches us, that at the day of judgment, when men shall be admitted into, or excluded from heaven ; God will have a regard to their works, to the good or evil which they shall have done. ‡ *God will render to every man according to his works*. || *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that we may receive according to what we have done, whether good or bad*. This is very positive, and therefore since there can be no contradiction in Scripture, here is enough already to convince us, that the doctrine of justification by faith, has nothing in it which destroys the necessity of good-works.

But it will appear yet less difficult to reconcile these two doctrines ; if we suppose that which no man can reasonably contest, namely, That when the Scripture says, that *faith* is sufficient to salvation, we are to understand by the word *faith* in this proposition ; *that true faith* which the Gospel requires. Now if we ask, What that faith is, and by what marks may it be known ? All the apostles will unanimously tell us, That true faith produces a holy life, and that it discovers it self by all manner of good-works. They assign good-works as the essential mark and character, that distinguishes a saving from an hypocritical faith. By that very thing therefore that the Gospel requires faith, it does likewise require good-works, since faith cannot be without works. And by consequence the opinion of those, who fancy that faith is sufficient without works, is evidently absurd, and contrary to the Gospel, and to the nature of faith it self.

But to set this matter still in a clearer light ; it is necessary to take notice here of two mistakes, which men are apt to run into when they speak of faith and good-works. The first is, that they separate faith from works ; they look upon faith as a thing quite different from works, and which supplies the want of them ; or rather they oppose faith to works, as if these two things were contrary to each other. A corrupt man will say, *I confess that I have not good-works, but however I have faith*.

Those who speak thus, suppose that they may have faith tho' they have not works ; but St. James has directly confuted this imagination ;

If that

* Rom. iii. &c. † Heb. xii. 14. ‡ Rom. ii. 6. || 2 Cor. v. 10.

** What does it profit, my Brethren, though a man say he has faith and have not works? Can faith save him? If faith have not works, it is dead, being alone.*

Who can after this separate saving faith from good-works? Can we separate that from faith, which God has declared to be inseparable from it? It shews that men are strangely blinded with ignorance and prejudice, when at this time of day we are fain to prove things so plain and unquestionable.

The second illusion is, that men place faith in confidence alone, and many define it by that. They fancy that to have faith, is nothing else but to believe that God is merciful, and to rely upon the merits of Christ; because faith embraces the promises of the Gospel, the natural effect of which promise is to fill the heart with assurance and tranquillity. It is beyond all doubt, that for the most part true faith is attended with confidence. But confidence is not the whole of faith; and I cannot imagine what part of God's word countenances that notion, which places the essence of faith in confidence alone.

The faith which the Gospel speaks of, consists in believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; in embracing his doctrine as true, and in making profession of it, in doing his commandments, and hoping for salvation from him. But the resolving all faith and religion into acts of confidence, is the most extravagant conceit that can enter into a man's head. If this notion was true, it would follow from it, that in order to be saved, it is enough for a man to believe that he shall be saved. Which is the same thing as to say, That whoever would have a right to confide in God, needs do no more in order to that, than actually to trust in him; and that is a most ridiculous thought, which turns all religion into a strong fancy. Before we believe a thing we ought to know why we should believe it, and have good reason and solid grounds for our belief. Before we trust in God, we ought to satisfy our selves that we have a right to confide in him: for can a man be saved only because without any ground or reason he fancies that he shall? We ought not to rely upon God but according to his promise. Now God has promised nothing to those who live and are hardened in sin; far from promising any thing to them, he threatens them with inevitable ruin. What claim or title then can an obdurate sinner have to the mercy of God? What confidence can he repose in God's promises, as long as he continues impenitent? None at all, except we suppose in God a general decree, to save indifferently all sorts of persons.

It must not be said, That these considerations are apt to alarm and disturb the peace of mens consciences, for they will alarm none of those who are animated with true faith and sincere piety. And as to others; we do them a great piece of service; when we awaken and terrify them out of that false quiet, into which a groundless confidence has betrayed them. On the other hand, it is a dangerous thing to teach, That confidence is the most essential thing to faith; for by this we may alarm some good men, who either through melancholy or want of instruction, are destitute of confidence and inward peace. And it has certainly happened,

ed, that several pious persons are fallen into black thoughts and sad scruples concerning their salvation, and that they have in some measure desponded, because they did not find confidence, and a sense of the love of God in themselves.

From all these reflections it does evidently appear, that faith never ought, nor can be separated from good-work; and that Christians are as much obliged to apply themselves to good-works, as they are to believe, and to have faith.

But now if it be asked, Why St. *Paul* then opposes faith to works, and why he excludes works, when he treats of justification? I answer, That the Apostle aims at two things by this. His design is to shew, 1. That works are not the cause and foundation of mens salvation; but that it flows from the pure mercy of God through Jesus Christ. This he proves with respect both to the Heathens and the *Jews*, in the first chapters of his epistle to the *Romans*. But he did not mean to say, That good-works are not necessary under the covenant of grace. His expressions are too clear to leave the least room for any doubt about this matter: to reject the meritoriousness of good-works is one thing, and to deny their necessity is another. But 2^{dly}. because it may be objected, that St. *Paul* does intirely exclude works, and that he uses expressions which imply, that Christians are no longer obliged to the practise of them, and that they have no influence on mens salvation either as causes or conditions; but on the contrary, are opposed to faith: therefore I add, That he speaks thus with relation to the works of the ceremonial law, and especially to circumcision. There were many in St. *Paul's* time, who asserted, that Christians were bound to observe those legal ordinances. It was about this question that the Apostles met at *Jerusalem*, and determined, * *That Christians are justified by faith only, and that the yoke of Mosaical ordinances, ought not to be laid upon them*. The same controversy is handled by St. *Paul*, in his epistle to the *Galatians*, where giving an account of his dispute with St. *Peter*, and of his reproving him for his too great compliance with the *Jews*; he affirms, *That we are justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law*.

Why has not that difference been observed which St. *Paul* makes about works? When he speaks of the works of the Mosaical law, he calls them *the works of the law*, or barely *works*; but when he treats of the works which the Gospel prescribes, he calls them *good-works*; because they are really good, holy and profitable in their own nature; but this title of *good-works*, is never bestowed upon the works of the ceremonial law, which considered in themselves had nothing of goodness or holiness in them. In a word, *good-works* in St. *Paul's* style, are quite another thing than barely *works*, or the *works of the law*.

If this had been considered, such great pains needed not to have been taken, to make † St. *Paul* agree with St. *James*. † St. *Paul* says, *That man is justified by faith without the works of the law*; ‖ and St. *James*, *That man is justified by works, and not by faith only*. There is no contradiction between these two Apostles. Both follow one hypothesis; and argue up-

* Acts xv.

† Rom. iii. 28.

‡ Gal. ii. 16.

‖ James ii. 24.

on the same principles. St. Paul disputing against the *Jews*, who would tye Christians to the observance of the works of the Mosaical law; affirms, That faith in Christ is sufficient, provided it brings forth good-works; and that it is not necessary to observe the Mosaical rites. St. James disputing against Hereticks, who pretended that faith did save without good-works, and so did intirely ruin our Saviour's morals; declares, that faith which does not produce good-works, is not sufficient to salvation. Is not this the same doctrine with St. Paul's? But instead of reconciling these two Apostles, some people find here great difficulties. They do not reconcile St. James with St. Paul, but they rather refute St. James by St. Paul. St. James is expounded with great caution; as if he had gone too far by saying, *That man is justified by works, and not by faith only*. This proposition is softened as much as possible, it is excused rather than explained; but as for what St. Paul says, *That faith alone justifies without works*, it is taken in the utmost strictness; so that all is ascribed to faith, and nothing to good-works. Nay, faith is set in opposition to good-works, and God to God himself; the passages of Scripture which speak of faith being brought out against those which relate to works. *It is true*, say some, *the Scripture says, that without holiness no man shall see God*; but it is likewise written, *That we are not justified by our works, but only by faith*. And by this way of reasoning, men raise themselves above the reproaches and accusations of their own consciences. I say it once more; this is to attack and confute the word of God by it self, and to charge the Holy Ghost with self-contradiction. For in short, if a man can be justified without good-works, he can be saved without them too; since the being justified is the same thing with the being saved: now if a man can be saved without good-works, he may see the face of God without holiness; which is directly contrary to what St. Paul tells us, * *That without holiness no man shall see the Lord*.

2. A great many people imagine, that it is one of the privileges of Christians, not to be tyed to the observation of God's law as the *Jews* were; some mistaken places give occasion to that error, and particularly this; † *We are no more under the law but under grace*. These words are thus interpreted. *The law did prescribe works, but the Gospel requires only faith; the law did threaten, but the Gospel speaks only of grace and pardon*. So that to require works, at this time of day, is to bring back the dispensation of the law. There is something of truth in this reasoning; but those who make use of it to free themselves from the observation of God's commandments, do very little understand either what the law or the Gospel is, and wherein these two dispensations differ. It is certain, that the law was a dispensation of severity; it did not propose to men remission of sins and salvation as the Gospel does. The law had not that power and efficacy to sanctify men, which grace has. The law laid upon the *Jews*, a great many obligations which were not only burdensome and painful; but which besides had no intrinsecal holiness in them; and those duties were enjoined under a curse. The law it self was a time of severity and malediction, in respect to all the nations of the earth, since all the while that æconomy did subsist, they were excluded from

* Heb. xii. 14.

† Rom. vi. 14.

from the covenant which God had made with the *Jews*. In these several regards, we are not under the law, but under grace.

But if from this, that we are not under the law, we should infer, that we are no longer bound to do what is just; this inference would overturn the whole Gospel, and transform religion into libertinism. If because we are under grace we ought to speak no more of works; why should the Gospel prescribe works, and the same works which the law enjoined, excepting only the ceremonies? Why should this Gospel call us to a holiness, which exceeds that of the *Jews*; and enforce this obligation, with more terrible threatnings, than those of the law? Why did our Saviour, *John* the Baptist and the Apostles, preach up repentance, and enter upon their ministry with these words, * *Repent ye?* According to the hypothesis of these men, they should have spoken to them after this manner, *This is the time of grace, the law is past, and the covenant of works is abolished; therefore fear nothing, let not your sins trouble you, for salvation is promised to all mankind*. Whence comes it to pass that our || Saviour speaks only of works, in his sermon upon the mount; or that St. *Paul* declares, that the natural intention and the proper effect of grace, is to teach men to live according to the rules of temperance, justice, and godliness? Must we say, that God is altered, that he does not love holiness so much now, as he did heretofore; or that sin is become less odious to him, since it was expiated by the death of his Son? But (it is said) *we are no more under the law*. What, are Christians then a lawless people? On the contrary we are under the law, I mean under the law of Christ, under † *the law of the spirit of life, which makes us free from the law of sin and death*.

But let us hear St. *Paul* himself, in what sense and respect does he say, *That we are no more under the law but under grace?* He says this, precisely to shew, that we ought to live no longer in sin. These are his own words, † *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid. On the contrary, sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace; you were formerly the servants of sin, but now being made free from sin, and become the servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness*. We need but read the sequel of his discourse to see how he inveighs against those, who turned the grace of the Gospel into a pretence to live in sin.

Before I leave this matter, I shall take notice of two errors, which are pretty common. The first is, the applying to Christians at this day, all those things which were spoken of old by the Apostles, to the converted *Jews*. It is said, *That we are no more under the law*; and Christians are often exhorted to bless God for being no longer under the curse of the law, and the yoke of *Moses*. And upon this a great many oppositions are observed betwixt the law and the Gospel. For my part, I do not think those exhortations and oppositions, so very proper to be insisted on, when we are speaking to men who never were *Jews*; unless we do it with a design to shew the excellency of the Gospel covenant, above that of the law, and the advantages of Christians above *Jews*. For after all, the law was given only to the *Jews*, and the *Gentiles* were never

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* Matth. iii. 2. & iv. 17.

|| Matth. v. 6. 7.

† Rom. viii. 2.

† Rom. vi. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18,

ver subjected to the ceremonies or the curse of it, as the *Jews* were. Why should we then say to people who never were under the law, *You are no more under the law?* The Apostles indeed spoke in that manner to the converted *Jews*; but as to those who were formerly *Pagans*, it would be more fitting to tell them; * *You have been converted from idols to the living God, Remember that ye were in times past Gentiles without hope, and without God in the world; and therefore live no longer like Heathens.* It is a great fault not to expound the Scripture according to the true scope of it, and to apply all that it contains, to all sorts of persons without distinction.

The other error is of greater consequence. People fancy, that because we are not under the law, which was a covenant of rigor, we are now to speak of nothing else to men, but of grace and promises, and that it is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, to threaten and to denounce curses against sinners. It has been said already, in what sense the law was a covenant of rigor, in opposition to the covenant of grace; but the Gospel has also its curses, and they are much more terrible than those of the law. The Gospel speaks of the future punishments of another life, in much clearer and stronger expressions, than the law does. To be convinc'd of this, we need but reflect upon that opposition which St. Paul makes between the law and the Gospel, in the tenth chapter to the *Hebrews*, *He that despised Moses's law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the spirit of grace? We know him that has said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God.*

3. The Libertines do likewise abuse what St. Paul says in the epistle to the † *Galatians* concerning Christian liberty; when he declares that Christians are freed from the bondage of the law, when he exhorts them; to stand fast in that liberty, and protests, that Christ profiteth nothing to those, who would be justified by the law. But a man may see with half an eye, that the Apostle meant only, that Christians are no longer bound to observe circumcision, and the other ceremonies of the law of Moses. That St. Paul has no other view or design but this, will plainly appear to every one who will read the whole epistle, and particularly the second chapter of it.

In the V chapter we find two things which are decisive in this matter. 1. St. Paul speaks there expressly of circumcision. ‡ *Behold I Paul say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing; for I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of none effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.* 2. It is very observable, with what circumspection the Apostle delivers himself, lest his doctrine should be wrested to favour licentiousness; after he had said, || *You are called liberty*, he adds, immediately *only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.* He explains what

* Thess. i. 9. Ephes. ii. 12. & iv. 17.

† Gal. v. 1.

‡ Gal. v. 2; 3, 4.

|| Ver. 13.

what he means by living after the flesh, by making an enumeration, of those sins which the flesh produces, and which exclude men from the kingdom of heaven. He exhorts men to live after the spirit, and to practise the Christian virtues. In the IV chapter, he pursues the same exhortations, and he ends the epistle with these remarkable words, which contain the sum of his doctrine; * *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature*: that is to say, Whether a man be a Jew or a Heathen, it matters not, so he believes in Jesus Christ, and observes God's commandments; || *Peace and mercy be on them all who walk after this rule*. Is there any thing plainer than this doctrine? And yet how clear soever it may be, Christian liberty is alledged to set men free from the obligation to keep God's commandments. All that St. *Paul* says against circumcision and the ceremonies of the law, is by an enormous blasphemy, turned against the holy commandments of the Son of God. Can any thing more odious or prophane be imagined, than the perverting of the Holy Scripture at this rate?

4. Those who plead on the side of corruption, are wont to object against what is said in behalf of holiness, this sentence of *Solomon's*, † *Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself over-wise*. And what inferences do they not draw from thence? They conclude from this place, That a man ought not to pretend so much to holiness, or to set up for a good man, and that in all things a mediocrity is best. One may easily apprehend that such sentiments must needs introduce licentiousness; especially, when they are thought to be supported by a Divine authority.

But let us see whether or no, such conceits can be founded upon this sentence of *Solomon's*. I shall ask in the first place, Whether it is possible for a man to be too just or too wise, and whether there can be a vicious excess in righteousness or wisdom? If a man may be over righteous, he may likewise love God too much; for to be righteous, and to love God is the same thing. Now God requires that we should love him with all our heart, and consequently that we should be as righteous, as it is possible for us to be. But far from being over-righteous, we can never be righteous enough. And if we can never be righteous enough, is there any occasion to exhort us, that we should not be over-righteous? I wish men had at least that reverence for the Scripture, as not to make it speak absurdities.

I know the ordinary evasion: vicious men will say, that when piety runs to excess, it leads to superstition or pride, and becomes troublesome and ridiculous. Every body says that, but without reason. I have refuted that opinion, and shewed that true piety never degenerates into superstition, or pride, and that devout men who are superstitious, or troublesome, have but a false devotion, or a misguided zeal.

This may direct us to the true meaning of the sentence in question; *Solomon* does not speak here of true justice and wisdom. For whether he may have an eye here upon superstitious or hypocritical persons whose righteousness is but imaginary, which sense is adopted by many interpreters, or whether he speaks of those who exercise justice with too much

severity,

* Chap. vi. 15.

|| Ver. 16.

† Eccles. vii. 16.

severity, as some think ; or whether as it is conceived by others, he gives this advice to busy and presumptuous people, who meddle in things which do not concern them, and fancy themselves able to determine all matters ; however, it is plain, that *Solomon* does not speak here of good men, who exactly follow the rules of true justice and wisdom. If we stick to the last of these three expositions, which seems to agree best with *Solomon's* design ; then the meaning of this place is clear and rational, and has nothing in it contrary to piety ; whereas the sense which is put upon these words by the Libertines, is both absurd and impious.

Those who would either justify or excuse corruption ; use to object in the second place, That since the Scripture teaches that all men, and even good men are deeply engaged in corruption ; it must follow from thence, that holiness and good-works are not so very necessary, and that the practice of these is impossible. Now to prove this universal corruption of all men, they bring several declarations of Scripture, and this among the rest, *There is not one that doeth good, no not one, &c. Psal. 14. Rom. 3.*

If their meaning in citing these words, was only to shew, that there is no man altogether free from sin ; and if it was granted on the other hand, that good men do not sin in the same manner that the wicked do ; I would not quarrel much about this interpretation, though not altogether exact or agreeable to the scope of *David* in the 19th *Psal.* But there is another design in it, which is to infer from these words, that men differ very little from one another, that they are all guilty of many great sins, and that none do, or can practise the duties of holiness. In a word, this is intended for the apology of corruption, and to silence those who oppose it.

If what *David* says in this place is to be strictly understood, it will follow, that there is not one good man upon earth ; that all men are perverted, that they are all become abominable by their sins, and that there is not one single person that is just, or that fears God. But this consequence raises horror, it is contrary to truth and experience, and to what the Scripture declares in a thousand places, where it speaks of good men, and distinguishes them from the wicked. Nay, this consequence may be destroyed from what we read in that very *Psal.*, which mentions the just who are protected by God, and the wicked who persecute them. This complaint of *David*, must therefore be understood with some restrictions.

By reading the XIV *Psal.*, we may perceive that *David* intends to describe in it, the extream corruption of men in his time. There he draws the picture of impiety and Atheism, and speaks of *those fools, who say in their hearts that there is no God*, and whose life is a continued chain of sins. It must be observed in the next place, that when St. *Paul* cites these words out of the XIV *Psal.* in the epistle to the *Romans*, chap. III. he does it with a design to shew, that the *Jews* were not much better than the Heathens, and that they had as much need of a Saviour. * *What then, are we better than they ? No in no wise, for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin.* This is the assertion which St. *Paul* maintains, and which he proves from that

* Rom. iii. 9;

that complaint which *David* made of old, † *There is not one that does good, &c.* From whence he concludes, *that all mouths must be stopped, and that all the world is become guilty before God*; so that the law of *Moses* could neither justify nor sanctify the *Jews*. But he teaches at the same time, that *Christ* was come to rescue men out of that miserable condition. And it were a strange thing if we must still say of Christians, *That there is none that does good, no not one.*

2. This answer is to be applied to that place in the *Ephesians*, where it is said, ‖ *That we are dead in trespasses and sins*, for to the same end these words are quoted. I do not deny but all men abstracting from the Divine grace, are to be considered as dead in their sins. That is *St. Paul's* meaning in that place; he speaks here of the natural state of men, and particularly of Heathens; which was a state of corruption and death, in which they had perished had not God taken pity upon them. But the Apostle intends to make the *Ephesians* sensible of that unparallel'd mercy of God by which they were converted to Christianity, being but poor Heathens before, who were dead in their sins, and obnoxious to the wrath of God. He does not say to them, *you are dead in your sins*; it is a falsifying the text to cite it so, and to say, *we are dead in our sins*; but *you were dead*, he speaks of the times past when they were Heathens; * *Among whom*, says he, speaking of the *Jews*, *we had our conversation in times past, in the lists of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind*, but now, he adds, *God has quickned us together with Christ*; both *you that were Heathens, and we that were Jews, are raised again from this spiritual death by virtue of God's great mercy.* This is the true meaning of that place, which gives us a lively idea of mens natural corruption, and of that happy state to which *Christ* has exalted them. I do not deny but that many Christians, are still in the same condition with Heathens, or very near it, being dead in their sins, and following the course of this world; but this can be said only of bad Christians, and not of those who have felt the divine and sanctifying virtue of the Christian religion.

3. It will be further said, That we must needs acknowledge, that all men without exception are sinners, because that is *St. John's* doctrine, † *If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves.* That is a truth which no man denies, because it is too evident both from Scripture and experience. But we must take care to understand this proposition aright, *that all men are sinners*, and that we explain it so, as that it may comport with that just difference we are to make between good and bad men; else under a pretence that all men are sinners, the distinction between virtue and vice will be taken away. It is fit to remark upon this occasion, that the Scripture does not give the name of *sinners* to all men, but only to the wicked and impious, this may be seen in the whole book of *Psalms*. When we say then, that we are all poor sinners we must know in what sense we say it,

As to these words, *If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves.* It is visible that *St. John* says this upon two accounts, which relate to two sorts of sins, into which men may fall. First there are great sins, there

† V. 19.

* Ephes. ii. 3. & 5, &c.

‖ Ephes. ii. 1.

† 1 John i. 8.

there is that corruption in which men lived before their conversion. In this regard St. *John* might say to those he writes to, who were new converted Christians, that they were all sinners, meaning, that they had all been so; for indeed both *Gentiles* and *Jews* had been extremely corrupt. Secondly, There are sins, into which those whose regeneration is not yet perfect, may fall; as there are infirmities from which the most regenerate men, are not free. In this sense all men are sinners, and the Christians to whom St. *John* directs his epistle, were all sinners also, tho' already converted. But the question is, Whether a true Christian sins like other men, and whether he who is a *sinner*, taking that word according to the ordinary use of Scripture, that is to say, one in whom sin reigns, is a true Christian? That can never be said. To this purpose we may hear St. *John* himself in the III chapter of the same epistle; where he expressly tells us, *That he who is born of God does not commit sin, that whoever sinneth is of the Devil, and that by this we may know the children of God and the children of the Devil.* Are not these words very plain? Who can have the confidence after this; to excuse corruption by saying, *we are all sinners*? But yet it is not only said that we are all sinners by these men, but besides, that we are all great wretched and abominable sinners. It is no wonder that men who have such sentiments, should be so corrupt.

4. But to this, there is a reply at hand, to shew that the justest men are guilty of very frequent sins, and it is taken from these words, *The just man sins seven times a day.* I might let this alone, because I am engaged only to answer those places of Scripture which are wrested into an ill sense about this matter. And this, that *the just man sins seven times a day*, is no where to be found in the Bible. Those who quote these words as if they were Scripture; will pretend no doubt, that they are contained, in *Prov. xxiv. 16.* But there is nothing like this in the sacred text. These are the words of *Solomon*, *A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.* *Solomon* speaks of the frequent afflictions of good men, and particularly of the ill usage they meet with from wicked men. In the 15 verse he addresses himself to the wicked, and tells them, that it is in vain for them, to lay wait for, and to persecute the just, for, adds he, *a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again, but the wicked shall fall into mischief and perish.* The meaning is, that God takes care of the just, and that if he permits that they should fall into many calamities, he does likewise deliver them. This is asserted almost in the same words, *Psal. xxxvii. 24.* *Though the just fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* To the same purpose we are told, *Job v. 19.* *He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee:* this admits of no difficulty, and all interpreters are agreed about it. And yet for all that, as men are apt to entertain every thing which excuses corruption; this proverb, *That the just man sins seven times a day*, prevails and passes for an article of faith. Is it not a lamentable thing, that men should be thus obstinately bent to wrest the Scripture, into a sense favourable to corruption, and that they should dare to falsify it at this rate?

There are many falsifyings in the way of citing this passage. 1. Whereas *Solomon* says only *the just*, he is made to say *the justest man*, to

give the greater force and extent to this sentence, to debase piety the more, and to insinuate, that the best and holiest men, are great sinners. 2. *Solomon* is made to say, that *the just sins*, but he does not say that, he says only that *the just falls*. I know that to *fall*, signifies sometimes to *sin*, but *falling* denotes likewise very frequently, *to be afflicted*, and a man is blind who does not see, that in this text, the word *fall* is used in this second sense. The 17 verse which comes immediately after that which we are now examining, proves it beyond exception, *Rejoyce not when thy enemy falleth*, &c. Besides those who are acquainted with the sacred style, know, that it does not usually express the sins of infirmity, to which the just are subject, by the word *fall*, that word importing commonly, the fall of wicked men. 3. *Solomon* is made to say, *That the justest man sins seven times a day*. This is another falsifying, an addition to the text, which is of no small consequence. *Seven times a day*, is not in the text, there is only *seven times*. Every body knows that seven times signifies, many times. And so the meaning would be, that the just do nothing else but transgress; that many times a day he falls into sin. But who does not see, that this would be the description of a man in whom sin reigns, and who is habitually engaged in it, and not the character of a good man? I do not say, but that just men have their weak sides, and fall sometimes into sin; this happens more or less according to the degree of their regeneration; but it is impious to say, that their life is spent in continual sins, and that they offend God at every foot; and yet this is what men would establish from this maxim, *That the justest man sins seven times a day*. Those who have a mind to quote the Scripture; should neither add to, nor diminish from it, they should not alter the words, nor divide sentences from what goes before and what follows; for otherwise there is no absurdity nor impiety, which may not be proved from the word of God.

5. But our adversaries will say, Whether that place is alledged right or wrong, it does not matter much, since there are others which say the same thing in stronger expressions. Does not St. Paul say, *Rom. vii. *I am carnal, sold under sin, for in me dwelleth no good thing: for that which I do, I allow not: and what I would, that do I not; but what I hate that do I. I see a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* If St. Paul himself speaks after this manner, who can deny, that the greatest saints fall into very heinous sins, and have still a large stock of corruption in them?

Those who draw this inference from the words of St. Paul, make him speak that which is quite contrary to his thoughts. He is so far from saying any thing that favours the cause of sinners; that on the contrary his design is to prove, the necessity of a good life, and to make men sensible of the efficacy of the Gospel in reference to sanctification. He had this in his view, in the vii chapter to the *Romans*, where he represents the difference between a corrupt and a regenerated man, and between the condition of man under the law, and his state under the Gospel. So that all he says of the carnal man sold under sin, &c. is to be understood of a corrupt man, living under the law.

* Rom. vii. 14, 15, &c.

I am not ignorant that divines, otherwise able and pious men, have thought that *St. Paul* speaks of himself in this chapter, and that he represents there, what passes within a regenerate man; but I know likewise that a great many orthodox divines, have rejected that exposition, as contrary to the scope of the apostle, to the constant doctrine of the New Testament, and to the spirit of the Christian religion. It is a sad thing that when a place is capable of two senses, men should pitch upon that, which comes nearer to the pretensions of sinners. I do not intend here to enter into a dispute, nor to offend those of a contrary opinion; I am persuaded that they have no design to countenance corruption; but as in all things we ought to seek the truth, and as the truth here, is of great consequence for the promoting of piety, so I entreat those who might have scruples concerning those words, to make these following reflections.

1. Let them seriously and impartially consider, Whether it may be said, that *St. Paul* was a carnal man sold under sin, a man who did no good but evil, and a man involved in death; these are the strongest expressions which can be used, and which the Scripture uses to give as the character of wicked and impious men? To believe this of *St. Paul*, is so very hard, that a man must be able to digest any thing, who is not startled at it.

2. I desire them to attend to the drift of *St. Paul*, he had undertaken to shew, that the doctrine of justification by faith, did not introduce licentiousness; this he had proved in the whole vi chapter, as may appear by the reading it. Is it likely that in the vii chapter, he should overturn all that he had established in the preceding, and say, that the holiest men are captivated to the law of sin? If this be *St. Paul's* doctrine, what becomes of the efficacy of faith to produce holiness, and how could he have answered that objection which he proposes to himself, chap. vi. 1. and 15. *Shall we continue in sin, shall we sin, we that are under grace?* *St. Paul* ought to have granted this objection, if it be true, that the most regenerate, are sold to sin. But it is plain, that in the vii chapter he goes on to prove what he had laid down already, to wit, that the Gospel sanctifies men, and not only this, but that the Gospel alone can sanctify men, and that the law could not. This is the scope of the whole chapter.

In the very first four verses, he shews that *Christians* are no longer under the law, nor consequently under sin, and that they are dead to the law, that they may bring forth fruits unto God. He expresses himself more clearly yet in the 5th verse, where he says, that there is a considerable difference between those who are under the law, and those who are in Jesus Christ. He plainly distinguishes these two states, and the time past from the present. *When we were in the flesh*, says he, *the motions of sin which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruits unto death, but now we are delivered from the law, that we should serve in newness of spirit.* These are the two states; the state past was a state of corruption, the present state is a state of holiness. But as it might have been inferred from thence, that the law was the cause of sin, the apostle refutes that imagination, from the 7th to the 14th verse.

After this, he describes the miserable condition of a man who is not regenerated by grace, and who still is under the law. He begins to do
this

this from the 14th verse, by saying, *the law is spiritual, but I am carnal sold under sin, &c.* And here no doubt it will be said, that St. Paul speaks of himself, and not of those who are under the law; for says he, *I am carnal, &c.* But one may easily see that the apostle uses here a way of speaking which is very ordinary in discourse, and by which he that speaks puts himself in the room of those he speaks of. And St. Paul had the more reason to express himself after this manner, because he had been himself under the law, before he was converted to Christianity. There are many instances in Scripture of this way of speaking, and we find one in this very chapter which is beyond exception. St. Paul says in the 9th verse, *I was alive without the law once, &c.* If we do not admit here a figurative expression, or if these words are strictly taken; then we must say, that there was a time when this apostle was without law, which is both false and ridiculous. As therefore it is plain, that when he says, verse 9. *I was without law*, he speaks of the state of those men to whom the law was not given; so it is unquestionable, that when he says, *I am carnal, &c.* he describes the state of a corrupt man living under the law, and not his own. This is the key which lets us into the meaning of his discourse, in which the law is mentioned, almost in every verse.

3. Lastly, That which makes it as clear as the sun, that this is his true sense, is, that when the apostle considers and speaks of himself as a Christian, he uses quite another language. To be satisfy'd of this we need but run over this chapter, and compare it with other places in his epistles.

If he says here, verse 7, 8. *That concupiscence is felt and reigns within a man who is under the law*; he declares, Gal. v. 24. *That Christians have crucified the flesh with the lusts of it.* If he says, verse 9, 10. *That sin lives within him, and that he is dead*; he had said, chap. vi. 2, 11. *That he was dead unto sin, and living unto God through Jesus Christ.* If he says, verse 14. *That he is carnal and sold under sin*, it is apparent that he does not speak of himself, since chap. viii. 1, and 8. he tells us, *That those who are in Christ Jesus are not in the flesh, and that those who are in the flesh cannot please God, and have not his Spirit.* If he says here, verse 19. *I know that in me dwelleth no good thing*; he declares, Eph. iii. 17. *That Christ dwells in our hearts by faith.* If he says, verse 19. *The good that I would, I do not, and the evil which I hate that I do*; he testifies in many places, *That the faithful do that which is good, and abstain from evil.* If he complains, verse 21, 22, 23. *of his being captivated to the law of sin*; he teaches, chap. vi. 17, 22. *That Christians are no longer the servants of sin, that they are freed from it, and become the servants of righteousness.* If he cries out, ver. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* It is manifest, that these are not the expressions of a man regenerated by Jesus Christ; for he adds immediately, *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, has made me free from the law of sin and death*, chap. viii. 12.

Now let any body judge, whether what is said in this chapter, can be applied to St. Paul, considered as a regenerated Christian? Can it be said, that concupiscence reigns in him who has crucify'd it? That sin lives in him who is dead to sin? That he who is not in the flesh, is a carnal

carnal man? That he who is freed from sin, is sold to sin? That no good thing dwells in those in whom Christ dwells? That a man is at the same time miserable and happy, a slave, and yet delivered by Jesus Christ, dead and alive? To say this, is it not to call good evil, and evil good; to put darkness for light, and light for darkness? Is it not to admit downright contradictions in Scripture? But especially, is it not to open a door to licentiousness, and to give us a strange notion of a regenerate man?

By all that has been said, I do not mean that there are no remnants of corruption, in those who are regenerated. Neither do I deny, but that, in those whose regeneration is but begun, there is some such struggle as that which is described in this chapter. This is *Musculus's* notion, in his Commentary upon the **Romans*. But that this chapter should be the picture of a regenerate man, and of a true member of Christ, is a thing so contrary to the Gospel, and to all the ideas of religion, that one can hardly imagine, how there could ever be men, who believed it.

III. But that which corrupt Christians endeavour to prove by those passages I have mentioned, they think to put out of all question, by the examples of those saints whose sins are recorded in holy Writ. To this purpose they alledge *Noah, Lot, Abraham, Sampson, David, Solomon, St. Paul, St. Peter, &c.* and from these instances they conclude, that since those great saints, fell into such heavy sins; sin is no obstacle to salvation, and that it is not inconsistent with piety.

If we did make a right use of the word of God, we would draw a quite contrary inference from these instances; and consider that it is absurd to plead precedents against an express law. If we must needs be governed by examples; we ought certainly to chuse the good, and not the bad ones; to imitate what is praise worthy in the saints, and not what deserves blame; their faults being like so many beacons, set up to keep us from striking upon the same rocks.

But to answer directly; I say first, that we are a little too apt to rank among saints, some illustrious persons mentioned in the sacred history; who perhaps were nothing less than holy men, and who it may be did perish in their sins, tho' God thought fit to make use of them, to carry on the designs of his Providence, and to deliver his people. It would be a rash thing to pronounce upon any man's salvation, or to speak irreverently of those great men; but the instance of *Solomon*, whose salvation has been at all times questioned by divines; should teach us, not to be so hasty, in placing those among saints, of whom the Scripture speaks with some honour, and in sheltering our selves under their examples.

As to those who by the testimony of the Scripture it self, did truly fear God; I might observe that they fell but once into those sins related in the sacred history; which would by no means favour impenitent and habitual sinners. But this answer does not fully satisfy; for besides that it supposes a thing which in respect of several persons cannot certainly be known; there are some sins which are so black, such as adultery and apostacy, that a man can hardly commit them more than once, except he is altogether sold to sin, and further, any one of those sins is incompatible with a state of regeneration.

We must therefore frankly own, that when those great men sinned in that manner, they did not act like saints, that they put themselves into a state, which considered in it self, was a state of damnation, and that they had perished, if they had continued in it; for as *Ezekiel* says, chap. xxxiii. 18. *When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.* We may judge of the heinousness and danger of those sins, by the degree of repentance, which some of these men have expressed for them, and by the publick acknowledgments they made of them. What alarms was *David* in, when he composed the li *Psalms*, which is the *Psalms* of his repentance? What a deep sense had *St. Peter* of his fault, in denying his master? What do then such examples signify to those who live in sin and impenitency; who can be sure that God will give him the grace, to recover himself as those holy men did? Those who presume to sin as they did, in hopes that they shall in like manner wipe off their sins by repentance and amendment, reason just like a man, who should swallow down poison, and conclude, it would not kill him, because some who have been poisoned, have escaped death.

But that which deserves here our greatest consideration, is the time which those saints lived in. There is great difference between us Christians, and the good men under the old Testament. Men before Christ, had not by a great deal that light which we have; and did not know as we do, the duties of holiness. Our Saviour teaches us that distinction, when he says, **That John the Baptist was the greatest among those who were born of a woman, but that the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than John the Baptist*; that is to say, That Christians have a much greater light than either *John Baptist*, or all the ancient prophets had. Now the measure of knowledge, ought to be the measure of piety; and therefore Christians ought to excel the *Jews* in holiness. What God did bear with at that time, would be in us altogether intolerable; and how can it be lawful for us to imitate the ancients in their vices, when we are bound to surpass their virtues?

This principle is of great moment, and without it we can hardly silence profane persons. A libertine insisting upon precedents, will say, that polygamy, the keeping of concubines, murder, divorce upon the slightest pretences, and such like disorders; are not so criminal as they are imagined to be; he will produce the instances of *Abraham* and *Jacob*, of the judges of *Israel*, of *David*, and the *Jews*. Far be it from us to detract from the honour and praise due to those ancient worthies; they have done much for the time they lived in. But God forbid too, that we should lessen the glory and the advantages of the Christian religion. If we speak like Christians, we will say, That God in his goodness did pass over many things, by reason of the time, and of the natural temper of the *Jews*, who were a gross and carnal people. Our Saviour's answer to the *Pharisees* concerning divorce, is very much to our purpose. †*Moses suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so*; and then he adds, that whosoever should imitate the *Jews*, and do that which had been done and tolerated till then, should be guilty of adultery.

We may easily apply this answer to the instance of *St. Peter*, since before our Saviour's ascension, the apostles were weak as yet, and possessed with

* Matth. xi. 11.

† Matth. xix. 8.

with various prejudices. But I think my self bound to add a word or two concerning the example of *St. Paul*, because it is commonly mistaken. That apostle says, † *That he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, who was not worthy to be called an apostle, and that he was the chief of sinners.* At the first hearing of these words many imagine, that *St. Paul* had been a profligate man, a swearer, and a godless wretch: and yet he means nothing else, but that he had once persecuted the church. For otherwise, *St. Paul* before his conversion to Christianity, was a good man, and his life was blameless and exemplary; for this he appeals to God, and the *Jews*, *Acts* xxiii. 1. and xxvi. 4. If he did persecute the church then, it was through a blind zeal and ignorance; and for that reason, as he tells us himself, verse 13, *He obtained mercy from God.* Is not this quite another case, than that of those Christians, who knowingly and wilfully allow themselves in sin?

It is another mistake to make *St. Paul* say, as some do, *That he is the greatest of sinners*; he does not say that, he says only, *That he is the chief or the first of those sinners whom Jesus Christ did save.* His meaning is, that he holds the first rank among converted sinners, that he is a remarkable instance of the divine Mercy, and that *Jesus* had begun by him, to shew his clemency and goodness. Thus he explains himself, verse 16. *For this cause, says he, I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him.* This is exactly what he meant; for as to what some imagine, that *St. Paul* out of humility acknowledges himself the greatest of all sinners; I think that explication is wrong, and that it neither agrees with truth, nor piety, nor good sense. A good man is not bound to think himself worse than the greatest sinners; on the contrary, he ought to bless God, for that good which the divine Grace has wrought in him.

IV. But as the last refuge of sinners is the mercy of God, so they commonly abuse those places, which set forth the greatness of that mercy. They found this principally upon these words, *Where sin does abound, grace does much more abound.* Under the covert of this short sentence, the most flagitious sinners think themselves safe. But the bare reading *St. Paul's* discourse, will soon convince us, that this is to wrest the Scripture into a false and pernicious sense. The apostle's design is to shew, that all men being rendred sinners in *Adam*, and by the law; the goodness of God was so great, that he was willing to save them through *Jesus Christ*. In order to this, to establish this truth, he had proved that before *Christ*, sin and death reigned every where; not only among the Heathens, but also among the *Jews*; upon this he adds, *That where sin did abound, grace did much more abound*; to signify God's having mercy on them, when they were involved in sin and death. In a word, *St. Paul* sets the happy condition to which men were advanced by *Jesus Christ*, in opposition to that which they were in before. This is the sense of that place, and the drift of the whole epistle. Can any one infer from thence, that now we may freely sin, and that grace will exert it self towards us, whatever sins we may commit?

It is fit to observe besides, that when *St. Paul* speaks of grace, he does not only mean the pardoning, but likewise the sanctifying grace; which destroys

destroys the pretension of the libertines. The apostle himself confutes it with a great deal of vehemence. He foresaw that some would argue like those we now contend with; and he makes this objection to himself, * *What then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?* And this is his answer, *God forbid! how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? We who have been baptized into Christ's death, that we should walk in newness of life. Reckon ye also your selves dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.* The apostle pursues these exhortations to the end of the chapter.

2. The promises and instances of God's mercy, are frequently also taken in a sense which favours corruption and security. All that the Gospel says upon this head, is interpreted by vicious men, as if the Son of God was come into the world, to give men a license to sin. To this purpose the instances of that woman who was a sinner, of *Zacheus* and the converted thief, are often alledged; as likewise the parable of the prodigal son, of the publican, and of the labourers. And from these instances, as well as from our Saviour's declarations, † *That he is not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* It is concluded, that the greatest sinners may obtain salvation, as well as the just. But if those who quote these instances, did narrowly examine them, they would read in them, their own condemnation. For first, all these sinners mentioned in the Gospel, did repent and were converted. That woman who had been a notorious sinner expresses the most lively sorrow; the publican smites his breast, the prodigal comes to himself again, and detests his former excesses; *Zacheus*, if he was an unjust man, restores fourfold. From these instances we may very well infer, that God never rejects returning sinners. But even this, is an invincible argument, that there is no mercy for those, who persist in their sins, and that too in hopes of pardon.

Besides, we must know that our Saviour's design in all these parables and instances, was to inform men that he was come to invite the greatest sinners to repentance; and especially to let the *Jews* understand, that for all the high opinion they had of their own dignity and merit, the Heathens, who lived in the greatest corruption, were to be admitted into God's covenant, and to have a share in his favour. Which actually happened to all those Heathens, who did believe in Jesus Christ. These instances and parables then represent the state men were in at that time, and not the state of those, who are entred already into the Christian church. It can never be said too much, nor remembered too often in the reading of the Gospel; that there is a vast difference, between those Heathens, who never heard a word of God or Jesus Christ; and Christians who were born in the church and live in the covenant with God.

Thus I think I have examined those places of Scripture, which are most commonly abused by the libertines. If I have omitted any, I hope what has been said in this chapter, may serve to suggest pertinent and satisfactory answers to them.

* Rom. vi. 1, 2, 3, 11, 12.

† Mark ii. 17.

C A U S E V.

A false Modesty.

CORRUPTION is not wholly to be imputed to that ignorance, or to those prejudices and loose opinions which prevail among Christians. For men do not always sin through want of knowledge, or out of meer wantonness and libertinism. There are many who acknowledge the viciousness of the age, and the necessity of a good life; and yet they neglect their duties intirely, or at least they are very remiss in the doing of it; acting for the most part, against their own persuasions.

There must have been then other causes of corruption in men, besides those which we have hitherto discovered. It is necessary to search into these, and to find out, if possible, why many persons, who want no instruction, and are solicited by the motions of their own consciences, to embrace the side of virtue and piety, do notwithstanding, continue in vice and corruption.

This seems to proceed chiefly from two dispositions, which men are commonly in.

On the one hand, they are restrained by an ill shame, from acting suitably to the sentiments of their own consciences; and on the other hand, they put off their conversion, hoping they shall one day make up all the irregularities of their conduct, by repentance. I look upon these two dispositions, as two of the principal causes of corruption, and therefore I thought it might be proper, to consider them both distinctly. I design to treat of *false Modesty* in this chapter, and to shew, 1. The nature, and 2. The effects of it.

1. By *false Modesty*, I mean that shame, which hinders men to do that which they know to be their duty. I call this shame vicious or ill, to distinguish it from another kind of shame, which is good and commendable, which consists, in being ashamed to do ill things. If *false shame* is a source of corruption; that other shame which restrains from evil, is a principle of virtue, and a preservative against sin; and therefore it ought to be as carefully cherished and maintained, as vicious shame should be avoided or shaken off. For as soon as the sense of this commendable shame is gone, innocency is irrecoverably lost. It is a part of the character of sinners in Scripture, that their wickedness raises no blushing, or confusion in them.

I say then, that this false shame, keeps men from doing at the same time what they know and approve to be their duty; and it is under that notion particularly, that I am to consider it here. It is not my design to speak of that shame, which arises from ignorance, or contempt, and which is to be met with in those profane and worldly men, who because they do not know religion, or judge it unworthy of their application, think it a disgrace to follow its maxims. I refer such men to the first chapter of this book, and to some further considerations, which I am to insist upon elsewhere. The shame I speak of at present, supposes some knowledge in the mind, and some value for, and inclination to piety. From whence it appears, how dangerous the effects of that shame are, and

and how important it is to know and observe them ; since it seduces and corrupts even those who are none of the worst men, and of whom otherwise, we might reasonably hope well.

Now to apprehend the nature of this vicious shame ; it must be observed, that shame commonly springs from two causes ; sometimes it proceeds from the nature of the thing we are ashamed of, or from the opinion we have of it : thus men are ashamed of things, which either are, or appear dishonest in their nature. But sometimes also shame is an effect of the regard we bear to other men's judgment, and then we are ashamed to do things which may bring contempt upon us, and disgrace us in the world. One may soon perceive that the shame that is vicious does not arise from the first of these causes. Religion has nothing in it, that is shameful and dishonest ; for far from that, it is of all things the most comely and honourable, and the most worthy of a man ; and it appears such, even to those, who by reason of a groundless shame, dare not practise the rules of it. The true cause then of this false modesty, is a feeble regard to men's judgment, and a fear of falling under their contempt or hatred. Piety is little practised in the world, it is despised, and it is hated ; and these are the three principal causes of vicious shame.

1. Piety is little practised in the world ; few people love or practise it. Now a man is very inclinable to do that which is commonly done ; he thinks it is safest and most honourable, to side with the multitude : he is afraid of making himself ridiculous, by being singular. It is a maxim generally received, That we ought to comply with custom, and to do as others do. The reason then why many have not the courage to be on the side of religion, is because that side is deserted and abandoned.

2. Piety is often despised in the world. It is looked upon as a mean and disgraceful thing. The strictness of a man, who acts upon principles of religion and conscience, is imputed to weakness of mind, singularity of humour, or caprice, and sometimes to hypocrisy and pride. Those who profess devotion and piety, are turned into ridicule : and on the contrary, it is thought honourable to comply in every thing, with the ways and fashions of the age. Tho' these sentiments are very unjust, yet they make a great impression, because few people have firmness enough to fight the judgment and contempt of men. We have naturally a quick sense of honour, and nothing is so unsupportable to self-love, as contempt ; so that this temptation is dangerous, and it easily produces in a man a false shame, which diverts him from religion.

3. Piety does likewise procure the hatred of the world ; because a good life accuses, condemns, and reproaches those who live ill. Besides, religion obliges us sometimes to do things which displease and offend men. How cautious soever it may be, it is much, if upon many occasions, it does not stir up their jealousy, their hatred, or their spleen. A good man is often bound to refuse what is desired of him. He is unacquainted with the maxims of that mean and fawning complaisance, which is necessary to get every body's love. Many for this reason neglect piety. They dare not let shine a light, which discovers the weaknesses and errors of others ; and fear and shame together make them think, that it would be ill-breeding, as well as a piece of imprudence, to follow a course of life which might render them odious.

From these considerations it appears already, that this shame is one of the general fountains of corruption, and that it can produce none but very ill effects; first upon those in whom it is, and next upon other men.

1. The natural effect of vicious shame, is to dissuade a man from his duty, and to draw him into sin. It makes his knowledge useless, it frustrates the warnings which his conscience gives him; and so it extinguishes in him the principles of virtue. Those who are possessed with this shame, dare neither speak nor act as they ought, they dissemble their true sentiments, they offer violence to their consciences, they have not the courage to speak the truth, or to reprove their neighbours, when occasion requires; they are loath to confess or to amend their faults; in a word, they frequently neglect the most indispensable duties of piety and charity: and all this, because they are checkt by a false shame.

But if this shame hinders us to do good, it does as forcibly prompt us to evil: as soon as a man thinks it a disgrace to do good, and to distinguish himself by a Christian deportment; he presently conceives likewise, that it would be a shame to him, not to imitate the irregularities of others. Hence it is that we applaud sin, that we are carried away by the solicitations, or examples of persons of authority; that we cannot withstand the entreaties of friends; that we engage in unjust enterprizes, or criminal diversions; and that we fall into many other wicked practices. A very little reflection upon our selves, will easily convince us, that shame produces all these ill effects. A heathen author* has proved long ago, in an excellent tract, That false modesty is one of the greatest obstacles to virtue; and that men commit many faults, and bring a great deal of mischief upon themselves, only because they dare not refuse to comply with others.

2. The effects of this shame are not less fatal in respect of other men. As it proceeds from the regard we bear to their judgments, so it usually shews it self in their company; so that we cannot but scandalize and corrupt them, when we govern our selves by the suggestions of this false shame. For not to mention here the scandal which this gives to good men; those very persons for whose sake we use such sinful compliances, and who despise religion; conceive yet a greater contempt of it, when they see, that those who ought to support it's interest, are ashamed of it, and dare not openly profess it. They judge that piety must be indeed a very mean and contemptible thing; and when they observe that men are afraid to displease them, they take such an ascendant over them, that virtue dares no more appear in their presence. Besides, that such an indulgence towards vice, gives a new force to it. If vicious men are not reprov'd, it confirms them in their ill habits; if they are imitated, they are authorized; if we are ashamed to confess our faults before them, we do not heal the scandal which we have given them, and that is the greater for having been occasioned by men who are thought pious, and not by libertines. But that we may be the more sensible of the pernicious effects of this kind of shame, we ought to take notice of three things, which are very remarkable in this matter.

1. Shame is a thing which has an absolute power over a man. Other passions may more easily be resisted; but when shame has gained an

ascendant

ascendant over the mind, it is extream hard to be conquered, especially if it proceeds from the regard we have for men; for when it arises from a natural disposition, it may sooner be overcome. The greatest threats and promises will not sometimes shake a man, who will presently yield if shame can be excited within him. How often do we find the most vigorous efforts we can make upon our selves, and our best resolutions quite dashed, by a silly bashfulness? A jest, a bare look, or a slight apprehension of being thought ridiculous, or a bigot, is sometimes enough to confound us, and to make all our good purposes vanish.

2. It ought to be considered, that the shame we speak of here, restrains those persons, who in their hearts are inclined to virtue; those who live in a profound ignorance, or in a total obduration, being not susceptible of this shame. It supposes, as has been said, some remainder of conscience and knowledge soliciting man to his duty; but it overcomes that knowledge and those good sentiments. We are to impute to this vicious shame, a great part of the sins of good men; and this is one of the articles upon which they have most reason to reproach themselves; as is well known to those who make any reflection upon their conduct. And if this shame is able to spoil those who otherwise are virtuous, and to extinguish their zeal and piety; we ought to reckon it among the principal causes of corruption.

3. Shame may lead men to the highest degrees of wickedness. For besides that a man sins against his conscience, when for fear of men he dares not do his duty; besides that he offends God in a very provoking manner, when he is ashamed to obey him, and fears men more than him; I say, that this shame is apt to betray him into the greatest enormities. A man is capable of every thing when he becomes a slave to other men's judgment, and when complaisance or humane consideration, have a greater force upon him than the laws of religion, and his duty. Whenever a man dares not appear good, he dares appear in some measure wicked. And when he tries to virtue an idea of shame, he is not far from affixing an idea of honour to vice, and from complying in every thing with the opinions of loose and prophane persons.

1. Men do not arrive of a sudden at this degree of corruption; false shame carries them to it by little and little. It makes one sin at first through complaisance, tho' with some reluctance. By this, conscience grows weaker; a man contracts the habit of slighting its suggestions, and vice becomes more familiar to him. Then he begins to sin more boldly; the shame of doing good increases, and the shame of sinning grows less. In a little time he comes to do out of custom and inclination, what he did before but seldom, and with some inward conflict. From thence he proceeds to an open contempt of piety, and so he forsakes an interest to which he was well affected at first, but which this shame has made him dislike. Thus many persons, who had good dispositions in their youth; being let loose into the world, have lost their innocence, and are turn'd libertines and atheists.

Now this false modesty being so pernicious we can never labour too much to prevent its ill effects. And this we shall succeed in, if we seriously consider, that there is a great deal both of error and cowardice

in the sentiments and conduct of those, who are hinder'd by shame, from discharging the duties of religion and conscience: first, there is a great deal of error in their proceeding. This shame is founded upon nothing else, but the judgment which the world makes of piety. But if those who despise religion are in the wrong, as they most certainly are; if it is extravagance and folly in them, to pass a false judgment upon piety; it is a much greater madness in those who understand better things, to subscribe to a judgment which they know to be false and erroneous, and to make that the principle of their actions. If virtue is a thing that is good, just, necessary, acceptable to God, and useful to those who practise it; if with it we cannot fail of happiness, and if without it there is nothing but dread and terror; why should we be ashamed to give up our selves to it? A wise man ought to esteem that which deserves esteem, and if ignorant and corrupt people are of another mind, he ought to set himself above their judgment, and to despise the contempt of the senseless multitude. The judgment of men cannot make that just which is unjust, nor supersede the necessity of what is necessary; so that it should be of no weight in so important a concernment, as that of our salvation. Our happiness is not to be decided by man's esteem, or contempt; and the approbation of God and our conscience, is infinitely to be preferred before their groundless opinions.

But if there is so much of error in vicious shame, there is likewise a great deal of cowardice in it. Nothing is more base and unworthy, than for a man to desert the interest of virtue, when he is solicited by his own conscience to adhere to it. Not to have resolution enough to do his duty in such a case, is on the one hand to submit his reason and conscience to the caprice of others, and to depress himself below the vilest things in the world; and on the other it is to have greater regard for men than for God. And is there any thing more abject than this proceeding? Is not this a shameful cowardice in a Christian, who is called to profess openly his religion and faith, and ought to think it his glory, to maintain the cause of virtue and justice, in spite of all the contradiction and contempt of the age? That threatening which our Saviour has denounced against those, who should not have the courage to embrace the Christian profession, or should abandon it, belongs also to those mean-spirited Christians we are now speaking of. ** Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

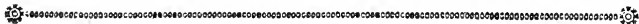
The first and chief remedy, against this false shame, is then to be possessed with the following reflections. Before all things to have a right apprehension of the certainty and importance of religion; to consider that it proposes to us infinite rewards, but that those rewards are reserved only for those, who have the courage to observe its precepts; to think what pleasure and glory it is, to be approved of God and of one's own conscience; to fix deeply this great truth in our minds; that men's judgment is very inconsiderable; that our felicity depends neither upon their esteem nor contempt; and to remember that the Scripture calls the men

of

of the world fools, and that a time will come, when *shame, confusion and misery*, shall fall to the lot of those despisers of religion, while † *glory, honour and peace shall be to every one that does good*.

2. We shall easily conquer this shame if we consider, that the danger of incurring men's contempt or hatred by doing our duty, is not always so great as we may imagine. I confess piety is often despised; but yet it frequently commands respect. Even those who think it strange that their example should not be followed, cannot help having a secret esteem and veneration for good men. When zeal is accompanied with meekness and discretion, there is no fear that a man should make himself odious or ridiculous by practising virtue. A Christian deportment, is so far from exposing men always to the contempt of the world; that on the contrary it frequently happens, that those who would avoid this contempt, by neglecting their duty, do thereby bring it upon themselves.

3. There might be yet another remedy against this vicious shame; and that is the example of men of authority. Whatever they approve or do, is reputed honourable in the world; and on the other side, what they despise or neglect, is thought mean and disgraceful. It would therefore be an easy thing to them, to correct the notions which men commonly have of religion. As soon as they shall love and honour it; other men will no longer be ashamed of it, but will place their glory in practising it. This I am to enlarge upon in the second part of this treatise.



C A U S E VI.

The Delaying of Repentance.

DO not know whether any illusion is more ordinary, or contributes more to the support of vice in the world, than that which I design to attack in this chapter, and that is the delaying repentance. We must not believe that men are so blind and so hardened, as never to think of their salvation. There are few who have not a general intention to obtain it. Even among those who live ill, many are convinced, that conversion is necessary, and that they are not yet in a state of grace. If it be asked, why then they do not repent? I answer, that so unreasonable a proceeding, which seems so contradictory to it self; ought to be imputed to the hope they entertain, of clearing all scores one day by repentance; and of obtaining the pardon of all their sins, through the divine Mercy. This is the true cause of the greatest part of those sins which are committed in the world. It is that deceitful hope which frustrates all the endeavours that are used, to make men forsake their vicious habits. The delay of conversion, ought therefore to be placed among the causes of the bad lives of Christians; and the importance of this subject, has made me resolve to bestow a particular chapter upon it.

Now to handle this matter right, we are to observe two different ways of putting off conversion; for all men do not delay it in the same manner, and the same sentiments and dispositions ought not to be supposed in them all. Some put it off to a remote time, and to the very end of their lives. Others do not adjourn it so long; they design to go about it a good while before death; at least they hope so; and they put it off to an undetermined time. The first, sin properly in hopes of pardon, but the others sin in hopes of repentance. The former deceive themselves more grossly, they think that in order to be saved, it is enough to beg for mercy, and to repent tho' never so late; the illusion of the others is more subtil, they conceive it is necessary to reform and to forsake sin; but for all that they do not convert themselves. Tho' these two ways of delaying have an affinity with one another, and might in a great measure be encountered with the same argument, yet I shall consider them here separately.

I. Men commonly entertain this opinion, that if they do but repent at the end of their lives, their sins will be no hindrance to their salvation. They allot for this repentance, the approaches of death, old-age, or the time of sickness; and they suppose that then, they shall fit themselves for a Christian death, by confessing their sins, and having recourse to the divine Mercy. It is not, I think, needful to prove, that this opinion is very common, for who can deny it? Neither will I go about to shew that it feeds corruption and encourages security, by proposing to men such a method of salvation, as leaves them at liberty to live still in sin; for that is self evident. It is more important to let men see how false and dangerous an imagination that is, which makes them believe, that so they repent before death, they shall avoid damnation and be saved. In order to this, we must endeavour to discover the principle they act upon, and to unfold the true sentiments of their hearts.

The delay of repentance includes two different motions; the one carries a man towards salvation, and the other towards sin. On the one hand, man is neither such an enemy to himself, as to be altogether unconcerned about his salvation, nor so blind as not to perceive that repentance is necessary. On the other hand, he is so addicted to his lusts, that he cannot resolve to renounce them. In this perplexity, self-love finds him out an expedient by which he thinks to reconcile with his appetites, the care of his salvation. And that is, that if he sins, yet he intends to repent.

But here it is manifest, that this man puts a cheat upon himself, and that such sentiments proceed only from self-love, and from a strong affection to sin. Nothing else but the absolute necessity of dying, and of giving an account to God obliges him to desist in the end of his life to acts of repentance. For it cannot be said, that the love of God and of virtue has any share in this conduct. Is it any love or regard to God, that makes a man desire him in his last extremity, and when he can enjoy the world no longer? This shews that a man thinks of God only because he expects salvation at his hands; which is to deal with him as with an enemy, to whom we surrender our selves as late, and upon as good terms as we can, and only that we may not perish. Such a delay includes a positive resolution to offend God, and to gratify one's passions, at least for the present. He that thinks to repent hereafter, is not wil-

ling to repent now. He allots the present time for the satisfying of his lusts, and for the committing of those sins, which are to be the matter of his future repentance. This is all that is fixed and certain in his resolution; for as to what he promises for the future it is most uncertain; and if we consider the thing right, he promises nothing at all, for he does not know, whether he shall not die very soon, nor what he shall do, in case he lives sometime longer.

The hazard to which a man exposes himself by this delay, is evident. In order to a complete repentance, two things are requisite. The first is to have time and opportunity to repent; the second is, to make use of that time and opportunity. Those who put off their conversion to the last, must suppose that they shall have these two advantages. But these things are extremely uncertain, and no man in the world can be sure of them.

1. No man can promise himself, that he shall have time and opportunity to repent at the end of his life. It is true in fact, that more than one half of mankind, die without having time to prepare for death. If we reckon up all those who are snatched away in an instant by unforeseen accidents, or a sudden death, all those who perish in war, all those who are seized with distempers which take away their senses, all those whom the approaches of death do not move to repentance, because they do not apprehend themselves in any danger of dying: and if we add to these, those whose only preparation is to have a minister to pray by their bed-side, when they can hardly hear a few words of what he says. It is certain, that all these together, make up above the half of mankind. Upon this I ask, even supposing that it were time enough for a man to repent when he sees death coming, whether it would not be folly and madness, for him to venture his salvation upon the hope of repenting then?

It seems to many, that it is the way to drive sinners into despair, to tell them they ought not to build the hope of salvation, upon what they shall do in the extremity of life. But what I have said just now proves evidently, that if salvation did depend upon the manner of dying, men must live in continual fears, and in a kind of desperation; since their salvation would depend upon a thing, which the half of mankind cannot reckon upon. On the contrary nothing is more comfortable to men, than to know that God grants them their whole lives to work out their salvation in; and that if they improve to that purpose the leisure and conveniences they have, their death will be happy, which way soever it may happen. But tho' what I have said were not true, and tho' all might assure themselves that they shall perceive the approaches of death, and have time to prepare for that last passage; yet what certainty have they, that they shall make use of that opportunity, and that their conversion will not be most difficult, if not impossible? Conversion is not wrought, without God interposing, by those means which grace uses for that end. And can any man flatter himself with the hope, that these means shall be offered him to the last, and that God in his just anger, will not withdraw them from him? There is neither particular revelation, nor general promise, to give such assurances to any man living. So far from it, that God tells us many things in Scripture, which leave no ground for hope, to those who abuse his mercy.

But

But further, What can we imagine that God will do in favour of a hardened sinner, at the time of death? When God has made use of the preaching of his word; of exhortations, promises, threatenings, inward suggestions and motions of his grace; when God, I say, has used all these means, for twenty, thirty, or forty years without any success: I cannot apprehend, what men expect that he should do more, at the hour of death. If it be said, that he can by a particular dispensation, by sudden inspirations, by a kind of miracle, convert a sinner in his last minutes; I will not dispute what God can do; but I will not scruple to say, that in the ordinary course of grace, conversion is not wrought by sudden and miraculous inspirations: the Gospel speaks of nothing like that, and those who look for such miracles, had best see, what they found their hope upon.

It is certain besides, that repentance is most difficult on man's part, when he is at the point of death. If a man has lived in ignorance and vice, is he not in great danger of dying ignorant and hardened? How will he perform duties then, of which he has not so much as a notion; Can a man at that time change his ill inclinations and shake off his vicious habits of a sudden? All those who have applied themselves to the work of conversion, know by experience, that the conquest, I will not say of many, but of one single vice, has required both time, and assiduous and constant care. Vicious habits are not to be destroyed but by degrees, and good ones are acquired only by reiterated acts. It is repugnant to man's nature, that this should be done in an instant. How can any one then reckon, that so considerable a change, as that which true conversion requires, will be effected in the short time of a sickness? And if this was possible, and through great endeavours might be done, yet can any man assure himself, that he shall have then all that freedom and all that strength of mind and body, which are necessary to set about this general reformation; Is the time of sickness wherein a man is so much sunk, and has the least either of leisure or strength, so very fit for a business of this importance? All that a man can do then, is to betake himself to some confused and abrupt devotions, the ordinary refuge of those sinners, who have lived in a state of obduration. But will that serve the turn? Are some hasty reflections upon a man's past life, some acts of contrition, some prayers proceeding from trouble and agony, and extorted only by the fear of death, some sobs and groans indistinctly breathed up to heaven; are these, I say, sufficient to make amends for all that is past, to extirpate many inveterate habits, and to secure to a sinner an eternity of bliss?

I shall add two considerations which are convincing, and cannot be contested.

1. By growing in years, men lose the sense and remembrance of their sins. Age and custom produce this effect. Excepting some extraordinary sins which cannot be forgot, most men do not remember their faults. And how should they remember them, since for the most part they do not perceive when they commit them? We daily see men who will lye and swear, and fly out into passion almost every minute; and yet do not reflect upon it; nay, they think themselves free from those faults. This error proceeds so far, that some very great sinners, who are living

in criminal practices, fancy themselves pious, and make no doubt, but that they are in the favour of God. Now since the custom of sinning, does blind men to such a degree; is it likely that after they have spent their lives in this security, they will effectually repent at their death? Can a man repent who does not know the reasons why he should, who does not feel, or has forgot his sins, and who thinks besides, that he is in a good state, and that he needs no repentance.

2. If repentance supposes the knowledge of sin, it supposes besides a hatred of it. But he who has loved sin to the last, is less able then to hate, than he is to know his sins. I cannot comprehend, how a man who has loved the world all his life, who has made it his only delight and study, to gratify his lusts, and who has always been cold and indifferent towards religion; should when death appears, suddenly change his inclinations, hate what he loved, and love what till then he looked upon with indifference. So quick a passage from the love, to the hatred of sin, is very rare. The sorrow for sin, and the hatred of it, are always faint and weak in the beginnings of repentance, even in those who repent sincerely. Conversion proceeds by degrees; a man must have discontinued sinning, and be already settled in the habits of virtue; before he can have a strong aversion to sin. And what kind of repentance then can that be, which begins in the extremity of life?

1. But here it is objected first, that God is always ready to restore the greatest sinners to his favour, when they have recourse to his mercy, and that there are express promises in the Gospel, which assure us of this. I grant it: God never rejects a repenting sinner. But before a man can build upon this, the hope of being received into God's favour at the hour of death, he must be sure that he shall then sincerely repent. Now I think I have demonstrated, that this is what no man can depend upon. As to the promises which are made to repentance in the Gospel; I do not deny but that they may be applied in a good sense to all sinners; but yet it is certain, that they are made in favour of those, whom God was to call to the Christian religion, and chiefly in favour of the Heathens. Christ and his apostles were to assure all men, that the sins they had committed, should not exclude them from the covenant of grace, provided they did sincerely mourn for them, and part with them. When the Heathens came to baptism, nothing else was required of them, but that they should repent, and make a solemn vow of being holy for the time to come. But as to Christians it cannot be said, that God demands nothing of them but repentance and sorrow for sins; for he calls them to holiness upon pain of damnation.

In this sense it was, that the apostles preached repentance, and by this we may know, how much Christianity is decayed. That repentance, which consists in the confession of sins, and in a resolution to forsake them, is the duty at which the Heathens began. This was the first thing which the apostles required of them; it was preparatory to the Christian religion. *St. Paul** places the doctrine of repentance, among the fundamental points, and the first duties in which the *Catechumens* were instructed before baptism. But now Christians look upon repentance, as the duty with which they are to end their lives; that is to say, they design.

* Heb. vi. 1.

sign to end, where the Heathens begun, and to enter heaven at the same gate, which admitted *Pagans* into the church.

2. It will be said further, That sometimes men, who have lived in sin; die to all appearance, in very good dispositions. To this I reply; That we see a great many more of those persons who die in a state of insensibility; and that by consequence, a sinner who puts off his repentance, has more reason to fear, than to hope. For who has told him, that the fate of these last, will not be his? and what surer presage can there be of so tragical a death, than the present hardness of his heart? Besides I do not know, whether it happens frequently, as the objection seems to suppose, that persons who have lived ill, are well-disposed when they die. If repentance can be saving and effectual when it begins only upon a death-bed, every body must own, that it ought to be very lively and deep, attended with demonstrations of the most bitter sorrow, and with all the proofs that a dying man can give of the sincerity of his conversion. But we do not see many instances of this nature. There are but few great sinners, who express a lively compunction at their death, or a sincere detestation of their sins, who have a due sense of their wickedness, and endeavour as much as they can to make reparation for it, who practise restitution, and edify all about them, by discharging the other obligations of conscience. It is but seldom that we see such penitents.

Besides, the expressions of devotion and repentance, which are used by dying men, are not always sincere. It is much to be feared that their repentance is nothing else but a certain emotion, which the necessity of dying, and the approaches of God's judgment, must needs raise in the mind of every man, who has his wits about him, and has some ideas of religion. Nothing is more deceitful, than the judging of a man by what he either says, or does, when he is under the effects of fear or trouble. It is commonly said of those, who have given some signs of piety upon their death-beds, that they have made a very Christian end: but there is often a great mistake in that judgment. And to be satisfy'd of it, we need but observe what happens to some who have escaped death, or some imminent danger. While the peril lasted, who could be more humble and holy than they? They shewed so much devotion, and uttered such discourses, that all the standers by were edified by them; their tears, their prayers, their protestations of amendment, in a word, their whole deportment, had in all appearance, so much of Christian zeal in it, that the beholders were struck with admiration. But there are many of these, who when the danger is over, continue in the same dispositions, remember their promises, or alter any thing in their former course of life; almost all of them return to their old habits as soon as the calamity is past. These are generally the fruits of that repentance which is excited by the fear of death, in those who recover: and what effects then can it have in respect of those that die?

I confess, we ought not to condemn any body; but I think we should not pronounce a definitive sentence, in favour of those who have led an ill life. For tho' men's judgment makes no alteration in the state of the dead; yet it may have a very pernicious effect upon the living, who conclude from it, that a man may die well, tho' he has lived ill. And while I am upon this subject, I must say, that nothing contributes more to the keeping

keeping up of these dangerous opinions, than when the ministers of religion commend without discretion, the piety of the dead. And yet this is frequently done, especially in great towns, and in the courts of princes. There are to be found in those places, mean-spirited and unworthy preachers, who prostitute their tongues and their pens to the praise of some persons, who had nothing of Christianity in their lives, and whose condition should rather make a man tremble. But if some remnant of shame restrains them from carrying their flattery so far, as to commend the lives of those, whose panegyrick they have undertaken; then they seek the matter of their praises, in some signs of piety, which those persons gave, before they left the world. Now I dare say, that the most atheistical discourses, and the corruptest maxims of libertines, are not by much so subtil a poyson, as such kind of eulogies, delivered before men who are engaged in all the disorders of the age, and then dispersed through the world.

3. The instance of the converted thief, who prayed to our Saviour upon the cross, and was received into paradise, is seldom forgotten. But this instance is generally very ill understood. First, it is supposed, without any ground for it, that this thief repented only upon the cross, and that his conversion was the effect of a sudden inspiration. But who can tell whether his conversion was not begun, either before he was taken, or in the prison, where it is probable that he was kept for some time, before the feast of passover? But if his conversion, must needs be sudden, and wrought only a few minutes before his death; if we must of necessity ascribe it to a miraculous inspiration and to those singular circumstances which he then happen'd to be in; yet I do not see what can be inferr'd from this instance; since no man living can assure himself that any such thing will befall him.

But be that as it will, we should, I think, observe a vast difference between the state of this thief, and that of a Christian. This poor wretch had not been called before, as Christians are; he had never known our Saviour; or at least he had not profess'd his religion; he had not had that illumination and those opportunities, which grace offers every day, to those to whom the Gospel is preached. And so his repentance tho' it came late, yet it might be as effectual to salvation, as that of the Heathens, who embraced Christianity in their riper years, and who happen'd to die immediately after baptism.

I shall say a word or two upon the parable of the labourers, where we read, * that those who went to work in the vineyard only an hour before sun-set, received the same wages, with those who had been at work ever since the morning. From this sinners imagine it may be proved by an invincible argument, that those who repent a little before death, will obtain the same reward with those whose life has been regular. But this was not our Saviour's meaning in that parable. It signifies only, that those whom God should call last, and who should answer his call, were to be received into the covenant, in the same manner as those, who had been called to it before, and that the Heathens should share in the same privileges with the *Jews*, tho' the *Jews* had been in covenant with God, a great while before the Heathens. This our Saviour declares in these

words,

words, which conclude the parable; *so the last shall be first, and the first last.* Here is nothing that can be applied to those Christians, who delay their conversion. They are not in the same case with the labourers, who were sent but late into the vineyard. Those labourers went no sooner, *because no man had hired them*; but they went as soon as they were sent. I say, Christians are not in this case, since they have been called in the morning, and at all the hours of the day, being born and having always lived in the church.

I have been somewhat large in shewing how unreasonable and dangerous the proceeding of those men is, who pretend to repent only at the end of their lives. But all those who put off their conversion, do not put it off so far. There are many who acknowledge, that it is dangerous to stay till the extremity, and that it is necessary to repent betimes; they propose to go about it in a little time, and they hope that they shall repent soon enough, not to be surprized by death under a total hardning; but in the mean while they do nothing toward their conversion.

This way of delaying, is an illusion, which does not appear so gross and dangerous as the former, because it supposes some inclination to good. But yet it is no better than an artifice of the heart, a trick of self-love, by which a man deceives and blinds himself. Nay, in some respects, the state of these last, is more criminal and dangerous, than that of the first. It is more criminal, because they do not what they approve of, and because they sin against the constant admonitions of their consciences, and do not perform their resolutions and their promises. But it is likewise more dangerous; for with this intention to repent in a little time, they think themselves much better than those who are resolved to repent only upon their death-bed; they applaud themselves for such a sense of piety as they have; and they judge, that if they are not quite in a state of salvation; at least they are not far from it. Now one may easily see that such an opinion of themselves, can only lay their consciences asleep, and inspire them with presumption and security.

But all these things considered, they go no farther with these good dispositions, than those, who without shuffling refer the whole matter to the end of their lives. All the difference is, that the latter do all at once, what the others do successively. And therefore all that has been said in this chapter, may almost be applied to these last. They run the same risk with those who design to repent only upon extremity, since death may surprize them before they have executed their good resolutions. They have as little love for God, and are as much addicted to their lusts: that which deceives them, is, that they fancy, that there is in them a sincere purpose of conversion. But if this intention is sincere, how comes it to pass that they do not repent? When a man is resolved upon a thing, when his heart is in it, when he desires it in good earnest, he goes about it without losing time.

But when a man uses delays, it is a sign that he is not well resolved yet: a resolution which no effect follows, is not a fixed and settled resolution. This purpose of conversion, is therefore but one of those wavering designs and projects, which are formed every day, but never accomplished. It is no more than a general and unactive intention, which
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may perhaps be found in all men. But other sorts of purposes are necessary for a man who hopes to be saved. Salvation is not obtain'd by bare designs and projects, but by the actual practice of holiness.

Now men might easily be undeceived, and convince themselves of the un-sincerity of all those resolutions they make in relation to repentance; if they did but reflect upon the time past, and ask themselves, Whether they have not been very near in the same sentiments and resolutions for some years together? And yet these sentiments have produced nothing, and those resolutions have made no change in them; they are still in the same state, and perhaps farther from conversion than ever. Must not men blindfold themselves, when they do not see, that it will still be the same thing for the future, and that life will slip away in perpetual delays; for what can they promise to themselves from the time to come, and what ground have they to hope that it will not be like the time past? Are they more firmly resolved than they were before? When will this resolution be put in practice? Will it be in a month, or in a year? They must confess, they do not know when it will be. So that when they promise to repent, they do not know what they promise; nay, they cannot tell whether they promise any thing. They will say perhaps, that they hope to confirm themselves in a good purpose; but what do they found this hope upon? what do they wait for, and what new thing do they imagine will happen to them? Have they any assurance that God will use for their conversion, other means and motives than those, which he has used already? Nay, how do they know but that they shall be deprived of those means and helps which hitherto have been tender'd them? How can they tell whether there is a time to come for them, and whether their life is not just ready to end? All this is very uncertain. But what is certainly true is this, that through so many procrastinations, their hearts grow harder, and their return to virtue becomes more difficult. The love of sin increases by the habit of sinning, and the means appointed to work repentance, lose something of their force every day.

These considerations do evidently shew, that the deferring of conversion, is an error as gross as it is dangerous.

I think it will not be useless to conclude this chapter, with observing that the reason why so many put off their conversion, is, because they look upon repentance as an austere and melancholy duty. And this notion must needs put them upon deferring the practice of it. It is therefore of the greatest moment, to destroy that prejudice; and to shew on the contrary, that if there is any sad and deplorable condition, it is that of a man who lives in sin. For that is either a state of fear and uncertainty, or of security and insensibility. Such a man can have no solid peace of conscience during his life, and what agitations must he fall into, when the thoughts of death and of a judgment to come happens to make some lively impression upon his mind? For granting that then he may use some endeavour to dispose himself to repentance; yet besides the danger of a late repentance, it is a sad thing to end one's life in those struggles and terrors, which must needs accompany such a repentance. A man who delays his conversion, prolongs his misery, and makes it greater and more incurable. But joy and tranquility are the portion

portion of a pure conscience. There is no felicity or contentment, like that of a soul which is freed from the bondage of sin. Repentance is the beginning of that happiness, which grows sweeter and more perfect, according to the progress we make in virtue. Then it is that a man is happy in all the circumstances of life, besides that he has the comfort of being supported at the approaches of death, with that peace and joy, which flow from a well-grounded confidence in the Divine Mercy, from the testimony of a good conscience, and from a steady hope of immortality.



C A U S E VII.

Mens Sloth and Negligence in Matters of Religion.

IT is natural and ordinary to men, to be unconcerned about those things which they do not know, or of which they do not apprehend the use and necessity. And so we may easily conceive that men living in ignorance, and being possessed with those notions I have now confuted, must needs be very negligent and slothful, in what relates to religion. But as this sloth considered in itself, is a visible cause of corruption, so it will be fitting to take particular notice of it in this chapter.

I suppose, in the first place, that it is impossible for a man to attain the end which religion proposes to him, without using the proper means which lead to that end. In religious as well as in worldly concerns, nothing is to be had without labour and care. As there are means appointed for preserving the life of the body, so there are some ordained for maintaining the life of the soul; and the use of these last means, is of the two the more necessary, because there is more care and forecast requisite in order to salvation, about preserving the life of the soul, than for supporting that of the body. It is certain that the more excellent any thing is, the more it requires our care; but besides that we see the life of the body is easily preserv'd; a natural inclination prompts us to those things which are necessary for our subsistence, and the means of supplying our bodily wants, offer themselves to us, as it were of their own accord. But it is not so with the spiritual life. Considering our proneness to evil, and the present state we are in, we cannot avoid being undone, if we neglect the necessary care of our souls, and if we follow all the bents and propensions of our nature. Religion obliges us upon many occasions, to resist our inclinations and to offer violence to our selves, it requires self-denial, watchfulness and labour; it lays many duties upon us, and it prescribes divers means, without the use of which, we cannot but continue still in corruption and death: I shall then but just name the chiefest of those duties and means.

Before all things, a Christian ought to be instructed, he ought to know with some exactness, both the truths, and the duties of Christianity :

nity: Now this knowledge cannot be acquired, without hearing, reading, meditation, or some other care of this nature. In the next place, as religion does not consist in bare knowledge, but chiefly in practice; none of those means should be neglected, which are proper to divert men from vice, and to spur them on to virtue. These means are very many, but they are all comprehended under these two principal heads; the exercises of devotion, and the circumspections which every person ought to use.

The exercises of devotion are mighty helps to piety and salvation; I mean such as meditation, reading, and particularly prayer, which is one of the most essential acts of religion, as well as one of the most efficacious means to advance holiness. There are on the other hand several methods of circumspection and care, which are of absolute necessity: as for instance, the foreseeing and shunning the occasions which may draw us into sin; the seeking those opportunities and aids which promote piety, the not being over-much concerned about the body, the cherishing good thoughts, and the resisting evil ones: but above all, it is a thing of the greatest importance, that every one should endeavour thoroughly to know himself, which he cannot do, but by examining his present state, and by reflecting seriously and frequently upon his actions and words, and upon the thoughts and motions of his heart. All these cares are essential and necessary. For without the use of those means, it is as impossible to be religious and pious, as it would be to live and subsist without nourishment. A man who will neither eat nor drink, must needs die in a little time. And so the spiritual life will soon be extinct, if the only means which can support it, are not used.

Let us now see, whether these cares and means which I have shewn to be necessary, are made use of. It is so visible, that they are almost totally neglected, that I need not be very large upon the proof of it.

Men take little care of being instructed, and of getting information and knowledge about religion. The far greater part either cannot read, or never apply themselves to any useful instructive reading. Few hearken to the instructions that are given them, and fewer yet examine or reflect upon them. Carnal lusts and secular business; do so engross them, that they seldom or never give themselves to searching the truth. They generally have an aversion to spiritual things. Hence it is, that in matters of religion, they will rather believe implicitly what is told them, than be at the pains of enquiring, whether it is true or not. And they are every whit as careless about exercises of devotion. Many would think it a punishment if they were made to read or to meditate. They never do those things, but with reluctance and as seldom as they can. They go about prayer especially with a strange indifference, and a criminal indevotion. In short, very few take the necessary care to preserve themselves from vice, and to behave themselves with regularity and caution; very few seek the opportunities of doing good, and avoiding the temptations to which the common condition of men, or their own particular circumstances expose them: and the greatest number are slaves to their bodies, and wholly taken up with earthly things. One of the most sensible and fatal effects of this negligence, is that those persons use no manner of endeavours to know themselves. It is very seldom if

ever that they reflect upon what passes within them ; upon their thoughts, their inclinations, the motions of their hearts, and the principles they act upon ; or that they take a review of their words and actions. They do not consider whether they have within them the characters of good men, or of wicked and hypocritical persons. In a word, almost all of them live without reflection.

Mens carelessness about religion is therefore extremely great. But they proceed otherwise in the things of the world, about which they are as active and laborious as they are lazy and cold in reference to true piety. They will do every thing for their bodies, and nothing for their souls. They spare no industry or diligence, they omit nothing to promote their temporal concerns. If we were to judge by their conduct, we would think that the supreme good is to be found in earthly advantages, and that salvation is the least important of all things.

I need not say what effects such a negligence must produce. The greater part of Christians being ignorant in their duty, having no knowledge of themselves, declining the use of those means which God has appointed, and without which he declares that no man can be saved ; and wearing out their lives in this ignorance and sloth, it is not to be imagined, that they can have any religion or piety ; and so there must be a general corruption amongst them. I say, it must be so ; unless God should work miracles, or rather change the nature of man, and invert the order and the laws which he has established.

But because it might be said that Christians do not live like Atheists, and that their negligence is not so great as I represent it ; let us consider a little, what sort of care they bestow upon the concerns of their souls. Certainly there are some persons who are not guilty of this negligence : but excepting these ; what is it which the rest of mankind do, in order to their salvation ? Very little or nothing. They pray, they assist sometimes at Divine-service, and at the publick exercises of religion ; they hear sermons, they receive the sacrament, and they perform some other duties of this nature. This is all which the religion of the greatest part amounts to. But first these are not the only duties which ought to be practis'd ; there are others which are not less essential, and which yet are generally neglected ; such as meditation, reading, self-examination ; to say nothing here of the duties of sanctification. So that if some acts of religion are performed, others are quite omitted. The reason of this proceeding may easily be discovered. There is a law and a custom, which oblige all persons to some acts of religion ; to pray, to receive the sacrament, and to go now and then to church : if a man should intirely neglect those external duties, he would be thought an Atheist : but there is neither custom, nor law, nor worldly decency, which obliges a man to meditate, to examine his own conscience, or to watch over his conduct, and therefore these duties being left to every one's direction, are very little observed.

As to the other duties which Christians perform in some measure, the want of sincerity in them, does most commonly turn them into so many acts of hypocrisy. They perhaps say some prayers in the morning ; but this is done without devotion, hastily, with distraction, and weariness, and only to get rid of it ; after, they think no more of God all the day,

but are altogether busied about the world and their passions; and in the evening they pray with greater wandring of thoughts than in the morning. If it so fall out, that they go to church, or hear a sermon, they do not give a quarter of an hours close attention to any thing that is said, or done in the publick assemblies. In many places the whole devotion of the people, consists in being present at some sermons, which are as little instructive, as they are minded or hearkned to. The use which is made of the sacraments, especially of the eucharist, converts them into vain ceremonies, and makes them rather obstacles, than helps to salvation. As to the mortifying of the body by reasonable abstinence, fasting and retirement, it is an unknown duty. The indifference of Christians is therefore but too palpable. What they do upon the account of religion is very little; and yet they do that little so ill, that it is not much more beneficial to them, than if they did nothing at all.

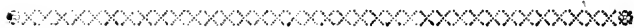
And now what might not be said, if after having thus shewn, that what men do for their salvation is next to nothing; I should undertake to prove, that they do almost every thing that is necessary for their damnation; and that they are zealous and industrious for their ruin, as they are slothful and negligent in what is requisite to preserve them. There are means to corrupt as well as to sanctify our selves. The means of corruption and perdition, are ignorance, want of attention, neglect of devotion, the love of the world, and of the flesh, unruly passions, temptations, and ill examples. Now supposing, that a man was so monstrously frantick, as to form the design of damning himself; what would such a man do? He would neglect the exercises of devotion, he would not pray at all, or he would pray only with his lips; he would profane the sacraments by an unsanctify'd use of them; he would only mind his body and this present life; he would give loose reins to his passions, as much as he might with decency and without danger; if he had an opportunity to gratify his sensuality, his covetousness, his pride, or any other wicked affection, he would gladly embrace it. This is what a man would do to damn himself: and is it not what a great many actually do? I confess, no man is capable of so wild a resolution, as to design to damn himself; but a man sufficiently damns himself, when he takes no care of his salvation, and when he does those things, which will infallible bring his perdition after them.

The sloth and negligence of men in the concerns of their souls, being one of the causes of their corruption, it would be highly necessary to remedy that negligence, and to inspire them with zeal for religion; but it is hard to succeed in this, laziness is attended with a certain sweetness to which men give up themselves with pleasure. The slothful do love and delight in rest; they cannot endure to be egged on to labour. This is one of those habits which are most difficult to be conquered; and to say the truth, there is but little hope of those, in whom it is grown inveterate: it is a great task to rouse them out of that sluggish and lethargick temper. God must interpose by a particular grace, by great afflictions, or by some other extraordinary method.

But yet, I do not think it altogether impossible to overcome this sinful and dangerous sloth, or to preserve those from it, whom it has not seized as yet. Serious reflections upon the importance of salvation, and

upon the necessity of working at it, may produce that effect. Men would not live in this carelessness, but that they either do not apprehend of what consequence it is to be saved; or that they imagine, there is not much to be done for the obtaining of salvation. These two prejudices maintain their laziness. Nothing can therefore be more useful, than to convince them on the one hand, that nothing in the world is of greater moment than religion; and that eternal happiness is the highest of all concerns: and to let them see on the other hand, that this felicity is not to be attained, but by assiduous care, and an exact observation of the duties of Christianity.

I know that it is difficult to make men seriously enter upon these reflections; but yet they ought still to be laid before them, and we should not give over. If they have no effect at one time, there are circumstances in which they will prove successful. I think, few would continue in this sluggish disposition, if they did represent to themselves what notions and thoughts they shall have at the end of their lives, every man is satisfy'd that he must die one day, and that his condition will then be the happiest that can be conceived, if he has made use of the time and opportunities he had to secure his salvation; but that if he has neglected these means, he shall find himself in strange agonies, and be reduc'd to dismal extremities. When death appears, when the world vanishes, a man is then wholly taken up with religion, he would give then all the world, if it was in his possession, to secure to himself a better life. Now since we all know that this must one day be our case, wisdom requires, that we should overcome betimes that negligence, of which the consequences will be so fatal; and that we should apply our selves with earnestness and pleasure to that work, upon which our sovereign felicity depends.



C A U S E VIII.

Worldly Business.

***** NEGLIGENCE commonly proceeds, either from indifference, or
 * N * from distraction. We neglect those things, which we look up-
 ***** on with indifference; but we frequently also neglect things of
 moment, because we are distracted by other cares. These are the two
 causes of mens carelessness in matters of religion. On the one hand,
 piety is indifferent to them, they neither know the nature nor the excellency
 of it; the duties which it prescribes, do not appear very pleasant or neces-
 sary to them; they love and esteem only the things of the world, all this I
 have proved, in the fore-going chapters. On the other hand, they are
 distracted by temporal cares, which rob them of the leisure and freedom,
 that are necessary for the study and practice of religion. Worldly business
 therefore is another source of corruption, as I hope to prove it by the
 following considerations.

I reckon among worldly employments, all those cares which relate to the

the world, or this present life, whether they take up the body or the mind. There are temporal cares which properly take up the body; such are the cares of mechanicks, or husband-men; and there are other secular cares, which chiefly employ the mind; such is the study of humane learning, of politicks, or philosophy. These last as well as the first, ought to be counted worldly business. Nay, we may observe that difference between these two sorts of temporal employments; that the cares which take up the mind are sometimes the more dangerous. While the body is at work, the mind may be at liberty; but when the mind is employed, when the heart is distracted and possessed with temporal cares, it is much harder for the thoughts of religion to enter, or to make any impression upon a man.

But whether these employments relate to the mind or to the body, we ought not to think, that they are of themselves hindrances to piety. For this imagination, would be a very gross error. Worldly business is lawful and necessary, and it were a sin to neglect it, since that would be contrary to the order which God has established in the world. Nay, it may be useful to our salvation, it may divert ill thoughts, it may take off men from trifling and vicious employments, and it may serve to mortify the body, and to banish idleness, which is the cause of all manner of vice.

I make this remark, because some people fancy, that in order to be saved, it must be necessary to live in an absolute retirement, to lay aside all temporal cares, and to give up our selves wholly to spiritual exercises, to reading, contemplation, meditation and prayer. But those who do thus stretch the obligation of renouncing the world, and insist so much upon a retired and contemplative life, do not I doubt, very well understand the nature of piety, nor do any great service to it. Sometimes by endeavouring to spiritualize men too much, we spoil all, and we make piety appear ridiculous or impracticable. We should always remember that piety is made for man. Now it is not one in fifty that can thus embrace retirement, and absolutely renounce the world. I am far from condemning retirement; it is sometimes very seasonable, and I think it in some sense necessary to all men. There are some persons who for the sake of their salvation, or the edification of the church, ought to chuse a retired life, disengaged from temporal cares. Others are called to that kind of life by the circumstances which providence has placed them in. And besides, there is no Christian, but ought to allow himself some times of retirement; nay, there are some temporal employments which do not hinder a man to live in a retired manner. But after all, it would be the ruin of society, and of most Christian virtues, if every one should live a-part, and busy himself only in spiritual exercises. God does not require this; He has created man to labour in the world, and those who follow an honest employment in it, act suitably to his will, and their business may prove a help to their salvation.

I need not I think, advertise the reader that I speak here only of lawful employments, and not of those which are bad and contrary to the laws of nature or religion. And yet these last are very common; but because every body may easily see that such occupations must unavoidably engage men into sin, I will make it my chief business to shew, that lawful and innocent employments, prove to many persons a hindrance to piety and salvation,

Temporal employments then being not bad in themselves, they cannot occasion corruption but by the abuse that is made of them. Now there are four faults which men commit in this matter.

1. The first is, when they are intirely taken up with worldly things. We have shewed already, that men live in a prodigious sloth and carelessness about religion, and that they do almost nothing for their souls and their salvation. From this it follows, that they must be employ'd only about their bodies and the concerns of this life. And in fact, if we inquire into their cares, we shall find that they terminate in the world, and in their temporal interest, and this I think, needs not be proved.

2. Their hearts sink too deep into the things of the world. The business of life is innocent when it is follow'd with moderation; but it diverts men from piety, when it is pursued more, and with greater eagerness than it deserves. That excessive love of the world, makes the unhappiness of men. Instead of esteeming temporal goods in proportion to their worth, and as remembering that they are not able to procure them true felicity; instead of considering that they are not made for this life only, and that they cannot long enjoy those advantages which they court; they give up themselves wholly to the world, they set their hearts and affections upon it, and they act as if this life was the ultimate end of all their actions. They labour only for their bodies, and for the gratifying of their appetites. This is the mark aimed at in all their thoughts and projects: this is what inflames their desires, and what excites in them the most violent passions of grief or joy, of anxiety or impatience. They are far from having such a hearty concern for religion and piety. In relation to this, their affections are faint and languid, and they do nothing but with indifference, or by constraint.

3. The third fault is when men are too much employ'd, and when they over-load themselves with business. It is a great piece of wisdom, both in respect of the tranquility of this life and the concerns of another, to avoid the excess and the hurry of business, as much as possibly we may, without being wanting to the duties of our calling; to confine our selves to necessary cares, and to wave all superfluous ones. Men would live happy if they did but know, what their profession requires of them, and limit themselves to it, without meddling in that which does not concern them. But here they observe no bounds; they will fly at all, they will busy themselves about many things, which do not belong to their province. This without doubt is a dangerous disease, and the occasion of several disorders.

4. In the last place, there is one thing more to blame, and that is when worldly business, becomes an occasion of sin, by the abuse that is made of it. For besides that it is a very ill disposition in a Christian to be fond of the world; most men are so unhappy as to direct all the business of life to a bad end, which is to satisfy and to enflame the more their irregular appetites. And by this means, many enterprizes and particular actions of theirs, which in themselves are innocent, become evil and unlawful, and engage them in all manner of sins.

These considerations prove already, that the greatest part of men's vices proceeds from their temporal affairs; but this will appear yet more clearly by the following reflections.

1. This excessive application to temporal concerns, engrosses almost
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our whole time, so that it does not leave us a sufficient share of it, to be spent in cares of another nature. Men confess this themselves, and plead it for an excuse. They alledge their business. A man who is engaged in the world will say, *I have no time to read, or to perform the exercises of religion; I have too much business, my employ or my calling does not leave me a minute of leisure.* And the truth is, they are too busy for the most part. If they have any spare time, some hours, or some days of rest, wherein the course of their ordinary employments is interrupted; they are not in a condition, to improve to the best advantage those short intervals of relaxation.

2. And truly, secular business does not only take away the best part of men's time, but it does besides distract their minds and invade their hearts and affections. When for a whole day or week the mind and body have been in agitation, a man is weary and spent, the activity of his thoughts is exhausted, his head is too full to be clear, he is not able to drive away in an instant so many worldly ideas, to calm his passions, and to turn himself of the sudden, to spiritual exercises. So that he must either absolutely neglect the duties of piety, or perform them very ill. When a man has brought himself to a habit, of being employed only in worldly affairs, he is no longer master of his own thoughts and motions. It is with great difficulty, if he can at all apply himself to objects that are foreign to him. Those objects affect him but weakly; he must make great efforts, before he can fasten upon them; and if he fixes there for a few moments, it is a violent state in which he cannot continue long. Those thoughts, of which he is constantly full, crowd in upon him, and he returns immediately to these things which he loves, and which commonly take him up.

This is the true reason, why men love and relish spiritual things so little, and why they think it so hard to subdue their minds with reading, attention, and meditation. This is particularly the main source of indevotion in the exercises of piety. Why is the mind so apt to wander in prayer? The too great application to temporal affairs is the cause of it. As soon as a man is awake in the morning, a throng of thoughts and a multiplicity of designs and business break in upon his mind, and take possession of his heart; he is filled with these things all the day, he follows and plods upon them without distraction or interruption. And how is it to be imagined that amidst all this hurry and turmoil, he should find that recollection, that tranquility, and that elevation, without which the exercises of piety are but meer hypocrisy? Whence comes it to pass that men bring so little attention and sincerity with them, to the publick worship of God? Why do sermons produce so little fruit? Why do the most certain and important truths of religion, the clearest and the most solid reasonings, make either no impression at all, or at least no lasting one upon the hearers? What is the reason why in the most solemn devotions, and particularly in the holy communion, it is so difficult for men to lift up their hearts to God, and to shake off a thousand idle or sinful thoughts, which come then to amuse and distract them? And lastly, Why do those vows and promises which are made even with some sincerity, prove so ineffectual? Why do the best resolutions vanish so easily and so soon? All this comes from men's being too much taken up with temporal cares.

3. These excessive cares do not only distract the mind, but they do besides directly obstruct sanctification, and lead men into sin. For first it is impossible to love religion and virtue, when the heart is set upon the world. Our Saviour tells us, **That no man can serve two masters*; and St. John declares, †*That the love of God is not in those who love the world*. There is such an opposition between bodily and spiritual exercises, that those who give themselves up to the first, are incapable of the others. Worldly occupations render men carnal, sensual and dull; they keep up ignorance and foment sloth, and they weigh down all their inclinations and thoughts, to the earth, so that they must be careless and indifferent, about spiritual objects and heavenly concerns. And indeed they are very ill dispos'd to value those good things as they deserve; or to seek them with that eagerness and sincerity which they ought. Can we think that men, who propose nothing else to themselves, but the amassing of wealth, the making their court, or the canvassing for places; and who live and toil only for such things, should have a due sense of the concerns of their salvation? It is hard to imagine it.

But further, religion does not allow Christians to love the world, or to cleave to it. ‡ It requires, that *they should possess temporal goods as not possessing them*, and that, *they should use the world, as not abusing it*; because on the one hand, *the figure of the world passes away*, and it would be a folly to fix their hearts upon vain and transitory enjoyments: and on the other hand, they ought to aspire chiefly to the possession of solid and eternal happiness. To be therefore taken up only with earthly things, and to let them enter too deep into one's heart, is a disposition quite contrary to that, which a Christian ought to be in.

4. Lastly, An excessive application to temporal affairs hurries a man into many disorders. We need but reflect a little, to be satisfied that a man who is filled only, with the thoughts and solitudes of this life, must be a slave to his senses and passions; and that he lays himself open every moment to a thousand temptations, which he is not able to withstand. Tho' his employments are lawful in themselves, yet he makes them criminal, because to him they are only means of gratifying his appetites. And the greatest mischief is, that when a man is once entred upon that course, he still confirms himself in it, so that at last he cannot leave it off. On the one hand, his passions are still mounting higher; on the other, business and toil grow upon him. He first proposes an end to himself, and then he will bring it about at any rate, as being engaged in honour and by interest not to desist. If he meets with obstacles he will do any thing to surmount them. If he succeeds, success animates him with new ardour; he is for going further: in a word, it is an endless labour, a continual succession of cares, which are still growing greater, and which end only with his life.

From all this we may conclude, that the abuse of worldly business is most dangerous, and that if we would not have it obstruct our salvation, we ought to observe these three rules.

The first is, That we should pursue the things of this world with moderation. One of the most useful directions for a happy life, is this; To lay

* Matth. vi. 24.

† 1 John ii. 15.

‡ 1 Cor. vii. 31.

lay nothing too much to heart. The way to preserve our innocence and tranquility, is to crave nothing too eagerly: not to rejoyce excessively at any prosperity, not to be dejected above measure for any disasters which may happen, and not to be too hot and peremptory upon any design. The second caution to be used, is the avoiding multiplicity of business, and excess of employments, as much as is consistent with the duties of our calling. Every one should consider what he is fit for, and what he is called to, and go no farther. In the last place, wisdom requires, that among all the affairs of this life, we should reserve the necessary time and care, to pay what we owe to God, and to mind our salvation, the most important of all concerns. To this end, it is very useful, to have certain times of retirement and leisure, and to accustom our selves to make now and then, even in the midst of temporal employments, such reflections as may call us back to our duty, and be like a counterpoise to that bias which carries us toward sensible objects. Let us often think that we are mortal, that we have a soul, and that there is another life after this. Let us consider what all our worldly cares terminate in, and what judgment we shall make of them upon our death-beds. These reflections will put us upon wise and moderate courses, and so we shall avoid innumerable disorders and miseries which men fall into, by their too great application to temporal business.



C A U S E IX.

Men's particular Callings.

THOU' we have seen already that corruption has its source in the abuse of worldly business, yet it may be proper to insist a little more upon this matter, and to consider it with relation to the different states and callings which men are engaged in. When we speak of worldly business, we mean chiefly those things, about which the greatest part of life is spent. Now those occupations must needs be suitable to the particular kind of life which a man follows. And so every man's kind of life, may be a source, or at least an accidental cause of corruption.

As the world is constituted, it is necessary that there should be different professions among men, that some should cultivate the earth, that others should apply themselves to arts and trades, and that others should exercise magistracy or traffick. The difference of sex, age, condition, and other circumstances, creates a great variety in relation to particular callings. Now this diversity of employs and conditions, is innocent in it self; the world subsists, and society is preserv'd by it. But yet it cannot be denied, but that a great part of the disorders, which happen in the world, proceeds from the kind of life which men chuse, and from the particular state they are in; and that because they abuse it, and do not demean themselves in it, with caution and prudence. The proof of this shall conclude the first part of this treatise.

But

But here we are to use some distinction. There are callings which are bad in themselves, and others which are lawful and innocent; they are not all therefore equally dangerous, and some produce corruption, more necessarily than others.

All professions, or callings are not lawful, some are unlawful and criminal. The world is full of people, who make sin it self their ordinary calling and profession. There are infinite numbers, who instead of following an honest employment, subsist only by the sins which they commit themselves, or which they make others commit. This might easily be proved by abundance of instances. How many are there, whose trade is a constant practice of obscenity, lewdness and debauchery, of artifice and intrigue, lying and knavery? How many are there, who are professed extortioners and cheats, who are always employed in acts of injustice, cruelty and violence? nay, there are societies form'd for that purpose; the trade of robbing, of punishing the innocent, and that by committing rapine by sea and land, is erected into an honourable and lawful employment. Many persons are suffered at this day among Christians, whose profession was formerly counted infamous: many are tolerated, who are only ministers of voluptuousness, and whose only business it is to introduce licentiousness of manners, to corrupt the youth by training them up to the love of pleasure; and to a luxurious and effeminate life; and to furnish those who are inclined to debauchery, sensuality, idleness, or gaming; with the means to gratify their inclinations. Now all these professions are not only inseparable from sin, but they likewise make way for all kinds of vice among Christians.

We ought to pass almost the same judgment upon the way of living of those, who without making a publick profession of vice, propose no other end to themselves in this world, but the pleasing of their appetites. Some have no other view, than to enjoy the pleasures of life, and they level their whole conduct at that mark. Others desiring to grow rich, or to raise themselves to honours, make no scruple of using all the means, which interest, ambition and injustice, have established in the world. They make use of fraud, violence and oppression; it is their maxim and their study to dissemble their sentiments, and to do mischief to those who stand in their way. In a word, they betake themselves to every thing that may further the success of their designs. Such a method of life, is manifestly contrary to the spirit of Christianity, and it must needs be highly sinful, since both the end of it, and the means used to obtain that end, are so.

There are other kinds of life, which do not seem altogether so bad, and yet are not much better. This may particularly be said of idleness. The profession of many, is to have none at all, and to be as little employed as they can. They think it the happiest of all conditions to have nothing to do, and to live at rest and free from action. But yet it is unworthy of a man, and much more of a Christian, to be useless in the world. And if this idleness is shameful and culpable in it self, it is much more so in its effects and consequences. It betrays men into frivolous or dangerous pastimes. For a man cannot be perfectly idle. The want of useful business must be supplied with amusements; and those amusements are generally sinful. Thus we see multitudes of people,
who

who excepting the time which they must needs bestow upon the necessities of nature, and upon some external and indispenfable acts of religion, consume the best part of their lives at play, or in diversions, in unprofitable reading and conversations, in meeting companies, in receiving or returning visits, or in other such things, which tho' they are thought innocent, yet they enervate the mind, they devour time, they enslave a man to the opinions and modes of the world, and they make him most frequently transgress the laws of religion. It would not be difficult to apply this to *professed* gamesters, to those who spend their time in trifling discourses and impertinent visits, and to many other persons. I might easily shew, if it was necessary, that such a life has little of Christianity in it, and that it is a great deal more to blame, than is commonly believed.

Thus men follow divers kinds of life, which are essentially bad, and wherein by consequence, purity of heart, and innocency of life, cannot be preserv'd.

As to those kinds of life and occupations which are lawful, I might observe in the first place, that for the most part men are too much wedded to them, and that they commonly abuse them. But I will not press this consideration, having shewn already in the foregoing chapter, that too great application to temporal affairs, robs men both of the time, and of that inclination and freedom which are necessary to mind spiritual things, and that it makes them dull, earthly-minded, sensual and slaves to their passions. To speak then only of what concerns particular callings, I shall observe these two general faults.

1. It is a great mischief that men embrace professions which are not fit for them. Every profession require some particular qualifications and talents; and since all men have not those qualifications, it follows that all men are not fit for all employments, and that distinction and choice are to be us'd in pitching upon a profession. The welfare of societies and of particular persons, does in a great measure depend upon that choice. If no care is taken of this, employments must be ill discharged, and from thence a great many disorders will arise both in church and state.

Now if we take a survey of the different callings which men are engaged in, we will find that they are often destitute of those qualifications which are necessary for the right discharging of them. And the worst of it is that this happens in the most considerable employments, and in those which might contribute most to the preserving of order, and the encouraging of virtue in the world. As to professions of lesser importance, the choice is much easier; every body almost is capable of them, and the faults which may be committed there are not of great consequence. If a husband-man does not well understand his business, or a mechanick his trade, no great inconveniency will ensue from thence in relation to society. But when publick employments are in the hands of men who are not qualified for them, it is hard to tell how much mischief is occasioned by it. Is it not for instance a lamentable thing, that so many persons should dedicate themselves to the church, who want the talents requisite for so high a function; and that so many who might do great service in that profession do not embrace it? By this it happens that some of those who are placed at the helm in several churches, want both

both learning and probity, and that religion is very ill administred, so that the people being without instruction or conduct, live in ignorance and disorder. The same may be said of the office of magistrates, when it is entrusted to those who are not proper for it.

2. Lawful callings may prove great occasions of corruption and disorder, both in respect of those who embrace them, and of the publick, when they are ill exercised, when the duties annexed to them are neglected; when men do not watch against the temptations which are particular to them, and when they look upon them only as means to gratify their inclinations, to get money, to have a rank, to gain credit, or to humour some other passion. I might enter here upon many particulars, but because this would lead me too far, I shall confine my self to a few instances.

It would be very proper to speak here of the profession of church-men, and of the office of princes, magistrates and judges, and to shew how pernicious both these kinds of life prove often, not only to those who are raised to them, but likewise to church and state. But these two articles are of too great moment, to be touched upon only by the by. They are two general causes of corruption, which deserve to be purposely handled, and which are to have a place in the second part of this book.

The profession of military men, is a kind of life which corrupts vast multitudes. I do not condemn the profession in general. It is lawful, a man may live in it like a Christian, and there are persons in military employments, of a solid virtue and an exemplary piety. But it must be confess'd, that the number of those persons is not great; and that for the generality, the maxims and deportment of the men of that profession, agree very little with the rules of Christianity. Those who follow the employments of war, are for the most part men of loose and vicious principles. Every body knows, that if on the one hand some good men are found to embrace this profession, on the other hand it is the ordinary receptacle, and the last shift, of idle and debauched people; and of those who are over-whelmed with poverty and misery. Besides, how do men live in that profession? saving some few disorders which military discipline does not allow of, every thing is lawful there; I speak of what is commonly observed. To spend their life in idleness and gaming, is the least fault of soldiers. Lewdness is a thing about which no great scruple is made among them. The same might also be said of injustice; it is well known that commonly officers do not thrive but the soldiers pay for it. I say nothing of unjust wars, nor of the cruelty and inhumanity which often attend that kind of life, because I will not enlarge upon this subject. But it is most certain, and every considering person will own, that after the rate that military men live almost every where; war is the school of vice, and that the prodigious number of those, who follow that employment, is one of the principal causes of corruption and debauchery.

Commerce is one of the most lawful and necessary professions of life. Not only society, but religion it self may reap great advantages from it. But yet this calling has its dangers and temptations, and it is exercised by many in a way which is contrary to good conscience. As the only end of traffick is gain, and as the opportunities of getting by unlawful methods, which may be practised with impunity, offer themselves every day;

day; so it is evident, that if a merchant has not a strict and well-informed conscience, and virtue enough to resist the perpetual temptations to which his calling exposes him, he will forfeit his innocence, and violate every minute the rules of justice and equity, of charity, truth and honesty.

There are few callings more innocent and more suitable to the order which God did establish at first, than the employments of those who exercise mechanick trades, and get their livelihood by bodily labour. And yet this kind of life proves to a great many an occasion to vice, because they do not arm themselves against the temptations and sins which are ordinary in those callings. It is almost the general character of this order of men, to mind nothing but the world, to labour only for their bodies, and to do nothing for their souls. Hence it is, that they are ignorant, that they know their religion very little, that they are gross, sensual, given to intemperance, and several other excesses. They are apt besides, to be unjust and false. They make no conscience of doing their work ill, of lying, and detaining what is not theirs. There is a thousand petty frauds and little knavish tricks, used in every trade, which are thought innocent and lawful ways of gain. Now it is plain, that all this does not contribute a little towards corruption.

What I have said of the employments of life, may be applied to the different states men are in, with relation to age, condition, and their way of living. All these are so many occasions and circumstances, which may divert them from their duty.

Thus youth has its particular temptations. Young people are vain, presumptuous, sensual, given to pleasure, violent and bold in their passions. They are likewise imprudent and fickle, because they want knowledge and experience. Being thus disposed at that age, they will almost infallibly, unless prevented by a good education, corrupt themselves, and contract ill habits, which will stick by them, as long as they live. Daily experience shews us, that youth ill spent is the source of the corruption of a great many for the rest of their whole life.

Old people are commonly covetous, morose, suspicious, wedded to the opinions they have once embraced, and most deeply engaged in their vicious customs. Their passions are not so boisterous, but they are more lasting and harder to be cured, than those of young people. And from this we may judge, that if reason and religion do not correct those faults of old people; that age, which ought chiefly to be employed in preparing for death, will prove an obstacle to piety and salvation.

The rich as St. *Paul* observes,* are proud and high-minded; they are apt besides to be slothful, they love to satisfy their passions, are full of self-love, minding themselves in every thing, and being little affected with the miseries of others. So that riches may easily spoil those who possess them, and do actually spoil many.

The poor are almost all of them vicious, because they are ignorant, forsaken from their infancy, and grown up in want and idleness, and among bad company. They have little religion, they will live without working, they are given to stealing and dishonesty. Envy fills their

hearts,

hearts, and they only keep within the bounds of duty, when they can do no mischief.

Those who live un-confined and much in the world, have for the most part little of a Christian character. They lie open to abundance of temptations, and what is most dangerous in that kind of life, is, that a man has no sooner embraced it, but he thinks it honourable, lawful and necessary; he hearkens no longer to the rules of religion, he is ashamed of them, and governs himself only by the maxims of the world. Others lead a retired life, they avoid great companies, and they seldom appear in publick. That state may have its advantages, but it has its dangers too. Those who live thus retired, are apt to think themselves much better than other men; because their conduct seems regular and free from scandal; and this inspires them with a secret pride, a great opinion of themselves; an austere and imperious humour, which makes them apt to speak ill and to judge rashly of other people, and this drives charity, gentleness, and humility out of their hearts.

I think I have said enough to shew, that men's various kinds of life, have a general influence upon the irregularities of their deportment. But to make this truth yet more evident, I shall add two reflections to all that has been said.

The first is, that of all the temptations which are apt to seduce men, none are more dangerous than those, which are, 1. Necessary and unavoidable. 2. Ordinary and frequent. 3. Hidden and imperceptible. Now the temptations arising from men's particular callings have these three characters. 1. They are necessary and unavoidable, we may withstand them, but we cannot avoid altogether being exposed to them. 2. They are frequent and constant, those employments in which the greatest part of our lives is spent, offering them to us perpetually. 3. They are hidden and imperceptible; for besides that men reflect little upon what is ordinary and happens every day; those temptations are varnished with the specious pretences of example and custom, and even of the lawfulness of the calling and of necessity. Thus a trades-man, is necessarily exposed to the danger of wronging his neighbour, and of transgressing the rules of justice, equity or sincerity: the opportunity of doing this returns every minute, and as often as he buys or sells; this temptation is imperceptible, and except he has a niceness of conscience, he will not be sensible of it, by reason that his profession is innocent, that he is allowed to get, and that most of the unlawful ways of gain, are authorized by custom.

2. The second reflection is, that the greatest and the most insuperable obstacles to piety, proceed, for the most part, from a man's calling. It is that which obstructs more than any thing else, the effect of the gospel, and men's conversion. We preach, we exhort to repentance. But to whom do we speak? We speak to men engaged in professions, which, considering how they behave themselves in them, divert them from piety, and furnish them with a thousand opportunities of sinning. We speak to people who have chosen already the course of their whole life; who resolved to continue in the state they are in, and to alter nothing in it; and who have formed to themselves, that scheme of employments, which they

they intend to follow at any rate. We preach to people who are no sooner out of the church, but they meet at home and in their ordinary business, with perpetual hindrances to holiness, and with temptations, which it is certain they will not withstand. Such hearers may be preached to long enough, before they reap any fruit from what they hear. Sermons are presently gone; but the temptations arising from the professions which men chuse, are continual, and last as long as their lives. They accompany a man every where, he is not jealous of them, he seeks them, he gives up himself to them, and he fancies he may lawfully do so. This is the visible occasion of the gospels having so little efficacy upon men's minds.

I shall conclude this chapter with two remarks which may serve for a remedy against this source of corruption. 1. Every one ought to examine the state and kind of life he is in; that if this state has something in it that is evil or contrary to the duty of a Christian, he must alter and correct it. If the profession is bad in it self, nothing else can be done, but to quit it. If it is lawful, we must take care not to render it dangerous or sinful, either by neglecting the duties to which it obliges us, or by not avoiding the snares and temptations that attend it, or by making it an occasion and pretence, to satisfy our inordinate affections. I confess we may meet here with difficulties. It is hard for a man to leave off a profession, to go out of his ordinary road of life, and to renounce some engagements when they are once formed. And yet this ought and may be done, if those engagements are not lawful. It is better we should offer some violence to our selves, by breaking them off, or by correcting what is amiss in them, than to run our selves into infinite miseries. But the best way is to obviate the evil in its beginning.


Therefore, I say, 2dly. That since people use to resolve upon a profession while they are young; that choice requires a great deal of prudence and caution; for no less than temporal and eternal happiness or misery depends upon it. But it is a sad thing to see, how rashly and inconsiderately this matter is gone about. Interest, chance, passion, the humour of parents or of young people, are the things which determine so important a choice. It is not much considered whether a calling is lawful, or proper for him that embraces it; little or no care is taken to form the inclinations of young persons; they are given up to their own conduct, and to all the temptations of that profession to which they are destined. And thus we need no longer wonder, why employments are ill discharged, why most people lose their innocence in them, and why there is a general corruption to be observed, in all states and conditions. This is the ordinary effect and consequence of men's particular callings.



A
T R E A T I S E
CONCERNING THE
C A U S E S
OF THE
PRESENT CORRUPTION
OF
C H R I S T I A N S,
AND THE REMEDIES THEREOF.



P R E F A C E.

LTHOUGH it cannot be contested, but that the Corruption of Christians proceeds from those Causes, which have been observed in the First Part of this Work; yet those Causes are not the only springs from which Corruption flows: there are others besides, which we are to discover now, and which deserve our most serious attention.

Hitherto we have found the Causes of Corruption, in the ill disposition of most Christians. But those which will be the subject matter of this Second Part, are of another nature. They are more general and of a greater influence, and they may be looked upon as the occasions of the

the others. For if it be asked, Why men are ignorant, full of prejudices, possessed with false maxims, or negligent in the concerns of their salvation; we may easily see that this proceeds chiefly, from the want of Order and Discipline, from the defects of Pastors and Magistrates, from Education, and from those other Causes, which I design to enquire into, at present. Things are upon such a foot among Christians in relation to these heads, that it is almost impossible but that the Corruption of men must be very great; and we must not hope to stem the tide of it, unless we remove those publick, and general Causes of Corruption.

In the next place these Causes are less known, and less observed than the others. I cannot tell whether it is because they are not thought of, or because no remedy is hoped for; but men do not appear very solicitous to remove them, nor do they seem to know them. Great endeavours are used in Books and pulpits, to instruct men and to bring them to a more Christian life: matters of religion and morality are carefully explained, but this does not heal the general disorders. The main Causes of remissness do still subsist, and hinder the effects of instructions and exhortations. It were therefore to be wished, that those who are concerned for the restoring of Christianity, had larger views, and did more diligently labour to take away the general Causes of Corruption.

Indeed it seems more difficult to remedy these I am now to mention, than the first General Abuses are hardly reformed, especially when they are confirmed by a long custom; and to attempt it may be thought a fruitless labour. But all this ought not to discourage us. Truths so important as these are, ought not to be suppressed; they may produce their fruit in their season, it is still a great matter to have set them in the best light we can: and this is what I shall endeavour to do at present.

P A R T II.

C A U S E I.

The present State of the Church, and of Religion in general.

PIETY is always necessary, and the practice of it is never impossible, to those who are well inclined. But yet we must confess, that the various circumstances of time, place, and of the state of religion, contribute much to the progress of piety or of corruption in the world. There are some happy circumstances, and some times very favourable to piety; as on the other hand there are unhappy

circumstances and times in which it is like a stranger upon earth, the means to promote it being then neither so effectual nor so frequent. The design of this work, obliges me to consider, what may be thought in this respect of the time we live in, and whether this Corruption which dishonours Christianity, does not proceed from the unhappiness of the times, and from the present state of the Church and religion.

But we cannot succeed in this enquiry, nor pass a sound judgment upon the present state of religion, without running back to its first origin and nature, and without taking a view of those ages which are elapsed, since its first establishment. The knowledge of the scripture and of history are here of great use. The scripture informs us what the state of religion should be, and history shews us the different states thro' which it has passed. When we examine religion by these two rules, we perceive that it neither has been, nor will be, always in the state it is now in.

It is fit in the first place to seek the true notion of the Christian Church and religion in scripture. There it is that Christianity still subsists in all its beauty, for neither the ages which are past, nor the changes which have happen'd, have been able to tarnish in the least, the brightness of those native and lively colours, in which our Saviour's religion is set forth in holy writings. We may take notice of four principal characters in the idea which the scripture gives us of the Christian Church and religion; and these are, truth, holiness, union and order.

1. The first and the chief character of this Church and religion, is the knowledge and the profession of the truth; this is what distinguishes Christianity from false religions. The Church is the Church of Christ no longer, than while she retains the purity of faith and of evangelical doctrine. It would be needless to prove this.

2. The sacred writers represent the Church as a society altogether holy. They name her * *The spouse of Christ, a glorious spouse, having neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing, but being holy and without blemish.* They call her † *The house of the living God, a holy nation, and the assembly of the first born which are written in heaven.* They give to Christians, the glorious titles of *kings, priests, saints, elect, children of God, and new men*; they speak of them, as a people separated from the world and its vices, dedicated to God and good works, and living in the practice of piety, temperance, justice, charity, and all other virtues.

3. Union and Love is the third character of the Church and of the true Disciples of Christ. The scripture does not speak to us of many Churches but of one, of which all the faithful are members, in what place soever they may be. St. Paul says that there is but *one faith, one baptism, and one God*; the Apostles enjoyn above all things, Union and Charity, and they give many precepts to maintain these, and to make them flourish among Christians.

4. As Holiness and Union cannot be preserved, where there is no order; so the Church was to be a well regulated society in which every thing might be done in a convenient and orderly manner. And in fact, there are in the sacred writings many laws to this purpose. We find there several regulations, concerning the way in which the Church ought

* Eph. v. 27. Pet. ii.

† Heb. xii.

ought to be governed, and concerning the calling of Bishops and pastors, and the principal functions of their office. The scripture does besides appoint the exercise of discipline, the manner of proceeding in relation to scandalous sinners, and the administration of publick alms. It prescribes the chief acts of religion and divine worship, prayers, fasting, sacraments, preaching, and some other heads. All these laws are designed to establish order and piety in the Church, and to banish confusion and scandals out of it. And this order cannot be a thing indifferent, since the Apostles have given us laws about it.

It is not difficult to shew that most Christian societies are hardly to be known by these marks. But before we come to that, it is necessary to observe the different states through which the Church has passed from her infancy to this time.

II. If we consider the Church in her infancy, we must acknowledge, that the first ages of Christianity were very pure, in comparison of the following. But yet we must take heed, when we speak of the purity of the primitive Church, that we do not form to our selves too advantageous an idea of it, as if Christianity had been then in its utmost purity and perfection. The Church in her beginnings did consist of Jews and Heathens. These men embracing Christianity, did not so entirely strip themselves of their prejudices and customs, but that they brought with them into the Church, some of the notions of Judaism, and even of Gentilism. It is well known that this was the first occasion of those heresies which did stain the purity of the Christian doctrines, and morals, and the cause of several disorders, which happened in the very times of the Apostles. Besides, the Apostles and the first ministers of the Christian religion, were not able, by reason of the persecution and of the obstacles they met with, to regulate all things as they would have done, if the Church had been in peace. We need not therefore wonder if we find imperfections and defects apparent enough, in the state of the primitive Church. And it is of some importance, to observe this, not only that we may have true apprehensions concerning this matter, but that we may besides obviate an unhappy consequence, which might be drawn in favour of the present corruption, from what has been known in the first ages of Christianity. No doubt but there were disorders and scandals at that time; but we are to remember, that the Church was then made up of men, who for the most part were born, and had lived in Paganism, and whose life had been spent in the thickest darkness of ignorance and vice.

Yet for all that the Church was then more holy and pure than she has been since, or is at this day in most places. This is matter of fact which cannot reasonably be contested; for besides that it may be verified, from the testimony which the sacred, and some of the heathen authors bear to the innocency of the primitive Christians, and that it is probable, that men were kept in awe while the Apostles were alive in the time of miracles, besides all this I say, there are two considerations which prove, that corruption could not be then so great or so general, as it is now.

These considerations are founded upon two undeniable facts. 1. That the Church was then persecuted. And 2. That discipline was then exer-

cised in it. These were two powerful means to remove vices and scandals from the Church. We may easily imagine, that men who loved the world and their sins, would not have embraced Christianity at a time, when whosoever became a Christian, did by that very thing expose himself to persecution, torments and death. This did fright away the greatest numbers of wicked and impious persons. But if any of these entered into the Church, discipline for the most part drove them out, when they made themselves notorious by a scandalous life. It is easy to judge, that in such circumstances there was more piety at that time, than we observe now in the Church. The first Christians were sincere in their profession. Being instructed by the Apostles, and apostolical men, they placed the Christian religion chiefly in a good life, to which they did solemnly engage themselves by baptism. They were united among themselves; they governed themselves in matters of order and discipline by the precepts of the Apostles, as much as the persecution gave them leave; and they did with courage lay down their lives for the truth. Such was the Christianity of the first ages.

But the Church did not continue long in that state before this zeal of those primitive Christians began to cool. On the one hand persecution ceas'd, and on the other, the ancient discipline was slackned. These two fences being pluckt up, and the emperors turning Christians, the corruption of the world broke in upon the Church. Divers abuses crept into doctrine, discipline, worship and manners, till the Church fell at last, into such a dismal darkness of ignorance, superstition and vice, that Christianity seem'd almost quite extinct and destroyed. All those who had any true sense of religion, did lament this; they complained openly of it, and they longed for a good reformation. This was the state which the Church and Religion were in, for some centuries.

It did not please God that those times of ignorance should last for ever; that darkness began to be dispers'd in the last century. Then it was that learning and languages revived, and that the holy Scripture, which had been for a great while, a book unknown to the people, was rescu'd out of that obscurity, in which the barbarism of former ages had buried it. Men did perceive that divers errors had been introduced into religion; they discovered several abuses, they went about to redress them, and they succeeded so far, that in this respect, Christianity was restored to its purity. But that great work could not be finished; so that at this day the Church and religion, are not yet brought to that state of perfection which they might be in.

III. For to come now to the present state of religion, it is certain, First that many Christian Churches are still very near in the same darkness, men were in some ages ago. I shall say nothing of the sinking of Christianity in *Asia* and *Africa*; there is more knowledge in *Europe*; but yet in many places we may observe almost all those disorders, which prevailed in the times of the grossest ignorance. Nay, our age is more unhappy than the precedent, in that those abuses have been confirmed and authorized by laws, and are now supported by force. How many countries and Churches are there, where the people know almost nothing of the Gospel, where religion is reduced to childish and superstitious devotions and practices, where the most ridiculous things are believed,

lied, and the most shameful errors received; where the looseness of manners may almost be parallel'd with Heathenism, where the most execrable crimes are committed? In a word, where the ignorance both of the people and clergy are general, excepting only some few understanding men who are sensible of these disorders, but are restrain'd by fear from discovering their sentiments. From those places Corruption spreads to others, and it would not be difficult to shew by several instances that the cause of impiety, ignorance and vice, is to be found in those places which should be the fountains of piety and religion.

What I have now said, is not to be applied to all Churches; for some there are where religion is not so corrupted, and where a purer Christianity is professed. But yet let us enquire in the second place, whether there are any Christian societies, where nothing is wanting or to be desired in the state of the Church and religion, and where it would not be necessary to make some alterations and constitutions, in order to come nearer to perfection? This deserves to be examined with care, and without prepossession. We ought here to lay aside the spirit of a party, and ingenuously to acknowledge defects where they are. For else if every one is wedded to the society of which he is a member, nothing can ever be remedied. For supposing that there are defects, what remedy can be used, if we are all possessed with this prejudice, That all is perfect in our society? Is not this the way to canonize abuses, and to prevent the restoring of order?

And first, we ought not to wonder, if there should still be imperfections in the purest societies. It would be a kind of miracle, if there were none remaining. God does not always think fit to finish his work all at once; unless he had made use of inspired men, such as the Prophets or the Apostles were. It was impossible so to attain perfection, and to provide for every thing at first dash, that nothing more should be desired. Besides, circumstances are so much altered that it seems necessary, to change several things that were left in the last age. It is further to be considered, that tho' Christians did long for a good reformation, yet great difficulties were to be overcome to bring it about. Mens minds were not much enlighten'd, they were just creeping out of darkness, and a long custom had almost obliterated the true ideas of religion. Almost all those who were in civil or ecclesiastical authority, did obstinately defend the abuses which all good men thought it necessary to redress. Extream severity was used towards those who desired this reformation of the Church. All this did terrify a great many well-meaning persons, and was the cause, that in several places, those who had courage enough to condemn the abuses openly, were not able for want of means, to do all that the interest of religion required. They were fain in those places to yield something to the iniquity of the times, and to settle things as well as they could till a more favourable opportunity. Some Churches came nearer to perfection than others. But howsoever, if we would pass a right judgment upon the present state of the Church and religion, we ought to examine the thing in it self, and without partiality. Upon this I shall offer here some general considerations, and refer to the following chapter some heads, which will require an exact and particular discussion. I will first resume the four characters, which the Scripture

gives us of the Christian Church and religion ; which are, Truth, Holiness, Union and Order.

1. All Christian societies boast that they profess the Truth ; and that very thing is enough to shew that many of them are in error, since they do not agree among themselves about the articles to be believed. I will not enlarge on this head, because it would lead me into many particulars, and in some respect, into controversy. I shall only say, that if we did judge of what is to be believed in religion, by that which ought to be the principle and rule of faith among Christians, I mean, the holy Scripture, we would soon perceive on which side the truth lies. We might observe in that society which vaunts it self to be the purest of all and even which pretends to be infallible, and the only true Church exclusive of all others, absurd tenets and monstrous doctrines, equally repugnant to Scripture and reason, and we should be convinced, that the doctrine of those Churches which did separate from that society, is much more consonant to the Gospel.

2. We must have a very mean notion of Christianity, if we can believe that Holiness, which is the second character of the Church, is to be found among Christians at this time. The complaint of the last ages was, That religion wanted to be reformed in doctrine, worship, discipline and manners. It was reformed in part by the rejecting of those errors and abuses, which were crept into doctrine, worship and discipline ; but the reformation of manners is still behind. The people have not as yet been reformed in this regard, except perhaps in those times and places where they have been persecuted. As for the rest, they have scarce changed any thing besides their belief and worship ; this alone proves that the state of the Church is yet imperfect. Holiness is the scope of religion, it is the chief character of Christianity ; so that where holiness and purity of manners is not, religion must be very defective.

III. Union, Peace and Charity, as was said before, are one of the essential marks of the Disciples and Church of Christ. But where is this character to be found ? The Church at this day is rent into factions and parties. We cannot say, that there is but one Church ; we must say, that there are many religions and Churches. Christians divide not only upon lawful grounds, which make separation necessary, but about things of small consequence. Upon the least diversity of opinions, they pronounce *anathema* against one another, form different sects and communions. Even those Churches which might have a common belief and interest are not united. Those men who by their office should be the ministers of peace, are but too often the firebrands of division. I desire no other proof of this, but that zeal which most divines express about the disputes of religion, and that little disposition which is found among them, to sacrifice some opinions, or expressions, to the peace of the Church.

I do not condemn all disputes without distinction, for some are necessary. The Apostles command the rulers of the Church, to establish with care, pure doctrine, and to confute those who endeavour to corrupt it. They did themselves on many occasions dispute against false teachers.

To desert the truth when attacked, were to make but little account of it :

it: this would be a betraying the interest of piety, since piety is always founded upon truth. Disputes become necessary, when essential truths are to be defended. Neither would I reduce all profitable or lawful disputes, to those only which concern fundamentals. There are errors, which tho' not mortal, yet are dangerous, and so it is needful to oppose them: and there are truths, which tho' not fundamental, are yet of great use in religion, and may serve to confirm the principles of Christianity. It is fit that such truths should be discussed, provided this be done with moderation and honesty.

I only blame useless disputes, or these, which tho' they may have their use, yet are accompanied with those passions and disorders, which blind zeal inspires. Such controversies which are but too common, are extremely fatal to religion. We are not able to express what mischiefs they occasion in the Church, and how prejudicial they are to the progress of Christianity in general, and of piety in particular. It may seem at first, that because the people do not take cognizance of these contests, they should prove hurtful only to those learned men by whom alone they are managed; but yet the whole Church feels the ill effects of them.

1. By reason of these disputes, the people are destitute of edification, or at least they do not receive all the edification which is necessary. Church-men being only full of these, study and meditate upon nothing else; in their sermons they speak only of these matters, which take them up, and which seem capital to them. They have neither leisure nor inclination to mind things of another nature, and to set about the reforming the manners of Christians; or they do it but faintly and carelessly. Whilst a minister is very busy in his study or pulpit, about confuting an adversary whom he never saw, or an error which is unknown to his whole flock, his sheep are lost, his hearers remain possessed with mortal errors concerning morality, and engaged in the most vicious habits. This is the fruit of most disputes, they occasion the ruin, rather than the edification of the hearers.

2. Disputes keep up among Christians false zeal, hypocrisy and licentiousness. The people learn by the example of their teachers, to place their zeal, not in opposing vice, but in understanding controversy, in adhering to certain opinions, and in bearing a strong hatred to those who dissent from them. They judge that what makes the ordinary employment of divines, what they insist most upon, what kindles their zeal, and excites in them the most violent passions, must needs be the most important thing in religion.

3. Sometimes the people take part in the quarrels of their teachers, from whence proceed unavoidable animosities and divisions, which extinguish love, and the spirit of Christianity, and which create insuperable obstacles to the peace of the Church, and the re-union of Christians. Of this we have but too many instances.

4. Lastly, the little union which is in the Church, is one of the great causes of the small progress of Christianity. Christians instead of making their religion appear lovely and venerable, to *Jews* and *Infidels*, expose it to their contempt. Instead of endeavouring to propagate the Christian faith, and to destroy idolatry, they turn their own weapons

pens against themselves; they mind nothing but the promoting the interest of their peculiar sects, and they neglect that of Christianity in general. On the other hand, unbelievers, seeing that Christians are not agreed among themselves, take occasion from thence to question every thing, and they judge that there can be nothing but uncertainty and obscurity in a religion, where there is nothing but controversy and different opinions.

The want of Union is then, a most considerable imperfection in the present state of the Church. It were to be wished, that some remedy might be applied to so great an evil, and that those controversies which produce and cherish it, might be turned out of doors. The way to compass this, would be to endeavour in good earnest, the reforming of manners, and the restoring of order. This great and noble design will no sooner be pursued, but men will be ashamed of all these contentions, they will look upon them as trifling amusements, and find no relish in those disputes, which to say the truth, do only employ such persons as are conceited with vain learning, and narrow-spirited men, who are not capable of larger and higher views.

IV. If we examine the present state of the Church with relation to order there we must ingenuously confess, that great defects are to be found. In matters of order and discipline, Christians ought to regulate themselves, first by the laws which Christ and his apostles have set them; and then by the examples of the primitive Church and of the purest antiquity. It being evident, that what has been practised in the first ages of Christianity, and does besides agree with the rules and the spirit of the Gospel, should have a great regard paid to it, by all Christians. Now it cannot be denied, but that most Churches have considerably departed from that ancient order.

To prove this by some instances, it is certain in fact, that the ecclesiastical order and government, which obtains in many places, is not such as it ought to be. None can be ignorant of this, but those who are altogether unacquainted with antiquity, or who being full of prejudices find what they please in Scripture, and Church-history. Can it be said, that the elections of bishops or pastors, are Canonical, as they are managed in many places, and that the practice and order, established by the apostles and the primitive Christians, are observed every where? It is certain likewise, that all Churches are not furnished with a sufficient number of persons to perform divine-service, and to instruct and edify the people. When we look back upon the primitive Church, we find, that tho' it was poor and persecuted, yet it had its bishops, its priests, its catechists and its widows. At this time we see yet in several places, that one single town maintains a great number of Church-men, who indeed, for the most part, are very insignificant; but elsewhere it is quite otherwise, one single man does often perform all the ecclesiastical functions; nay, sometimes many Churches have but one pastor. This disorder as well as many others, proceeds partly from the want of necessary means and funds, to supply the occasions of all Churches. Here it might be proper to speak of the pastoral functions, and of the administration of discipline; but these two heads being important, I reserve what I have to say about them, for the two next chapters.

We ought here not to omit the want of union and correspondence among Churches. If they had more communication and intercourse one with another, great advantages would follow from thence. Right measures might be taken for the edification of the people, and for the redressing of abuses and scandals; that uniformity which is so necessary, both in worship, and in Church-government, and discipline, might be established; and that would contribute much to the honour and safety of religion in general. The Church would appear then like a well-ordered society, and like one body, of which all the parts should maintain a relation to, and a strict dependance upon one another. On the other hand, it is a great unhappiness, when Churches have little or no intercourse or communication one with another, so that every one orders its matters and customs, the form of its worship and government, within it self.

Thus in many respects, it would be easy to shew, that things are not altogether regulated in the Church, as they ought to be, with relation to order. Men are not sensible of these defects, because they are apt to judge of religious matters, by the practice of the present time, and by the customs of their respective countries; besides, that antiquity is but little known. And yet these defects contribute more than is commonly imagined, to the decay of piety and zeal. The want of order in any society, does most certainly bring confusion and licentiousness into it.

V. The worship of God being the end and the essence of religion, we cannot but inquire whether all things are well regulated with relation to that. To speak here only of the publick worship, it would be very necessary, that it should be performed every where in such a manner that the people might understand, the most essential parts of religion and divine worship, to be adoration, praise, and the invocation of God; and that the discharging of these duties is the end of publick assemblies. I remark this particularly, because in many places, devotion is placed only in the hearing of sermons. Churches are properly nothing else but auditories. People fancy that sermons are the chief thing they meet for, and that preaching is the principal function to be exercised by ministers in the Church. The prayers and the psalms, are looked upon only as preliminaries or circumstances to a sermon. This is a dangerous notion, because on the one hand it makes Christians neglect divine service, and on the other it renders religion contemptible, when sermons are not so edifying as they should be, which happens but too often. And therefore it would not perhaps be amiss, if as it is practised in several Churches, divine service was distinguished from sermons by some circumstances of times or persons; so that it might be one thing to celebrate divine service, and another, to hear sermons.

Several reflections might be offered here concerning the principal things relating to publick worship, such as forms of prayers, liturgies, the manner of praising God, and sacred hymns. It would be a question worth the examining, whether we ought in Christian Churches, to use only Psalms and Canticles, out of the old Testament, among which tho' some are most edifying and full of excellent expressions of piety; yet there are many which relate altogether to some particular passages of those times; or if they speak of Christ, it is only in a prophetic style, very obscure to the people. One would think that Christian hymns, which
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should be sung to the honour of God and Jesus Christ, chiefly to celebrate the wonders of our redemption, might be extraordinary useful, to nourish piety and to stir up devotion, as well as more agreeable to that, which the apostles prescribe, and which the primitive Christians practised in their assemblies. Would it not likewise be necessary to agree about giving the holy Sacrament to sick and dying persons; and to restore the more frequent use of the eucharist, according to the practice of the apostles and of the primitive Church? Fasting being enjoined by our Saviour, and established by the example of the apostles, and by the universal practice of the first Christians, and of all the Churches in the world for several ages; there is reason to wonder that in some places this duty should be almost out of date. For as to solemn fasts, which are celebrated from time to time, and seldom enough; those are not properly the fasts of which the Gospel speaks, and which were observed by the ancients: they are acts of publick humiliation, designed for times of calamity, or of extraordinary devotion, and the use of these ought not to be too frequent, because custom is apt to lessen their effect. But I mean those fasts which are helps to devotion and holiness, and means to mortify the body, and to dispose men to humiliation and repentance.

Uniformity in divine worship would be another very necessary establishment. It would shew the unity of faith, it would render religion venerable, and prevent those disorders and confusions, which are inevitable, when rites and practices quite different, nay, sometimes contrary to one another, are observed in several Churches.

Lastly, Care should be taken, that divine service might be performed every where, in an orderly grave and decent manner. The exterior of religion, has a greater influence than we imagine, upon the essence of it; besides that we have an express law, * which says, *That all things should be done decently and in order.* Indeed, pageantry and pomp, the great number of ceremonies, and whatever favours of superstition, ought to be avoided, as well as every thing which is contrary to the essence of evangelical worship: and it were better to fall into an excess of simplicity, than to clog religion with too many ceremonies. But yet under pretence of simplicity, we are not to run into confusion, and to neglect the externals of religion and divine service. If we should examine by this rule what is done in some Churches, with relation for instance, to the laws and forms of publick assemblies, to the celebration of divine worship and the sacraments, and to the persons who receive the communion, and who officiate; we might find there several things to be rectified. And it would be very useful to take this into consideration, for the want of gravity and decency, and a dry and careless performing of publick worship, render religion despicable, and make the people, who commonly judge of things by their outsides, to entertain a mean notion of divine service; which produces the contempt of religion, and by consequence ill manners.

VI. This contempt of religion is another fault, which ought not to be passed over in silence. It has been always the general sense of mankind, that religion is to be honoured and respected. The Heathen religions, as false as they were, did attract the veneration of the people; and the same may be seen at this day, among the several nations of infidels. Cer-

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tainly then the Christian religion deserves all the veneration and respect, which men are capable of. But it must be confessed, that in many places, it is falling of late, into a very great outward meanness. Men are accustoming themselves, to look with indifference, with haughtiness and scorn upon every thing which has any relation to the Church or to religion. This appears especially in the contempt, which is expressed towards the Clergy. Tho' the Scripture represents their office, as a most excellent and honourable employment; tho' it enjoyns Christians, to * honour, love and reverence those, who have the rule over them; yet the ecclesiastical order is generally but little honoured: and what is more surprizing, it is most depressed and abased, in those Churches which otherwise profess a purer doctrine and worship, than other Christian societies. I do not speak of all Churches in general; but whoever sees what is practised in many places, would be apt to think, that it was a part of the reformation of the Church, to strip the Clergy of all ecclesiastical authority, and of every thing that might render them venerable to the people, and to set them upon a low and contemptible foot. Their character is become abject, if not odious, and it becomes so more and more every day. That which makes it more despicable, is the poverty which many of them are forced to live in.

It is not difficult to find out the grounds of this contempt. It may be justly charged upon the Clergy themselves, their character is become vile, because they expose it; but it does not follow that men have a right to despise them; all that is to be done, is to endeavour the reclaiming of them. If under pretence of persons being unworthy, or of some abuse in offices, it was lawful to despise the professions themselves, would not even magistracy be often the vilest of all employments? May we not say also, That Church-men do not well maintain their character, because they are despised? An office which is slighted will never be well discharged; it is seldom that great worth is to be found in a post which is little honoured, or rather much despised.

The chief cause of this contempt was the manner in which things were ordered in the last Century. Persecution, poverty and the opposition of the higher powers, were at first great obstacles to the establishing of good order. Princes and great men did possess themselves of the revenues and authority of the Church. Nothing was left to Church-men, but the care of making sermons, and of administering the sacraments. They were turned into bare preachers; a character which for the most part is not very fit to create respect. I say nothing here of the discipline and government of the Church, because I am to speak of these more largely by and by.

This abasement of religion and of the ministry, is a visible cause of corruption. As soon as sacred things are disregarded, impiety must needs prevail; especially if the ministers of religion are despised, then religion can have no great force upon men's minds. The master cannot be honoured, when his servants are slighted. Men, who are without authority, cannot keep the people in their duty. Whatsoever comes from an abject person, who is neither beloved nor esteemed, can never be received with submission. The contempt of pastors, draws of neces-

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sity after it the contempt of divine service, of preaching, and of other sacred functions.

The poverty of Church-men, is not much less fatal to the Church, than the immense and excessive riches which did formerly corrupt the Clergy. For besides, that in those times and places in which the Christian religion is predominant, and professed by persons of quality. Poverty makes the ministers of religion contemptible to the people, and even to great men, it being certain that in those circumstances, it is necessary that ministers should live with some credit; besides this I say, that poverty disables them from exercising hospitality, from minding their function as they ought, and from discharging the duties of it with authority and zeal: it forces them to have recourse to several mean or unlawful methods to supply their necessities, and those of their families, and to do many things which do not comport with their employment. From thence proceeds likewise the want of able ministers. A great many persons who might have the necessary talents, qualifications and means, to be very useful in the Church, take a disgust at that profession, by the fear of contempt or poverty. As long as things are in this state, religion will be despised, and corruption will still be in vogue.

It is not so easy to remove this cause of corruption as it is to detect it. The re-establishing of order, seems to be a thing extremely difficult. To this end it would be requisite, that Princes and Church-men should act in conjunction. But there are few Christian princes who lay this to heart, and divines have quite other things in their thoughts; their great business is to maintain what is established, and to dispute with those who find fault with it. On the other hand, knowledge or resolution is wanting, and there is not enough of honesty or greatness of soul, to confess the truth. Few writers have the courage to speak so impartially, as the famous author of the history of the reformation in *England* has done, in the preface to his second volume. It is thought by many persons, that all would be ruined if the least alteration was made. Some of those defects which have been mentioned in this chapter, are now become inviolable customs and laws. Every body fancies true and pure Christianity to be that which obtains in his country, or in the society he lives in; and it is not so much as put to the question, whether or not some things should be altered. As long as Christians are possessed with these prejudices, we must not expect to see Christianity restored to an entire purity.

But yet it is to be hoped from the grace of God, and the force of truth, that Christians will open their eyes at last, and that divines will grow sensible of the necessity of minding these things. The main point here is to shake off all prejudice, and to consider things in their nature and original. Our Saviour has left us an excellent rule, when speaking of the abuses which had been so long received among the *Jews*, in reference to marriage, he tells us, **That from the beginning it was not so*. This maxim is of great use, and a lover of truth and virtue, should always have it before his eyes. It were to be wished, that we should still appeal to it, and that instead of governing our selves by the custom of the present time, we should run up to the ancient constitution, and compare what is done at this day, with that which has been, and ought to be done.

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* Matth. xix.

done. This would be the true way to reform abuses, and to draw near to perfection, and to bring things back into the natural and primitive channel.

C A U S E II.

The want of Discipline.

✠✠✠ T is not my design in this chapter to speak of Church discipline in general. I shall only insist upon that part of it, the end of which is to regulate the manners of Christians. And this is an important matter. The want of discipline is one of the greatest imperfections which have been observed in the present state of the Church, and one of the most evident and general causes of the corruption of Christians. But because some men have pretended, that discipline, such as I suppose it in this chapter, was a humane and arbitrary institution, the observation of which was not absolutely necessary, and might be dangerous; I think it proper to say something here, concerning the original and the necessity of the discipline of the Church.

I. It is certain in the first place, that all societies and bodies have a right to establish an order to regulate themselves by, and to provide for their security and preservation. When several men or people, unite to form a body, they have power to make laws and regulations, to which all the members of that body, may be tyed; and to exclude those from their communion, who will not submit to them. But these laws ought not to clash with other laws already established, nor with just and acknowledged rights. I think, this power which is granted to the meanest of societies, cannot be denied to the Church; and this proves already that the Church had a right to appoint a discipline to which, all her members should be subject, provided, that discipline did not on the one hand prejudice publick tranquillity, and the authority of the magistrates; nor any ways contradict on the other hand, the laws of the Gospel. Now as discipline is not liable to either of these inconveniences, but does rather perfectly agree with the welfare of civil society, and the spirit of the Christian religion, as will be proved hereafter; so the establishing of it, seems to be equally lawful and necessary.

II. But further, discipline is an order, which has God for its author. We find the institution of it in holy Scripture, and in the laws of Christ, and of his apostles; I shall recite the chief of these.

1. In St. *Matthew's* Gospel, chap. xviii. 15, 16, 17. we read these words, *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a Heathen man and a publican.* For the right understanding

derstanding of these words, we must know that our Saviour does not enact here a new law, and that an order like that which is here prescribed, was already observed among the *Jews*. But here, as upon many occasions, our Saviour did comply with the custom and practice of that nation, because he judged that those customs were good, and fit for his views and purposes. The first Christians did the same in matter of order and government, they did form the Christian Church upon the model of the *Jewish* assemblies, and upon the method which was there observed.

This is the key of the place I have now quoted. Our Saviour approves the *Jewish* practice and enjoins his disciples to observe the same order amongst them. It cannot be doubted but that this was his meaning. For he speaks to his disciples, and it appears by all the circumstances of this passage, and by the sequel of his discourse, that he is giving here a law, which concerns the Christian Church. It is true indeed, that he properly speaks of private difference, but what he says ought to be applied to all those disorders, which may happen in the Church, and particularly to scandals. And surely it is evident, that if we may proceed in the methods here enjoined, when the case is only concerning some differences between private men, we have much more right to do so with relation to publick sins, since they are cases which concern the whole Church, and that directly, and which do yet more properly belong to her cognisance, than the quarrels of private men. The meaning of Christ is then, that there must be an order in his Church for the removing of scandals. He supposes that the Church has a right to interpose upon those occasions, and he commands that those who shall refuse to hear the Church, be looked upon as if they were her members no longer, and that communication with them should be avoided: this is the import of these words, *Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and publican*.

2. The V. chapter of the first epistle to the *Corinthians*, ver. 2, 3, 4, decides this matter. St. Paul having been informed, that there was a man among the *Corinthians*, who lived in incest, he writes about it to that Church; and first he reproves them, *for not having cut off from their communion, the person who had committed so infamous an action*. In the next place he does himself excommunicate that man and deliver him up to satan. I know that perhaps this power of delivering up to satan belonged only to the apostles, and it is likely, that this was one of those extraordinary punishments, which they had a power to inflict upon prophane and rebellious persons. But as for excommunication, it is the common and ordinary right of the Church. This right, or rather this duty of the Church, is clearly asserted by the censure which the apostle addresses to the *Corinthians*, because *they had not taken that incestuous person from among them*, and because they had not observed the order he had given them before, not to suffer fornicators; * *I wrote unto you already not to company with fornicators*. He repeats this order in these words, which contain an express and general law against all scandalous sinners. † *I write it unto you again, not to keep company; if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat*. This is positive: and what the apostle adds, *Do not ye judge them that are within?* Is a confirmation that

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the Church has a right to do so, with relation to her members. Lastly he concludes with these words, * *Therefore put away from among your selves that wicked person*; for thus this verse is to be rendred, as the drift of the whole chapter, of which this is the conclusion, shews it evidently. I desire the force of this proof may be considered. It is not one single passage which I here produce, it is a whole chapter, it is a thread of arguments, and of express and reiterated injunctions. St. Paul describes those whom the Church ought not to suffer in her bosom, he appoints what is to be done in reference to them; which is, that they ought to be cut off from the body of Christians, and that their company is to be avoided. There cannot be a clear and express law, if this is not so.

3. There are some other places which have no ambiguity in them, 2 *Thess.* iii. 6. *We command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, this preface is remarkable; here is a law in due form, which the apostle is going to deliver, he proposes it by way of command, and he interposes the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, *We command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us*. This law is repeated, v. 14. *If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed*.

4. The 1st epistle to *Timothy*, affords us proofs unanswerable. The design of St. Paul in this epistle is to establish order and discipline in the Church. To this purpose he gives several precepts to *Timothy*; he instructs him exactly how pastors ought to proceed about information, censures, and the principal offices of Church-government. † *Rebuke not an elder but instruct him as a father, and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity.* ‡ *Against an elder (or a priest) receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses: them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear, I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.* I might add other places out of this epistle and the following, and out of that to *Titus*. ¶ Here is then again, a whole thread of discourse, prescribing the order according to which the Church is to be governed. Here are particular rules; and St. Paul uses an adjuration to oblige *Timothy* to observe them. These laws do not concern *Timothy* in particular, but St. Paul speaks here of the episcopal function, and of the duty of the pastors of the Church in general. We need but read the epistles to *Timothy*, and the beginning of that which he writes to *Titus*, to be satisfied that he intends that this order should be settled in all the churches.

Either there is nothing plain in Scripture, or it appears from all these places, that discipline is instituted of God; that the exercise of it is committed to pastors; that scandalous sinners are not to be tolerated in the Church; that private men ought to avoid their company; and that the governours of the Church are bound to proceed against them, by private and publick censures, and even by excommunication. If the passages I have cited do not prove all this, we may wrangle about every thing,

* Ver. 13.

† Chap. v.

‡ 1 Tim. v. 1, 2, 19, 20, 21. ¶ Tit. iii. 10.

thing, and all arguments from the sacred Writings may be eluded. The institution of the sacraments is not more exprefs or positive.

III. But tho' these places were not so positive and so clear as they are, yet we may be assured that this is their true meaning, because this is the sense in which the whole primitive Church understood them. The practice of the first ages, in conjunction with the laws of Christ and of his apostles amounts to a demonstration, which cannot be withstood; besides that we are to presume, that what has been practised from the foundation of the Church, and in the time of her purity, was settled by the apostles themselves, or by apostolical men, so that we ought as much as possibly to conform our selves to it. Now we know that discipline was observed in the primitive Church, notwithstanding the unhappiness of the times, and the persecution. This is unquestionable matter of fact, and therefore I shall take it for granted; and only say in short, that then all those who embraced Christianity were engaged by a solemn vow to renounce the vices of the age, and to lead a holy life; that those who were baptized were not suffered to live disorderly; that vicious persons were debarred the holy mysteries; that those who fell into great sins were excommunicated, as well as those who were contumacious and incorrigible; that such were not restor'd to the peace of the Church, but after various degrees of penance, and a publick acknowledgment of their faults; and that as to those who relapsed, they were received only at the hour of death. Very clear monuments of this practice are still extant, in the writings of the ancient doctors of the Church, as well as in the old canons and decrees of councils. This discipline must needs have been very severely observed, since St. *Ambrose* was not afraid to put it in practice against the emperor *Theodosius*.

I am not ignorant, that the primitive Church has varied about certain circumstances, that the penitents were treated sometimes with more and sometimes with less severity, and that the time of their penance was longer or shorter: but as to the main or the essence of discipline, it did always obtain in the primitive Church. And it was as little question'd then, whether discipline ought to be observed, as whether Christians should be baptized. This usage among the first Christians is at least a strong presumption in favour of discipline; but it being consonant besides to what we read in the New Testament, I do not see how there can remain any doubt about this matter.

IV. In the last place, the nature of discipline it self, proves the usefulness and necessity of it. All those who are not blinded with prejudice, must own, that discipline considered in it self, is altogether agreeable to the spirit of Christianity. 1. The honour of religion, and the promoting of Christ's kingdom, require order in the Church. Who does not see but that if the Church did tolerate scandalous persons and take them into her bosom, and make no difference between them and the faithful; she might justly be charged with all the disorders and scandals which are observed in the lives of bad Christians, and be looked upon by infidels, as a prophane society, where vice is permitted. But the exercise of discipline is an authentick disowning of vice, whereby the Church declares publicly that she does not allow of it.

2. Discipline is a most efficacious means to procure the conversion of sinners.

sinners. A man must be very much hardened, when the being removed from the communion of Christians, does not reclaim him. But when a scandalous person is suffered to live in the society of the faithful, when he is admitted to the same privileges with other members of the Church, this gives him an occasion to harden himself in sin, and to think that he is as good a Christian, and that he has as much right to salvation as others, which is a most dangerous, but withal a most common imagination.

3. Discipline is useful to the Church in general. Many who may otherwise have ill inclinations, are restrained by example, or shame, or fear, or even by conscience: good men are thereby doubly edified; since on the one hand this rigour confirms them in their duty, and that on the other hand, it makes reparation for the scandal which other men's sins give them.

From all this, I conclude, that discipline is a sacred, necessary and inviolable order. It cannot be said, that it is a humane, or arbitrary establishment, which may be altered, or which was only to continue for a time. An order which has its original in the express laws of Christ and his apostles, and which is appointed in Scripture as a general law; an order which has been observed in the primitive and apostolical Church; an order which is founded upon the very nature of the Church and religion, and which perfectly agrees with the spirit of the gospel; such an order certainly ought to be followed, as being of a necessary and indispensable obligation. I say it again, there is nothing more positive than this in the institution of the sacraments, discipline as well as the sacraments, is founded upon divine institution, and confirmed by the practice of the primitive Church; but in discipline there is one thing more than in the sacraments; for whereas the sacraments considered in themselves, and without respect to the divine institutions, are things indifferent and of no use; discipline in it self is just and useful, agreeable to the principles of Christianity as well as to plain reason and sense.

I have perhaps been too large upon this subject, but it was to be proved in the first place that discipline is necessary and instituted by God, since that is the ground I go upon in this whole Chapter.

II. This sacred order which had been settled in the beginning of Christianity was altered in process of time; and in this as in many other things Christians grew remiss. This was done by degrees; for good laws are not commonly abolished all at once, but through insensible changes. We learn from ecclesiastical history, that the slackning of discipline, is chiefly to be imputed to the taking away some publick penances. Those penances were converted into private confessions and penances. At first this alteration was only concerning some sins, which were not thought to deserve the utmost rigor of discipline; for as to great sins, such as murder and adultery, the ancient order was still in force. But at last, about the end of the IV Century, publick penances were abolished, first in the eastern, and some time after, in the western Churches. Instead of penances, private satisfactions were appointed, and then men unhappily began to be more concerned about the exterior of penance, than about what is spiritual in it, and fit to reclaim sinners. This was done at first by a kind of relaxation or indulgence; but that

which at the beginning was no more than an exception to the law, succeeded in the room of the law it self; and from thence sprang indulgences, satisfactions, penance, auricular confession, and many other practices, which are but corruptions of the ancient discipline. The Bishops on the other hand being distracted by temporal cares, after the conversion of the emperors to the Christian religion, began to neglect the essential parts of their function, and the conduct of their flocks. They were for humouring great men, who thought it hard to submit to the publick order. This is a short account, how the purity of the Christian religion was considerably adulterated in the point of discipline.

III. We are now to examine what the present state of the Church and religion is, with relation to discipline. All the abuses which came up in the room of the ancient discipline, do still subsist in most places, both in the Greek and in the Latin Church. The Canons and laws of the Church in the first Centuries have been abrogated by contrary laws and Canons. This is acknowledged by all men of learning and sincerity.

Let us see then whether this discipline is to be found any where else. There are many Churches in the last age, which did redress those abuses I now mentioned. But they ought to have gone further; as these abuses had succeeded in the room of apostolical discipline, so that too should have been restored, when these were taken away. But this was not done as it might have been wished. The disorder was removed, but order was not re-established; and it is not hard to apprehend how this came to pass.

It is no wonder that those abuses should be taken away; they were grown too intolerable; and they could not hold out against the learning of an age more knowing than the former were. Things were gone so far, that a turn and a revolution were necessary. It is very probable besides, that interest, pride, or ambition, did move great numbers of persons, who after all had not much piety, to set themselves against those many and great disorders, and to shake off a yoke under which the Christian world then groaned. But the same principles hindered them to submit to the yoke of Christ, and to bind themselves to the observation of evangelical discipline. We are to consider further, that the rules of discipline and penance had been disused for several hundred years, so that it was not easy to bring the world to submit to an order, of which the notion was lost. Policy had perhaps a large share likewise in this revolution. Princes and great men were easily determined, to pull down the excessive and usurped authority of the Clergy, but they did not all express the same zeal to restore to the Church, her lawful authority. In fine, among divines themselves, there were many who could not endure that discipline should be named, and who disputed and writ again those, who were for excluding scandalous persons from the holy sacrament, and for making use of excommunication and publick penances. In such circumstances the restoring of discipline was a hard task. It will not be improper to relate here concerning this matter, the opinions and the very words of those who were then employed about the reformation of the Church.

They

They looked upon discipline as a capital point to restore religion to its purity. They wrote * *That discipline was the best, nay the ONLY MEAN to keep the people in obedience; that the Church would never stand upon a firm and solid foundation, till discipline and excommunication were used to purge it, to give a stop to licentiousness, to banish vice, and to mend manners, and that whosoever did reject the lawful and moderate use of excommunication, shewed himself by that to be none of Christ's sheep.*

But we do likewise observe in their writings, that they had the ill fortune, of not being able to succeed in their design, they say openly, that they met on all hands with insuperable obstacles. † *That there was a company of ministers, who preached a Gospel without discipline, and who even questioned, whether the use of discipline was to be brought back into the Church: That some introduced licentiousness instead of Christian liberty, and thought that to reject the Pope was enough in order to be truly evangelical: That others observing the daily decay of Christianity, wished that the authority of the ministry might be restored, but that either they did not see the true way of bringing this about, or that if they saw it they despaired of success: That those who endeavoured to revive discipline were called tyrants, who would have usurped the liberty of the Church: That the people had shaken off all restraint, and were accustomed to licentiousness; as if by taking away the Pope's authority, the ministry had been destroyed, and the word of God and the sacraments had lost their efficacy. They have said, that the want of discipline did produce corruption. ‡ That because there were neither censures, nor corrections, nor penances,*

* *Calvini epist. & responsa. pag. 337. Disciplinam jure vocare possumus optimum, atque adeo unicum retinendæ obedientiæ vinculum. Et Paulò post. Itaque ecclesiæ nostras tum demum ritè sustulas arbitrabor, ubi isto nervo colligatæ fuerint. Et pag. 336. Cæterum non aliter consistet ecclesiæ incolumitas, quam si ad eam purgandam, frænandas libidines, tollenda flagitia, corrigendos perversos mores, vigeat excommunicatio, cujus moderatum usum quisquis recusat, præsertim admoinitus, se ex Christi ovibus non esse prodit.*

† *Capito in Calv. epist. p. 7. Peritiores rerum ecclesiasticarum, cernunt in causâ (ejectionis vestræ) fuisse totam cohortem ministrorum, evangelium docentium sine disciplinâ, imò ne scientium an disciplina sit in ecclesiâ revocanda. Otiosam enim functionem quidam tueri malunt, quam fructuosam: quidam licentiam pro Christi libertate induxerunt, quasi ab evangelio stent, qui jugum pontificum abjecerint. Aliqui verò id est, plerique omnes, animadvertentes rem Christi indes abire in pejus optarent quidem restitutam auctoritatem ministrorum, sed aut veram ejus reparandæ rationem ignorant, aut eam videntes desperant prorsus. Et Paulo post: auditis enim tyranni esse voluistis in liberam ecclesiâ voluistis novum pontificatum revocare, atque id genus contumeliarum, &c. Et Paulo post: nam frænum prorsus excussit multitudo, quæ assueta est & educata propemodum ad licentiam, quasi auctoritatem pontificiorum frangendo, vim verbi, sacramentorum, & totius evangelii evacua-remus, &c.*

‡ *Bucerus de animarum cura, p. 171. Et quis negare potest, cum omnium peccatorum, quam atrocia etiam illa sint, adeo nulla increpatio, castigatio aut penitentia est in ecclesiâ, hinc fieri ut juvenus & plebs eo leviores reddantur ad omne malum. Pudor & dedecus abeunt, homines efferuntur, redduntur (ut Paulus conqueritur) omnino impoenitentes; dedunt se libidini,*

penances, nor excommunications in the Church, even for the greatest crimes, the people and youth, did commit all manner of sins: That no person was restrained by shame, and that men became proud and altogether impenitent: That if the more odious sins, were expiated by penance and a reasonable severity, as St. Paul enjoyns, and as it was anciently practised, there would be less corruption and more zeal in the Church.

These were the sentiments of many doctors in the last age; they saw that the want of order and discipline, was going to bring libertinism into the Church. But yet their endeavours were not altogether useless. Some Churches drew considerably nearer to the apostolical institution, and there are some where discipline is not yet quite abolished: they still make use of some part of those means prescribed by the Gospel for the correction of manners: they do not admit all persons indifferently to the sacrament: they retain the use of publick penances, and even, in some places, of excommunication. But yet there are still many things wanting in the order and government of those Churches, as will appear by comparing their present practice with that of the primitive Church, and with the Canons of the ancient discipline. I do not pretend that in this matter the practice of the first Christians ought to be copied in every thing, but certainly in many points we ought to conform to it.

If we examine in what manner discipline is administered now a-days, we may observe several defects in it which are very considerable. For instance, we shall find Churches where excommunication is us'd about matters of no great importance; where that which is called excommunication, is rather a civil sentence or punishment, than an ecclesiastical censure, and where, not the pastors of the Church, but civil judges excommunicate. Another common fault is, that discipline is exercised only upon two or three sorts of sinners; fornicators and notorious blasphemers are indeed severely proceeded against, but a great many persons are suffered in the Church, who have nothing of Christianity in their deportment; such as drunkards, idle people, and several other sinners; whom the divine laws subject as much to the rigour of discipline, as adulterers. It would be altogether necessary to use discipline against those who enter into marriage only to conceal their shame, and yet in most Churches no satisfaction is demanded of such people: this is a matter of very great moment. There is no sufficient care taken, to be satisfy'd about the sincerity of sinners repentance, when they are to be restored to the peace of the Church. The apostolical precept about avoiding all familiar intercourse with scandalous sinners, is out of use. By all this we may see, that few Churches can boast of a pure discipline. But supposing that true discipline might be found in some places, yet how many

libidini, omnique vanitati; denique vita ista petulanti atque perdita fatiari nullo modo possunt.

Idem. p. 189. Si crassiora delicta severiore pœnitentia compensarentur, ut sanctus docet Apostolus, utque in sancto atque salutari usu fuit in ecclesiis veteribus bene constitutis: major inde apud omnes Dei Filios peccatorum fuga & detestatio, majorque vitæ Christianæ Zelus existeret, quam proh dolor! hodie apud nos deprehendimus. *Vide* & *Buceri epistolam ad Calvinum, in epistola Calvini.* pag. 370 & 371.

many defects do creep into the best constituted Churches, either through the stubbornness of sinners, the opposition of corrupt magistrates, or through the fault and carelessness of pastors? The best laws are good for nothing when they are not observed, so that whether those, who ought to exercise discipline for the giving a stop to scandals, do it not, or whether they have not the power to do it, it is still true that corruption proceeds from the want of discipline.

What must we say then of those Churches, where discipline is wholly unknown? where neither Church nor pastors have any authority to govern or inspect; where ministers dare not exclude any one from the sacrament, but admit all persons indifferently to the holy communion; which abuse would have been thought an unheard of profanation in the primitive Church; and where all publick penances are out of doors? I say nothing of excommunication; if any man should propose the restoring of it, his design would be look'd upon in many places as an unpardonable crime; and the strangest thing of all, is, that this want of discipline, is to be found in Churches, which acknowledge the Scripture for the rule of religion; and that there are divines, who instead of promoting the re-establishment of discipline, oppose it, and maintain that none are to be debarred from the sacrament; who cannot endure the very name of excommunication, and who pretend that where the magistrate punishes vice, there is no need of any other discipline. Those divines have not the greater number on their side, but their opinion prevails, because it favours policy and licentiousness.

We are to impute to this fatal remissness, the looseness and irregularity of the manners of Christians. I need not insist more upon this, for every one is sensible of it. Good order keeps men in duty, but where there is no order, vice must of necessity bear sway. What should restrain people? Excepting some general admonitions which are delivered in sermons, every person is left to himself, and lives as he thinks fit. Private men are not bound to give an account of their conduct to any body. Those who lead the most unchristian life, swearers, covetous, profane, lewd and intemperate persons, all sorts of people, live peaceably in the Church; they are reputed members of it, they are mingled among true Christians, they enjoy with them the same spiritual privileges, at least in all outward appearance, and they are admitted to the same sacraments. As long as things are in this state; we must not hope to see any abatement of corruption.

But that nothing may be omitted which may contribute to the clearing of this matter, it is necessary to answer some objections, and that which is alledged to excuse, or even to justify the taking away of the ancient discipline.

1. Against the restoring of discipline, some say, (which was objected in the last age) *That it is sufficient for the edification of the Church, that the Gospel should be preached in it; since that is the ordinary means which God has appointed to procure the conversion and the salvation of men.* The Gospel no doubt, is sufficient to teach us, all that is necessary to be known in religion, but it is not true, that God makes use only of the preaching of the Gospel, for the salvation of men: for he uses other means besides, as for instance, the sacraments; and those means, among which disci-

pline is to be reckoned, are prescribed by the Gospel it self; so that whoever submits to the Gospel, must likewise submit to that order we speak of. But further, the Gospel barely preached and known is not sufficient to salvation; nothing but the practice of the Gospel can save a man, and it is to little purpose to preach it, if the manners of Christians are not regulated, and if discipline is not used to that end, as a mean appointed of God. As to preaching it will be shewn in the next Chapter, That men ascribe more efficacy to it than it has, and that there is a mistake in the opinion which they commonly entertain of it.

2. Those who are for mystical devotion and piety will certainly say, *That discipline is not essential to religion, that it is a matter of external order, and that external things are useful only to carnal and imperfect Christians.* But I desire those who have such opinions, to speak more reverently of an order of which God is the author, and which the Apostles have so expressly recommended. It cannot be thought that the Apostles, who did abolish the Mosaical ceremonies, would at the same time have burdened the Church with needless laws, or that they would have interposed Christ's authority, for the observation of an order, which had not been necessary. They are desired to consider besides, That men have bodies as well as souls; that among a great multitude, there are many persons of a gross understanding, who cannot be restrained but by external laws; and that it is absurd to pretend, that men can be so spiritualized, as to need no longer outward aids to piety. But it is a gross error to look upon discipline, as an order purely external: for properly speaking it is an order altogether spiritual. Discipline does not touch either men's bodies or their estates, it uses only spiritual means, and it is efficacious no farther, than as it operates upon the heart and conscience.

3. But others will cast the objection I have now confuted into this form; they will say; *That in external things, among which discipline is to be ranked, Churches are at liberty to regulate themselves as they think good.* I grant that Churches have that liberty in indifferent things, which are not appointed by a divine authority, but this cannot be applied to the matter in hand. An establishment of divine institution cannot be reckoned among things indifferent. Do we look upon the sacraments as indifferent ceremonies, which we are not bound to observe, under pretence that they are but external rites and ordinances? Churches indeed have a liberty where there is no law, tho' still that liberty is to be wisely and discreetly used, for fear of confusion; but when God has settled an order, Churches are not at liberty to chuse another, to make new laws and to set up a new form of government. Such a liberty would be meer unruliness, and a criminal and sacrilegious presumption. This would be the way to multiply sects and religions infinitely.

4. The same answer may serve to refute such, who to justify the practice of those Churches, which do not observe the form of discipline used in the primitive Church, make a distinction between discipline and the manner of exercising it. They own *That discipline is necessary, and that there ought to be order in the Church; but they think that the way of exercising discipline may vary, according to time, place, and other circumstances.* This distinction may be received, when the case is only about some indifferent circumstances, but it is alledged without reason, when the

the question is concerning the substance or the essence of the thing it self. The disorder we complain of, is, That what is essential in discipline has been taken away, to substitute in lieu of it, another order, and to set up a new discipline of which the Apostles did not speak a word. Now that which is most essential in discipline, and which is not observed in most Churches, is this, That scandalous sinners are not to be suffered in the Church; and yet they are suffered: that they are to be warned and re-proved in private, and even in publick; this is seldom done, and in some places it is never done: that Christians ought to separate themselves from those who live disorderly; and this is not observed: that upon certain occasions, they are to be cut off from the body of the faithful; but pastors dare not so much as mention this: that the administration of discipline belongs to pastors; that they ought to preside, proceed and judge in all emergent cases; the Scripture gives them that right, and ascribes to them those offices; but they have been divested of them, new political bodies have been erected, in which there is but one Church-man, or two for form's sake, who often have neither vote nor authority in them. It is of divine right that sinners should give real proofs of their repentance, as for instance, by making restitution, by reconciliations, by acknowledging their fault; but this is not now required of them; nay, in some Churches it is not so much as enquired into. It is against all the laws of discipline, That none should be excluded from the holy communion, and yet in most places this is not regarded. Lastly, it is an apostolical order and practice, That sinners should be received to the peace of the Church, but 'tis after they have fitted themselves for it, by a sincere, and if the case requires, by a publick repentance; but now a-days those ancient rules of discipline are abolished.

After all this, can it be said that no alteration has happen'd in the essence of discipline, but only in the manner of it? Censures, suspensions, excommunication and the authority of pastors are taken away; the government appointed by the Scripture is overturned, another and quite different form is brought into the room of it; and yet people will say, that the question is not about the thing it self, but the manner! It is not sufficient to have any kind of order; the order which God has prescribed, and no other, ought to be observed. Some circumstances may be varied according to the necessities of Churches, but the substance of the thing it self is unalterable.

5. Many are of opinion, That the authority of the magistrate supplies the want of discipline, and that this way is by much preferable to the other. I confess, that the punishments inflicted by the magistrate upon scandalous livers are of great use; that magistrates who use their authority to suppress vice are very commendable, and that discipline is of much greater force, when it is supported by the authority of civil powers. But still the divine institution is to be preserved intire; it does neither belong to the magistrate, nor to any power to alter that which God has commanded, and to deprive the Church of her right. After all, the discipline of the magistrate is not the discipline of the Church; these are two distinct things and of a quite different nature. The magistrate uses external and corporal punishments; fines, imprisonments, banishments, force, &c. These methods are certainly useful, they may ter-

rify sinners, and in some respects keep them in awe and duty: but besides this, it is necessary to work upon the heart, and to bind the conscience by those methods which discipline uses, or else it is to be feared, that we shall only make hypocrites, and that men will abstain from evil more out of the fear of punishment, and upon temporal considerations than from motives of conscience.

Nay there are people, who if they had nothing to fear but a fine, or some days imprisonment, would gladly purchase at that rate the liberty of sinning, and fancy that provided, satisfaction be made to the magistrate, there is no more to be done for the clearing of their conscience. Besides, what a disorderly thing is it, that an offender who is prosecuted, fined, and imprisoned by the magistrate, should still be treated like a member of the Church, and admitted to the holy sacrament? The magistrate's authority is therefore a very efficacious mean to promote the glory of God, when it is joined with ecclesiastical discipline; but to think that civil laws are sufficient to regulate manners and to reclaim sinners, is a conceit almost as unreasonable, as it would be ridiculous, to proceed against robbers, or the other disturbers of the publick peace, only by spiritual punishments. Let no man then confound those things which God has set asunder.

6. It is farther said, *That these rules of discipline were only for a time, and that the times are altered.* But how can it be proved, that the laws of discipline were only made for a time? Is there any ground for this either in the Scripture, or in the nature of those laws? Are the laws of discipline like those of *Moses*, which do no longer bind us? Did the apostles make this distinction? Did *St. Paul* say upon this subject, as he did in another case, **I only give my judgement; I have no commandment of the Lord?* Does he not speak positively of the order according to which the Church is to be governed? Does he not command in the name of Jesus Christ? Does he not establish general laws and maxims for all the Churches? The apostles indeed appointed some rules, the observation of which is not necessary at this day, because those regulations were visibly founded upon particular reasons, which do no longer subsist, and therefore they are not proposed as general laws. But the reasons upon which discipline is founded, and which are taken from order and edification, from the honour of the Church, from the conversion of sinners, and from the nature of the Christian religion, those reasons do still subsist; and consequently the rules of discipline are sacred and inviolable, especially being delivered by way of command, and repeated in so many places. The Christian Church is to be diffused all the world over, sometimes she is persecuted, and sometimes she enjoys a calm; but whatever state she may be in, her nature does not alter. As there is but one God, one Church, one faith, one baptism; so there is to be but one order, at least as to essential things, and that order ought to be conformable to the laws of the apostles. Or else there will be, as in fact we see there are, as many different customs and disciplines, as there are kingdoms, states, provinces, nay towns and churches.

7. It is commonly objected, *That the zeal of the primitive Christians is extinct, that men are now very corrupt, and that it would be impossible to bring them*

them to a submission to the discipline of the Church. But that very thing that men are corrupt, proves the necessity of discipline. Order is never more necessary than when all is in confusion. * *St. Paul says, That the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient.* Discipline seems more necessary now, than it was in the first centuries; because then persecution kept corruption out of the Church, but when the Church is in peace, vices and scandals do infallibly multiply; and then it is, that good discipline is of excellent use.

But then it is said, *That it would be impossible to restore it, considering the disposition men are now in.* I confess this design would meet with opposition. Those who go about to restore order and suppress licentiousness, must still encounter difficulties; but yet this might be compassed, if princes and magistrates did not oppose it. If all the pastors did set about it, with a zeal accompanied with prudence and gentleness; if they did carefully instruct the people concerning the necessity of discipline; and if they did apply themselves to the civil powers with equal vigour and respect; they would carry the point at last. After all, the people are not in a worse disposition than the Heathens were in, before the apostles preached the Gospel to them; and there are Christian princes and magistrates who have piety and zeal. If then the Heathens of old could be brought under the discipline of Christ, in the sight of Heathen magistrates, should we despair of subjecting Christians to it? The instance of those Churches where discipline is observed, at least in part, and where excommunication and publick penances are in use, shews that there is no impossibility to succeed in this design. If the thing was impossible, God would never have commanded it.

8. In the last place, here is an objection which is commonly urged with great force, and which seems to have much weight in it. It is said, *That we have reason to fear that discipline would bring tyranny into the Church, and that those who govern it, would then assume too much authority.* Let us see whether this fear be well grounded.

And first, if we suppose this principle, That discipline is instituted of God, and that the apostles did commit it to the Church and her governours, which I think has been fully demonstrated, will it not be a kind of blasphemy, to say, That discipline is not to be suffered, lest pastors should become tyrants? Would not this reflect upon our Saviour and his apostles, as if they had established a dangerous order, which is apt to introduce tyranny? At this rate the apostles and the primitive Christians, did inroach upon the liberty of the people, and the authority of princes. Every Christian will abhor this consequence, and yet it results naturally from the opinion of those who reject discipline for fear of tyranny. Besides, supposing that Christ has instituted the order we speak of, can we thus argue against it, without shaking off his yoke? But men do not consider this. They fancy that every thing that is granted to the Church is granted to her governours, whereas they should remember that it is paid or yielded to Christ, whose right it is, and who cannot be deposed of it without sacrilege. Here we might retort the charge upon those who bring it. They talk of tyranny, and is it not an intolerable piece of tyranny,

tyranny, to oppose a divine law, and to debar the Church and her governors of the enjoyment of those rights, which God had given them?

But to come closer to the objection. Nothing can be feared, but one of these two inconveniences; either an empire over consciences, or some prejudice to the publick tranquillity, and to the authority of civil powers.

As to the first of these two inconveniences, there is no great reason to fear it; since the apostles, who so expressly recommend discipline to pastors, forbid them at the same time to assume a dominion over consciences. Provided discipline is used only in those cases, and in that manner which the Scripture appoints, and as it was practised by the first Christians*, nothing like this is to be feared from it. The discipline we speak of, does not meddle with points of faith, and so fear in this respect is groundless. As to those cases which concern manners, injustice can hardly be committed about them. The Church does not judge of secret and unknown facts. She only proceeds against notoriously scandalous and impenitent sinners, and she receives them, as soon as they express their repentance; And is there any thing of tyranny or danger in this? It is proper to observe here especially with reference to excommunication, which is thought the severest part of discipline, That when the Church proceeds to that extremity, she does not, properly speaking, act by way of authority, as if she had an absolute power to punish a sinner, and to cut him off from her body: but that sinner has already by his life cut himself off from the communion of Christ, he is no longer a member of the Church; so that the Church only declares that, which is done and determined already, tho' she should not declare it.

Neither is there any cause to fear that the publick peace should be disturbed by the exercise of discipline. On the contrary, society will be the better regulated for it. For discipline does not touch civil matters. Excommunication it self, does not hinder a man from being still a member of the common-wealth, nor that all the duties of justice and humanity should be discharged towards him.

As for the authority of civil powers, it is no ways injured by this, as evidently appears from the first Christians exercising discipline openly in the sight of the Heathen magistrates, without any opposition from them. Christ did not come into the world to erect a temporal kingdom, nor to draw men off from their submission to the authority of kings and magistrates. It is the principle of a true Christian, † *To render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's.* This principle will not deceive a man, and as long as we adhere to it, all things will be in order. Religion is so far from having any just umbrage to princes, that on the contrary it strengthens their authority. Submission to the higher powers is recommended by the apostles in the most earnest manner. The Christians of the first ages, who were very strict observers of discipline, distinguished themselves by their loyalty to princes. Nay it is observable, that their discipline which was so severe against sinners, was as strict against those who were wanting in the fidelity and respect due to superiours; witness that Canon, † which enjoins the deposition

* 1 Pet. v. 2. 2 Cor. i. 24.

† Mat. xxii. 21.

† Can. Apost. 84.

position of those bishops and clergy-men, who should offer an affront to the prince or his officers.

Whosoever will take the pains to weigh this matter, will acknowledge that discipline is a distinct thing from the civil power. Each of these has its bounds and limits. The Church does not touch the body nor civil matters, and it is not the magistrate's business, to regulate things relating to conscience and salvation. Indeed if magistrates imagine, that they have a right to govern the Church as they think fit, and that they hold the same rank in it, which they hold in the civil society, so that the ministers of religion are but their officers; discipline may seem to them to lessen their authority: but let those who entertain such thoughts, see how they can reconcile them with the Gospel, and with the nature of the Christian religion.

Notwithstanding all this it will be said, that Church-men have been known to usurp a dominion over consciences and over kings. It is true, Church-men have abused their authority, but because a thing has been abused, is it therefore to be abolished? Wise men will rather say, that things ought to be restored to their natural state and to their lawful use. Else the whole authority of kings and magistrates might be pulled down, and we might argue thus. Monarchical government is liable to great inconveniences, kings have been tyrants and usurpers, therefore there must be no more kings. Magistrates and judges have been unjust, covetous, cruel, and therefore no magistrates are to be endured. Would not this argument be extravagant and impious? And yet the like argument is used against discipline. In Church as well as in state government, there will be always some inconveniency to be feared; this evil is almost unavoidable, there being no form of government which the malice of men may not abuse: but those abuses are without comparison, a less evil than anarchy, which is the most dangerous state of all.

But let us clear the matter of fact, upon which the objection I am now confuting, is founded: it is supposed, that discipline did introduce tyranny; but on the contrary, it was upon the ruins of discipline, that tyranny was erected. This is known to all those, who have any knowledge of antiquity. When did Bishops and Clergy-men usurp that excessive authority, over men's estates, persons and consciences? It was when the observation of the ancient discipline was slackned, when discipline began to wear out of use, when sinners, and especially great men, were exempted for money; when that which should have been transacted by the whole Church, was referred only to the Clergy, and when publick confession was changed into a private one. It was by these means, and not by the due exercise of discipline, that Church-men made themselves masters of all.

What we ought to do then is this, first, to enquire what is of divine institution in discipline, and to restore that; in the next place to consider what the salvation of sinners and the honour of the Church require, and what was good and edifying in the practice of the primitive Church, in order to conform to it; and lastly, to provide by good laws, that no man may exceed the bounds of his calling; particularly, that in restoring to the Clergy their lawful authority, all just measures may be taken, to prevent their abusing it. If Christian princes are bound to preserve the

rights of the Church, they ought likewise to take care that nothing be done against their own authority, and to punish those who oppose it, or who disturb the civil society, whether ecclesiasticks or lay-men. This we are to treat of in another place.

Besides, when we speak for the re-establishment of discipline, we mean that pastors should be subjected to it as well as their flocks, and that if there is an order in the Church to regulate the manners of Christians, there should be one also to regulate the Clergy, and to lay strict obligations on them to discharge their duty in all its parts; and that according to the ancient practice, discipline ought to be more severe, against the ecclesiasticks who fail in their office, than against the people. But as we have complained in this chapter of the want of discipline, with relation to the Church in general, so we are going to shew in the next, that this want is neither less observable, nor less fatal, in those things, which concern the governours of the Church.

I conclude with saying, that in order to remedy the corruption of manners among Christians, it is absolutely necessary to restore the use of discipline. This is what has been and is still heartily wished for, by many persons of eminent learning and piety, and it is that which I desire all those who have a zeal for the glory of God, to take into their serious considerations.



C A U S E III.

The Defects of the Clergy.

IN searching after the causes of the decay of piety, we cannot but enquire, Whether corruption does not proceed from the pastors and governours of the Church? Pastors are appointed to oppose the progress of vice, and to be publick fountains of instruction, edification and good example; so that in truth their ministry is of most excellent use, when duly exercised. But when vice reigns, when scandals multiply; that general corruption is, if not a certain proof, at least a strong presumption, that there is some fault in pastors.

If we would be satisfied about this matter, we need but reflect upon the nature of their office, and upon their way of discharging it. This is what I design to enquire into in this chapter: in order to which, I shall consider, 1. What functions and duties are annexed to the office of pastors. And, 2. What qualifications are requisite in them to discharge it worthily.

I. There are two principal functions incumbent on pastors: Instruction and the government of the Church.

1. It would be needless to prove that the office of pastors obliges them to instruct the people and to preach the Gospel, for this is beyond all question. It will be fitter to observe, that the fruit of publick instructions deliver'd in sermons, depends upon two things; the matters treated of,
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and the way of proposing them; so that the faults committed in sermons are either in the things themselves, or in the manner of handling them.

I. The matters handled in sermons, are either of doctrine or morality. What has been said in the first chapter of this treatise, may serve to discover to us the defects in preaching, with relation to these two heads. Those who preach the Gospel do not sufficiently instruct the people, neither in the fundamental doctrines, nor in the duties of religion: and as catechising is properly designed for the explication of these truths and duties; I think ignorance and corruption chiefly proceed from this, That in most Churches, things are not well ordered, with reference to catechising. They are neither frequent enough, nor so proper for instruction as they should be. Besides, catechising is almost every where neglected, if not despised. The common notion is, that catechisms are only for children and for the meaner sort of people. The function of a catechist, which was anciently so considerable in the Church, is look'd upon now as a function of no great importance, and it is usually committed to persons of the least knowledge and experience.

These faults might easily be remedied. One of the most useful establishments in Churches, would be to encrease the number of catechisms, and to appoint them instead of the sermon. But to render them more useful and more frequented, it would be necessary to establish two sorts of them. In those of the first sort the elements of religion should be explained in an easy and familiar manner, for the benefit of children and of the less-knowing part of Christians. The other should be for those who have attained a higher degree of knowledge, and in these, matters that had been proposed but generally before, should be more fully and exactly handled. But if it be thought that an establishment of this nature, and that the multiplying of catechisms, might meet with difficulty and obstructions, it would be necessary at least, for the instruction of great numbers of persons, who never assist at those exercises, that ministers should be obliged to preach upon the same subjects, which are commonly treated in catechisms.

As for sermons, the church would reap more benefit from them, if preachers did always shew true judgment in the choice of the matters they handle. We must not think that all sorts of subjects are instructive alike, and that in order to preach the Gospel, it is enough to speak of God in a sermon, and to take a text out of Scripture. Every subject ought to be proposed and pressed according to its importance. To insist upon matters of lesser moment, whilst those which it most concerns Christians to be informed about are neglected, is to swerve from the true intendment of preaching. But because all preachers have not the capacity to make this choice, it would be fitting, that part of the matter of their discourses should be appointed and prescribed to them by a law. For when they are tyed to no rule, when they are at liberty to preach upon any subject, which they think fit to chuse, it happens that many instead of handling the most important things in religion, and of consulting the present state and necessities of their flocks, apply themselves to various subjects which are of no great edification.

Preachers for the most part, consult only their own inclination in the choice of their matter; and when they pitch upon a subject, it is rather
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because it pleases them, and because they apprehend a facility in treating it, than out of regard to the necessities of their congregations. Those who are fond of mysteries and allegories, apply their time and studies to the expounding of the prophecies, and to the unfolding of the types of the old Testament. Those who are given to disputing, fill their sermons with nothing else but controversy. And the same may be said of speculative divines, who are conversant in the fathers and history, they entertain the people with those things which are the ordinary subject of their meditations and studies. I do not mean, that such things ought never to be spoken of; they may sometimes be touched upon, provided, this be done judiciously: but they have a sorry notion of religion and preaching, who make those matters their main business, and fancy they have entirely fulfilled all the parts of the Gospel ministry, when they have preached upon types, or controversy.

What I have now said, may be applied to the choice of texts. * *All Scripture* indeed, as St. Paul says, is profitable for instruction; that divine book contains nothing but what is useful; but yet the various usefulness of the several parts of Scripture, is to be distinguished, and it must be owned that some places are more useful and instructive than others. Some difference is to be made between those books and chapters, which explain the doctrine of redemption, the design of Christ's coming into the world, or the duties of a Christian life; and those which serve only to acquaint us with the order of times, and to confirm the certainty of history. These last have their use, since the truth of history is one of the main proofs of the truth of religion; but those places are more useful which treat of what we are to believe or to do in order to salvation. It is of another sort of importance, to explain the Gospel, than to preach upon the book of *Joshua* or *Ruth*, or upon some places of the prophets. I am not ignorant that some have thought, that the Scripture is equally rich every where; that all doctrines may be drawn from all texts; that those chapters and verses which seem the most barren, and where there appears nothing extraordinary, contain mysteries and treasures which might exhaust even the meditations of angels; but this conceit is so absurd and repugnant to sense, that I do not think it worth my while to confute it.

Morals being so essential a part of religion, should be very particularly insisted upon by preachers, and yet few do it; so that morality, of all things is that which is the most superficially handled in the greatest part of sermons. This fault in preachers proceeds from several causes. Some have a prejudice against morality, and think it ought not to be insisted on.

Others who are conceited with vain learning, imagine that to preach morals, argues but an ordinary measure of parts, and little skill in divinity, and that it becomes them better to soar after high speculations, and to dive into the mysteries of faith and of the most sublime theology. This custom of insisting more upon doctrine than morals, proceeds also from another cause, which is, that in this last age divines were fain to be continually explaining and disputing; and so the same method has been followed ever since.

I am apt to think besides, that many divines neglect morality, because
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the treating of it is more difficult, than the explaining doctrinal matters. Let those supercilious and speculative divines say what they will, the right handling of morality is the hardest thing in preaching. It is easie to explain a text, or a point of doctrine; and a man must be very meanly gifted, if with the help of a commentary or a common-place, he is not able to do the feat, and to furnish out his hour. But to preach morals is quite another thing. I confess that there is a way of preaching morality which requires no great pains. If men content themselves with delivering moral sayings concerning vice and virtue, this may done without much labour. But when a preacher pursues true morality, when he is to master the hearts of men, to reform the manners of a whole congregation, to encounter the inclinations of his hearers, and to make them renounce their passions and prejudices; then it is that he meets with many and great difficulties; this is an inexhaustible spring of labour and meditation, and a task which few preachers care to take upon them.

In religion, doctrine should never be separated from morality, nor one of these preferred before the other. But yet it is necessary to insist more upon morality than upon doctrine, not only because the design of our whole religion is to make us good men, but also because morality cannot effectually be taught without being much dwelt upon. It is only by enlarging on matters, and entering into many particulars, that the two ends of morality are to be attained, which are instructing men in their duty, and persuading them to the practice of it.

Morality is of a vast extent, as may appear by considering how many duties are comprised under these three heads of Christian morals, piety, justice and temperance. Besides these duties which are common to all men, there are some particular ones relating to the different conditions, callings, ages, and states which men are in. And how many things are there to be considered upon all these heads? This is not all, for these duties vary infinitely, by reason of the diversity of circumstances. There are almost as many different dispositions as there are persons among a great multitude of men who are addicted to the same vice; there are hardly two who are vicious in the same degree and manner. It is therefore requisite that preachers should descend into particulars, and that they should so characterize duties, virtues and vices, that every one may know himself in the description.

And yet this relates only to bear instruction. Now if in the next place we intend to engage men to the practice of these duties, there new difficulties will arise, and no good success can be expected but from assiduous care and constant labour. There are in man's heart, so many different dispositions and motions, so many illusions and prejudices, so many windings and artifices, that a very particular application is required for us to insinuate our selves into it. When the truths and doctrines of religion are to be taught, things need not be so minutely handled, and there is no occasion to use such mighty endeavours; nay, the being very particular may be a fault. He that would instruct, so he is clear, should rather be short than prolix. The hearers do easily apprehend the truths which are proposed to them, and the most corrupt men are able to discern truth from error; a libertine will find who is in the right or in the wrong, in a dispute. But it is not so easie a thing to touch the heart, or

to conquer inveterate habits. What Tully says in his dialogue of the orator, deserves to be inserted here, it is this, * *Passions are not to be excited in a moment, as a proof does presently persuade so soon as it is proposed. A proof is confirmed by reasons, and reasons clearly set out, make an impression immediately; but when we intend to raise the passions, the success does not so much depend upon the conviction, as upon the perturbation of the mind; Oratory cannot have its effects then, without prolixity, variety, copiousness and vehemence of discourse. Those therefore who speak briefly and calmly, are fit to instruct, but not to move.*

From these reflections it appears, that the method of those preachers, who are large upon the explication of doctrines, and succinct upon morals is, directly contrary to the true way of preaching, and that those do very ill understand what morality is, who either despise it, or look upon it, as the easiest thing in preaching.

We may likewise apprehend from what has been said, what are the most ordinary faults of preachers when they treat of morals. I shall observe three of them. Their morality is *too general*, it is *defective*, and it is sometimes *false*.

1. Many preachers are *too general* in handling morality. This is the head which is the most slightly touched upon. They spend the greater part of their sermons in explaining the sense of a text, they sift all the words, and examine all the circumstances of it with the utmost nicety. In a word, they drain the subject. But when they come to the application, they content themselves with two or three general uses; they address to their auditory some loose exhortations to a good life; even when they are to speak upon a moral subject, they confine themselves for the most part to general considerations: nothing is particularized, or treated with the necessary exactness. Now generalities are of no great use in matters of morality. To say in general terms, that men ought to be good, and to declaim against sensuality, or covetousness, is that which will convince no man. It is not bawling or sending sinners to hell, that is likely to win upon them. It should be distinctly shewn, what it is to be a good man; virtues and vices should be characterized, and their various kinds and degrees observed; particular rules ought to be given to the hearers, they ought to be furnished with necessary motives and directions; we are to confute their mistakes, and to obviate their objections and excuses. Till we come to this, preaching will be attended with little success.

2. The moral discourses of preachers are often *defective*; for besides that they handle morality in a superficial manner, there are some essential articles which they seldom or never speak of, among which we may reckon

* *Cicero de orat. lib. 2. non enim sicut argumentum, simul atque positum est, arripitur, alterumque & tertium poscitur; ita misericordiam aut invidiam, aut iracundiam simulatque intuleris, possis commovere. Argumentum, enim ipsa ratione confirmat, quæ simul atque emissæ est adhærescit. Illud autem genus orationis, non cognitionem judicis, sed perturbationem requirit, quam consequi nisi multa, & varia, & copiosa, & simili contentione orationis nemo potest. Quare qui aut breviter, aut summissè dicunt, docere judicem possunt, commovere non possunt.*

reckon restitution. The moralities of preachers turn almost together upon four or five heads, tack only some of the grosser sins, such as blasphemies, uncleanness, and such other vices. But this is to confine themselves, to the first elements of piety and morality. True morality goes a great deal further. Piety does not only banish the more heinous sins; it does besides fill the heart with a sincere love of virtue; it softens and rectifies the inclinations, it produces in a man, gentleness, humility, patience, resignation to the will of God, divine love, tranquillity under all events, charity towards other men, and a zeal for justice and goodness. This is the main of piety, this is what should be incessantly laid before Christians, to make them apprehend the extent and perfection of the morals of the gospel.

3. The moral discourses of preachers are *false*. 1. When they are too remiss; 2. When they are too severe, and 3. When they are contradictory. Their morality is too remiss, when it does not propose all the duties of holiness in their full latitude, when it flatters sinners, or does not sufficiently awaken their consciences. It is over-severe, when it raises groundless scruples in men's minds; when it represents as a sin, that which is not really so; or when it makes a necessary duty of any thing, which may be omitted without danger. Preachers likewise over-do things, in the pictures they draw for virtues and vices. If they are to speak of covetousness or forbidden pleasure, they strive to make of these the most hideous pictures they can; they paint out a covetous or a voluptuous man as a monster, they affect the most lively descriptions and figures, and their sermons are loaded with every thing that their collections afford upon the subject. But all this is only noise, and so much breath spent in vain. Such morality does not hinder the voluptuous or covetous man, from pursuing his ordinary course, it is rather apt to harden him in it; because as he does not see himself in the dismal picture which is made of these vices, so he thinks himself free from them, or at least not very guilty of them. Lastly, preachers do sometimes deliver contradictory morals. Having not sufficiently meditated upon the principles of religion and morality, they run themselves into contradictions; they say one thing in one place, and the contrary in another; they lay down principles which destroy the consequences they will draw from them, or they draw consequences which over-turn the principles they have laid down.

II. The faults I have hitherto observed, relate to the matter of preaching; those which are committed in the manner are not indeed so essential, but yet they are important enough to deserve some notice here.

It is to no purpose to preach pure doctrine and good morality, if this is not done in a proper way to instruct and to persuade. The most important truths lose their force in the mouth of a man, who either cannot speak of them in a suitable manner, or expresses them obscurely. And so likewise the way of exhorting and censuring, is often the reason why exhortations and censures prove ineffectual. Either they are not accurate or convincing enough, or they are cold and languid, or they are not seasoned with prudence and mildness; but are a kind of fire, which has more of anger and indiscretion, than of true zeal in it, and which offends more, than it affects or persuades the hearers.

Divers considerations might be here insisted upon concerning the way of preaching; but I think what is most material to be said on this subject, may be reduced to this one thing; that the manner of preaching is not simple and natural enough. The way of preaching should correspond with the design of religion and sermons, which is to inform the understanding, and to move the heart. This end is attained by those, who think and speak clearly and naturally, when every thing, in reasoning, method, stile, and exterior, is regulated by nature and true sense. But it has been observed long ago, that preachers are particularly apt to fail in this respect. False and confused ideas, un-accurate reasonings, strained or impertinent reflections, forced and unnatural expressions, are almost become the property of that order of men. One would think that most preachers take pains not to follow nature; as if a man was no sooner in the pulpit, but he must speak no longer like the rest of mankind, as if the part of a preacher was something like that of a prophet among the Jews. Nay this is passed into a proverb; so that odd ways and injudicious reflections, are called ways and reflections of preachers.

1. If nature was consulted, and if men did consider the end of preaching, they would see in the first place, that the method which is followed by many, in the explaining of Scripture and the composing of sermons, had need be reformed in some respects, and that it does not agree so well as it should, with the simplicity of the Gospel. For instance, why should time be wasted in exordiums and preliminaries? Why should a preacher dwell upon the explaining of words and phrases which every body understands, or upon pressing the least circumstances of a text? What signify those needless digressions, those objections which no body thinks of, those citations and stories, which in some countries fill up sermons, and so many other small niceties, which clog these kind of discourses. All this might be let alone, without prejudice to publick edification.

2. It is for want of consulting nature, that preachers are obscure. Sometimes the obscurity of their sermons arises from the things they speak of, when they are obscure in themselves. But at other times this obscurity proceeds, from their not having distinct ideas of the subjects they treat. Their stile and language do also contribute much to make them dark. Some use scholastical words and terms of art, which are arabick to the people; others delight in figurative and improper expressions, which present false ideas to the mind. Now they might avoid all these faults, if they did not forsake nature and simplicity. But some preachers affect the saying new and singular things, and they would be sorry if they had made use of simple and common ideas, reasonings and expressions, which yet are the clearest and the best.

3. False eloquence proceeds from the same source. Preachers commonly aim at eloquence; and it is to compass this end, that they take such pains in the composing and delivery of their sermons, and that they affect a style, a pronunciation and gestures, which become a stage-player or a prophane orator, much better than a minister of Jesus Christ. I might remark here, that this affectation of eloquence, is not very suitable to the spirit of piety, which should animate a Clergy-man. But not to moralize upon this, I shall observe that these preachers miss their mark, by making so much work, and by using such mighty endeavours

to hit it. True eloquence, the force of a discourse, an elevated and sublime style, consists in following nature. Nothing admits of greater vehemence and loftiness than the subjects which religion affords. Let a preacher be well acquainted with these, let him go about them in an easy and natural way, but especially let him feel and be thoroughly affected with them; and he needs not trouble himself about any other helps; he will despise all the false sparkling, and the vain ornaments of insipid and boyish eloquence, and he will not be capable of speaking like a grammar scholar, or a declaimer. All that which costs preachers so much labour, flights of wit, refined thoughts, ingenious descriptions, polite language, all that I say, is very mean. By such things they may raise at most a vain admiration, but they will never instruct nor convert a sinner. One dram of good sense is worth more than all that.

4. Some preachers run into another extreme, their way of preaching is neglected and coarse; they think to justify themselves, by saying, that they are simple and popular, that they speak naturally and without art. But they swerve as much from nature as the others, and as it is a fault to be affected, it is another to be flat, homely and barbarous: it is as much against nature, to use ridiculous and offensive gestures, tones and ways, or to stand without motion or action in the pulpit, as it is to play the declaimer there.

I might add other considerations about the manner in which the Gospel ought to be preached, but I should engage too far in this subject. We may judge now whether ignorance and corruption, do not proceed from the defects of those who preach the Gospel. The people have scarce any notion of religion, but what they gather from sermons. If sermons then are not instructive and edifying, either because all the truths and duties of Christianity are not proposed in them, or because they are ill proposed, the people must of necessity be very much in the dark.

I shall say one word more concerning the instruction which pastors owe their flocks. Publick instruction, how useful soever they may be, are not sufficient. The edification of the Church requires, that upon certain occasions, pastors should likewise instruct in private. This necessity of private instructions, may be proved by the following arguments. 1. If there be none but publick instructions, and exhortations, what instruction can a great many persons receive, who either do not frequent, or do not hearken to sermons? What will become of those who hear, but do not understand what they hear, or who understand it, but forget it presently, and so do not practise it? 2. All things cannot be said in sermons, how particular soever they may be; yet still many things remain untouched. Nay, there are matters which a preacher cannot bring into the pulpit. Can he enumerate all the cases in which injustice may be committed, or restitution is to be made? Can he specify those infinite frauds which are practised in mens several callings and trades? can all cases of conscience, about which the hearers want instruction, be decided in a sermon? Dare we insist in the pulpit upon the head of impurity? And may not this be one of the reasons why that sin is so common? If Christians then have no opportunity to be instructed in private about these articles, they will be ignorant with relation to them as long as they live. 3. In order to good instruction it is necessary, that the teacher and

those who are taught, should communicate their thoughts to one another. For the hearers may have their doubts; they may sometimes be at a stand, by reason of something which they do not know, or of some difficulty which starts up in their minds. Some have been hearing sermons for these twenty or thirty years, who yet entertain scruples and doubts concerning the fundamentals of religion. If such persons receive no other information, they will not be moved by any thing, that is said in publick, but they will retain their scruples to their dying day.

All this shews that private instruction is a part of the pastoral care: and the practice of it would certainly be very useful, not only for the edification of the people, but also to keep the Clergy from growing amiss, and to make them more diligent in the discharge of their office. For when they have nothing to do but to preach sermons, it is much to be feared; considering mens propension to laziness, that they will become negligent. It is therefore an unhappiness, that private instructions should be almost out of use, and that there should be so little communication about religious matters, between the people and their ministers. We have no instruction remaining, but what is delivered from the pulpit; and that would not be sufficient, even tho' sermons were such as they ought to be. But when private instructions are wanting, and when sermons are defective besides, it is impossible but that the greatest part of Christians, being destitute of necessary informations and aids, must live in corruption.

II. The second function of pastors, which should perhaps be named in the first place, is the conduct and government of the Church. upon this I observe. First, That those do not understand the nature of the pastoral office, who confine it to preaching. There was a time when preaching was quite laid aside, and when Church-men did only perform divine service. But now a-days in many Churches, the whole ministry is placed in the business of sermons, and the ecclesiasticks are looked upon, not as pastors, but preachers; as men whose office it is upon certain days and hours, to speak in the Church. Preaching is without dispute, a part of the office of pastors. But it is a great mistake to think, that God has appointed them only to preach; for they are entrusted besides with the government of the Church, and this part of their employment is at least, as essential as preaching. It is remarkable, that the scripture speaks of pastors in divers places, and that the titles it gives them, and the functions it ascribes to them, relate chiefly to the government of the Church. This is implied in the name of bishops, priests or elders, guides and pastors. St. Paul has writ concerning the duties of the ministry, if we examine what he says of the functions of that charge, and of the qualifications of those who are to be admitted into it; we shall find that he is much larger upon the government of the Church, than upon preaching. To this purpose, the epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus* may be consulted.

But further, all Church-men are not called to preaching. The apostles distinguish their functions; they tell us, * *That all are not doctors, that all do not interpret, that all do not administer the word, that all do not teach and exhort; that some are appointed to instruct, to exhort, and to expound the scriptures, others*

* See 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6, 28, 29, 30. Acts vi. 2, &c. Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8. 1 Tim. v. 17.

others to govern, and others to do works of charity. 'Tho' we should suppose that there is nothing in this, which relates to the extraordinary gifts conferred upon the first ministers of the Gospel, and to the order which was then observed; yet it is plain that these places are to be understood, of the gifts and functions of ordinary pastors.

This is confirmed by the practice of the primitive Church. The principal and the most general function of pastors then, was the inspection and governing of the Church. Preaching was not neglected, but all Church-men were not preachers, this province was committed to those who were fit for it. Would to God this distinction was still observed! The Church would be better governed, and the Gospel better preached than it is. There are talents requisite to preach the Gospel, which every body has not, and others are necessary for the conduct of the Church; and all these gifts seldom meet in one person. If then no regard is had to different gifts and functions if without distinction every thing is committed to one person, it is visible that the Church will be ill edified. Besides that I have shewed in the first chapter of this second part, that it is a dangerous notion, which restrains the ministry to preaching. But to remove this inconveniency it would be necessary, that a competent number of ecclesiasticks should be had in every Church.

I. To express my thoughts more particularly concerning the office of pastors, with relation to the government of the Church; I observe, first, That discipline is worn out of use, as I have shewn at large in a chapter upon that subject. It is true, that this defect is not wholly to be imputed to pastors. If they do not govern the Church by a good discipline, it is because they have been deprived of their authority. Many of them are sensible of this disorder and lament it: but what can they do when they exercise their ministry in places where their hands are tyed up, where they dare not refuse the sacrament to an adulterer, and where they should bring themselves into great troubles, and perhaps be deposed, if they took upon them, to observe the apostolical discipline? They are forced then to confine themselves to preaching, which when it is not backed with discipline, can never have that effect which it would produce in conjunction with it. There was nothing left to pastors but what could not be taken from them without abolishing the whole ministry: all that remains is only preaching and administering the sacraments. And yet for all that, a great part of the Clergy, may justly be charged with that fault we complain of, and with that corruption of the people which is a consequence of it: (since there are those among them, who oppose the restoration of discipline, and look upon it as an indifferent order; and others who are placed in Churches, where some form of discipline is left, render the exercise of it ineffectual, either through imprudence and excessive severity, or through a shameful remissness, and a cowardly indulgence.

2. Besides the publick, there is a private discipline, which consist in inspecting the lives of private persons, in visiting families, in exhortations, warnings, reconciliations, and in all those other cares, which a pastor ought to take of those over whom he is constituted. For neither general exhortations, nor publick discipline can answer all the occasions of the Church. There are certain disorders, which pastors neither can, nor ought to redress openly, and which yet ought to be remedied by them. In such

cases private admonitions are to be used. The concern of mens salvation requires this, and it becomes the pastoral carefulness, to seek the straying sheep, and not to let the wicked perish for want of warning. But these are cares to which some pastors do not so much as think themselves obliged; they content themselves with admonishing sinners from the pulpit. There is very little intercourse between pastors and those who are committed to their charge. Private persons live without being accountable for their conduct to any body; and except they commit the greatest enormities, they fancy no man has a right to enquire into their actions. Nothing reaches them but sermons, and these they mind as much, and as little as they please; this must needs produce licentiousness.

The visiting of sick and dying persons, is one of the most important functions of the office of pastors; but when it is not performed with exactness and zeal, it contributes as much as can be imagined to the keeping up of security. Every one must needs see, of what consequence this part of the ministry is, if he considers that it is at the end of life that we are to be judged, and that our eternal state depends upon the condition we dye in: and if we reflect at the same time upon what the scripture tells us, * *that we shall receive in the world to come, according to the good or evil we have done in this*; we will easily apprehend, what ministers ought to do, when they visit sick and dying persons. Their chief business should be, to discover what state those persons are in, that they may suit their exhortations to it. Then is it that they ought to speak to the conscience of sinners, and to persuade them by all possible means, to examine their lives, and the disposition they are in, in reference to their salvation. And when a minister meets, as it happens too frequently, with sick persons, who are engaged and hardened in vicious habits, or whose repentance may justly be questioned; it is then that he had need use all his skill and prudence, all his zeal and endeavours, to save souls which are in so great danger. Upon such occasions both the minister and the sick person, have need of time, leisure and freedom, and a hasty discourse of prayer signifies nothing.

And now we may judge whether a man discharges the office of a pastor, who only in general exhorts dying persons to acknowledge themselves miserable sinners, and backs those exhortations with assurances of the divine mercy through Jesus Christ, or who only reads some forms of exhortations and prayers, as the custom is in some places. This method is fitter to lay asleep than to awaken a guilty conscience; and this way of exercising the ministry, overturns the doctrine of a future judgment, and most of the principles of religion. A minister speaks to a sick person of the pardon of his sins, he exhorts him to leave the world with joy, he discourses to him of the happiness of another life, and fills him with the most comfortable hopes; and perhaps this sick person is a man loaded with guilt, a wretch who has lived like an Atheist, who has committed divers sins for which he has made no satisfaction, who has not practised restitution, who never knew his religion, and who is actually impenitent. Such a man ought to tremble, and yet such consolations from the mouth of his pastor, make him think that he dies in a state of grace.

But if this way of visiting and comforting the sick, betrays them into

security,

security, it has the same effect upon the standers by, who when they hear the consolations which are administered to persons, whom every body knows not to have led very Christian lives; make a tacit inference, that the same things will be said to them, and that their death will be happy, whatsoever their past life may have been.

Besides the want of ability and zeal, there are two things which hinder pastors from discharging towards dying people, the important duties to which their office obliges them: The one is, that commonly pastors visit the sick only in cases of extremity; and the other is, that they have too little communication with their flocks, and no sufficient knowledge of the lives and conduct of private persons; so that being ignorant of the state and occasions of the sick, they cannot at the approach of death, administer to them wholesom counsels and exhortations.

These I think are the most essential defects of pastors, both in the instruction, and in the government of the Church.

Having thus far treated of the duties of the pastoral charge; I come now to consider those qualifications, with which pastors ought to be endued. And these are of two sorts: first, The endowments of the mind, by which I mean those abilities and talents, which are necessary for the instruction and conduct of the Church; and secondly, the qualifications of the heart, by which I mean probity and integrity of life.

I. No man questions but that abilities and talents are requisite in those who exercise the office of ministers in the Church. First, Some are necessary for preaching the Gospel, and for the right expounding of scripture. Preaching requires a greater extent of knowledge, than is commonly imagined. To preach well, a man should be well skilled in languages, history, divinity and morality. He should be acquainted with man's heart, he should be of a sagacious and discerning spirit, and above all things he should have a true and exact judgment; to say nothing of some other qualifications, which are necessary to every man who speaks in publick.

Neither are these endowments sufficient; particular talents are requisite for the conduct of the Church. To guide a flock and to be accountable for the salvation of a great number of souls, is no small charge, nor an employment which every body is fit for. A man to whom the government of a Church is committed, in whose hands the exercise of discipline is lodged, whose duty it is both to exhort and reprove both in publick and in private, and who ought to supply all the occasions of a flock, and to be provided for all emergencies; such a man has need of a great deal of knowledge, zeal and firmness, as well as of much wisdom and prudence, moderation and charity. That all these qualifications are requisite in a pastor, is evident from the nature of his office; and *St. Paul* teaches it, when he appoints that none shall be admitted to this employment, but those in whom they are to be found.

What effect then can the ministry have, when it is exercised by men who want these qualifications, or perhaps have the quite contrary; who are ignorant, who know nothing in matters of discipline and morality, who can give no account of a great many things contained in Scripture, and whose whole learning is confined to a Commentary; who can neither reason true, nor speak clearly; who are either indiscreet, negligent

or remiss in the exercise of their office? But I do not wonder that these qualifications are wanting in most Clergy-men. Vast numbers who were not cut out for this employment, aspire to it. And besides these, abilities are not to be acquired without labour and application. Now many Church-men are shamefully idle; they look upon their profession as a mean to live easy, so that declining the duties of their place, they content themselves with the incomes of it. Those who are to preach are more employed; but their sermons are almost their whole business: their work consists for the most part in copying some Commentaries, and as soon as they have acquired a little habit and facility of speaking in publick, almost all of them give over study and labour. We may almost make the same judgment of those ecclesiasticks, who tho' they study hard, yet do not direct their studies to the edification of the Church. The learning and the studies of divines, I speak of those chiefly who have cure of souls, is often vain, and of no use for the edifying of their flocks. They apply themselves to things suitable to their inclinations, and their studies are but their amusement, or their diversion. Now he who neglects the duties of his calling, and pursues other employments, differs very little from him who does nothing at all.

II. Probity is, not less necessary to pastors, than knowledge and ability; and this probity ought to have three degrees.

1. The first is, That pastors give no ill example, and that their life be blameless. This is the first qualification which *St. Paul* requires in those who aspire to this holy office. * *Let a Bishop, says he, be blameless; that is, his manners ought to be such that he may not justly be charged with any vice, or give any scandal. Then the Apostle specifies the faults from which a pastor ought to be free; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient; not a brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity, and who is not lifted up with pride and self-conceit.*

Every body knows how much might be said, if the conduct of Clergy-men was to be examined upon all these heads. Are not many of them scandalous by the irregularity of their manners? How gross and shameful soever the sin of drunkenness may be, yet do they never commit it, and is not this vice very common among them in some Countries? Are not some of them furious and passionate in their actions and words? Do we never observe in them a fordid covetousness, and an excessive study of self-interest? Are their families always well ordered? Are not positiveness and pride very remarkable in some persons of that profession? Is there not often just cause to complain, that they are implacable in their hatred, that they have little charity; and that there is less prepossession, and more of gentleness and true zeal to be found among lay-men, than among divines? I say nothing of some other faults which are not less scandalous in Church-men; as when they are given to swearing, when they are dissolute and undecently free in their words, when they are wedded to diversions and pleasures, worldly-minded, lazy, crafty, unjust and censorious.

When such vices appear in the lives of Clergy-men it is the greatest of scandals; from that minute the Gospel becomes of no effect in their mouths,

mouths, the laws of God are trampled upon, the most sacred things are no longer respected, divine worship and the sacraments are profaned, the ministry grows vile, religion in general falls under contempt, and the people being no longer curb'd by the reverence due to it, give up themselves to an entire licentiousness. I confess that Christians ought to follow the doctrine rather than the example of their guides, and that it is possible to profit by the instructions of a man, who does not practise what he teaches. But every body has not discretion and firmness enough, to separate thus the doctrine from the example, and not to be shaken by the scandal occasioned by Church-men, when their life and their preaching contradict each other. Men are very much taken with outwards, and govern themselves more by imitation than reason. A great many persons want nothing but pretexts and excuses, to justify them in ill things; and there is no pretence more specious, than that which the ill lives of the ministers of religion affords. When the people see men who are incessantly speaking of God and recommending piety, and yet do not practise themselves what they preach, they reject all that comes from them, they fancy that the Gospel is preached only for form's-sake, and that the maxims of religion may be safely violated.

2. But St. Paul requires somewhat more in pastors, than not to be scandalous; this is but the first and the lowest degree of probity. He would have them besides to be adorned with all manner of virtues. ** To be vigilant, prudent, grave, modest and given to hospitality, gentle, charitable, lovers of good men, wise, just, holy and chaste, shewing themselves in all things patterns of good works, of purity, gravity, and integrity.* And indeed pastors are not only appointed to instruct and govern their flocks, but they are obliged besides to set them a good example, and to be their patterns; and they do not edify less by their good examples, than by their exhortations. The purity of their manners, and the regularity of their conduct, give a great weight, to all the functions of their ministry, these make their persons venerable, and engage a great many to imitate them. Now whether these qualifications are to be found in pastors, every body may judge. I except those who ought to be excepted, but for the generality, Wherein do Church-men differ from other men? Do they distinguish themselves by a regular and exemplary life? Their exterior indeed is something different, they live more retired, they preserve a little decorum, tho' even this is not done by all; but as for the rest, are they not as much addicted to the world, and taken up with earthly things, have they not as many humane and secular views, are they not as much wedded to interest and other passions as the bulk of Christians are?

3. This second degree of probity is not sufficient. The life of an hypocrite may be blameless and even edifying; by composing his exterior he may pass for a saint. There is therefore a third degree, and that is the rectitude of the heart, a good conscience, a great measure of true piety, devotion, humility and zeal. Pastors ought to be in private, inwardly and in the sight of God, what they appear to other men. And certainly none can have greater inducements to piety, than a man whose ordinary business it is to meditate upon religion, to speak of it to others,

to

to reprove hypocrisie and vice; to perform divine service, to administer the sacraments, to visit afflicted and dying people; and to give an account to God of a great number of souls. I do not know whether there is a higher degree of impiety and hypocrisie, than when a man who is in these circumstances is not a good man. Such a man makes but sport with the most sacred things in religion, he does properly play the part of a Comedian, and of an hypocrite all his life. No profession damns more certainly, than that of a Church-man, when it is thus exercised.

It may perhaps be said, that all these moralities are nothing to my purpose; that this third degree of probity, is necessary only for the salvation of pastors in particular, and that as the people are unacquainted with the inward dispositions of their teachers, and are not able to distinguish true from counterfeit piety, it is enough for their edification, that the exterior should be well regulated. But those who think this, are very much mistaken. This want of piety and devotion is capital, and here we find the main Cause of the remissness of pastors, and of the Corruption of the people. From whence do those faults proceed which we have observed in Clergy-men? How comes it to pass that some of them are ignorant and lazy, that others apply themselves to unprofitable subjects and studies, that others preach only out of vanity, and that their discourses are languid and jejune? All this, is because their hearts are void of devotion and piety.

There are some preaching matters, and those too the most edifying, which can never be well managed, but by a man animated with sincere piety. Those preachers who describe the beauty of virtue, or the happy state of a good conscience, the hopes of another life, or the necessity of working out one's salvation, and who are not affected and pierced thorough with what they say, do but stammer about these things, and they will hardly excite those motions in other men's hearts, which they never felt in their own. We cannot preach with success without knowing the heart of man, and this knowledge ought to be the chief study of those who preach the Gospel. But the surest and most compendious way to know man's heart aright, is to consult our own, to reflect upon our selves, and to have a spotless conscience: without this a man is still a novice and a bungler in preaching. And so in the exercise of discipline; in private exhortations, in the visiting of the sick, in prayers, and in all other pastoral functions, there is still something defective, when a man does not perform them, out of a principle of charity, but only to discharge the outward obligations which his office lays upon him.

Pious and good Church-men, who are not on the other hand destitute of gifts, fulfill much better the duties of their ministry. A pastor who loves his profession, who lays the functions of it to heart, who is thoroughly convinced of the truths of religion, and who practises the rules of it; who in private humbles himself before God, and ardently implores his blessing; who is ever intent upon seeking means to edify the Church; who turns all his meditation that way; who thinks day and night of the necessities of his flock; must needs be successful, he has in himself the principle of all benedictions and happy success. When he is speaking or exhorting, it is his heart that speaks, and the language of the

the heart, has a kind of eloquence and perswasiveness in it, which is soon discerned by the hearers, and which always raises a pious and a zealous preacher, above a mercenary and hypocritical one. The want of piety in pastors, is therefore the principal source of the faults they commit, and of the mischiefs which proceed from their remissness.

Whosoever will seriously and without prejudice consider all that I have now said, must own, that the Cause of the Corruption of Christians is chiefly to be found in the Clergy. I do not mean to speak here of all Church-men indifferently. We must do right to some, who distinguish themselves by their talents, their zeal and the holiness of their lives. But the number of these is not considerable enough to stop the course of those disorders which are occasioned in the Church by the vast multitudes of remiss and corrupt pastors. These pull down, what the others endeavour to build up. Some perhaps, will ask, Whence do all these faults of the Clergy proceed? In answer to this question, I have three things to say.

1. It ought not to be thought strange, that pastors should not fulfill all the obligations of their office. As things are constituted almost every where with relation to discipline, to the inspection and authority over private persons, to the visiting of the sick, and to some other parts of their employment, they cannot if they would discharge their duties. Neither the magistrates nor the people would suffer it. On the other hand, the defects of pastors, are the consequences of the contempt and abasement which their office is brought under, as well as of the poverty they live in. This contempt and poverty discourage a great many, who might otherwise considerably edify the Church; and they are the cause why multitudes, who have neither education, nor talents, nor estates, dedicate themselves to the ministry of the Gospel. It is commonly imagined, that all sorts of persons are good enough for the Church; and whereas the *Jews* did offer their most excellent things to God, among Christians, what is least valued is consecrated to God and the Church. Some are devoted to the holiest and the most exalted of all professions, who would not be thought capable of an employment of any consideration in the Common-wealth. If then we intend to remedy the faults of the Clergy, we should begin with redressing what is defective in the state of the Church and religion in general.

2. Many ecclesiasticks fail in the duties of their calling, because they do not know what it obliges them to; and this they do not know, because it was never taught them. There are indeed schools, academies and universities, which are designed to instruct those young men, who aspire to this profession; but I cannot tell whether schools and academies, as they are ordered almost every where, do not do more hurt than good. For first, as to manners, young people live there licentiously, and are left to their own conduct. The care of masters and professors, does not extend to the regulating of the manners of their disciples. And this disorder is so great, that in several universities of *Europe*, the scholars and students make publick profession of dissoluteness. They not only live there irregularly, but they have priviledges, which gives them a right to commit with impunity, all manner of insolencies, brutalities and scandals, and which exempt them from the magistrates jurisdiction. It

is a shame to Christianity, that princes and Church-men should not have yet abolished those customs and establishments, which smell so rank of the ignorance and barbarism of the Heathens. And yet these universities are the nurseries out of which pastors, doctors and professors are taken. Those scholars who neither have birth, nor sense of virtue or honour, and who have spent their youth in licentiousness and debauchery, spread themselves into all Churches, and become the depositaries, and in some measure the arbitrators of religion.

As to the studies which are pursued at universities, I observe in them these two faults. The first relates to the method of teaching. Divinity is treated there and the holy Scripture explained in a scholastical and altogether speculative manner. Common places are read, which are full of school-terms, and of questions not very material. There young men learn to dispute upon every thing, and to resolve all religion into controversies. Now this method ruins them, it gives them intricate and false notions of divinity, and it begets in them dispositions directly opposite to those which are necessary to find out truth.

The other fault is more essential: little or no care is taken in academies, to teach those who dedicate themselves to the service of the Church, several things, the knowledge of which would be very necessary to them. The study of history and of Church antiquity, is neglected there.

Hence it is that most divines, may be compared with people, who having never travelled, know no other customs or ways of living but those which obtain in their countries. As soon as you take these divines out of their common-places, they are in a maze, and every thing seems new and singular to them. Morality is not taught in divinity-schools, but in a superficial and scholastick manner; and in many academies it is not taught at all. They seldom speak there of discipline, they give few or no instructions concerning the manner of exercising the pastoral care, or of governing the Church. So that the greater part of those who are admitted into this office, enter into it without knowing wherein it consists; all the notion they have of it, is, that it is a profession, which obliges them to preach, and to explain texts. It were therefore to be wished, that for the glory of God, and the good of the Church, schools and universities should be reformed, and that the manners and studies of young people, should be better regulated in those places. This reformation would not be impossible, if divines and professors would use their endeavours about it. But those kind of establishments are not easily altered. The ordinary method is continued, and things are done as they were of old, because men are willing to keep their places, and the stipends which are annexed to them.

3. The third and principal remedy would be to use greater caution, than is commonly done, when men are to be admitted into ecclesiastical offices. The first qualification to which, according to *St. Paul*, regard is to be had, is probity and integrity of life. The persons therefore who offer themselves, should in the first place be examined in relation to manners, and to all those moral dispositions, which *St. Paul* requires in them, and those should be excluded in whom they are not found. But this article is commonly slubbered over, and a young man must have been

been very dissolute, if he is refused upon the account of immorality. So that the most sacred of all characters, is conferred upon many persons, who according to the divine laws, ought to be rejected.

The other part of the examination of Candidates, relates to their ability and talents. Now in order to judge of their capacity, it is not enough to enquire whether they know their common-place-book, or whether they can make a sermon; it would be necessary besides to examine them about the fundamentals of religion, about history, discipline, the holy Scripture and morality. All these important matters, the knowledge of which is of daily use with reference to practice, and in the exercise of the sacred ministry. But they are not insisted upon. The examination turns upon some trials about preaching, and upon some heads of divinity which are scholastically handled, by arguments and distinctions: after which if the Candidate has satisfied in some measure, ordination follows.

Now when such insufficient persons are once admitted the mischief is done, and there is no remedy. These men are afterwards appointed pastors in Churches, where for 30 or 40 years, they destroy more than they edify. How many Churches are there thus ill provided, where the people live in gross ignorance, where the youth are lost for want of instruction, and where a thousand crimes are committed? The cause of all this evil, is in the ordination of pastors.

It will no doubt be objected, That if none were to be admitted but those, who have all the necessary qualifications, there would not be a sufficient number of pastors, for all the Churches. To which I answer, That tho' this should happen, yet it were better to run into this inconvenience than to break the express laws of God, A small number of select pastors, is to be preferred before a multitude of unworthy labourers. We are still to do what God commands, and to leave the event to Providence. But after all, this scarcity of pastors is not so much to be feared. Such a strictness will only discourage those, who would never have been useful in the Church, and it is a thing highly commendable to dishearten such persons: but this exactness will encourage those, who are able to do well, and the ministry will be so much the more esteemed and sought after.

C A U S E IV.

The Defects of Christian Princes and Magistrates.

IF it had been possible without an essential omission, not to have detected this Cause of Corruption, I would have passed it over in silence. We ought not to speak of the higher powers, but with great discretion and respect: and therefore it is not without some kind of reluctance, that I suppose in the title of this Chapter, that one of the Causes of Corruption is to be found in Christian Princes and Magistrates.

gistrates. But if I had suppressed this, I should have dissembled a most important truth, and omitted one of the heads, which are the most necessary to be insisted upon in a work of this nature. By reason of the rank which princes and magistrates hold, they have always a great share in the good or ill manners of the people. And so I cannot excuse myself from shewing, that the Corruption of Christians, may partly be imputed to those, who are ordained for the government of Civil Society. In order to this I shall offer some reflections upon the duty of princes and magistrates, considered 1. As Civil, and 2. As Christian Magistrates.

Although the institution of princes and magistrates does properly relate to civil matters; yet the manner of governing their people, has a great influence upon the things of religion. This cannot be questioned, if we suppose this principle; That God who is the author of the religion, is also the author of civil society and magistracy. It is St. Paul's doctrine, * *That there is no power but of God, and that the powers that be are ordained of God.* If God is the author of religion, and of civil society, he is also the author of those laws upon which both religion and civil society are founded. Now God being always consistent with himself, the laws which are derived from him, cannot contradict one another; and this shews already, not only that there is no opposition between religion and civil society, but that these two things having besides, a necessary relation to one another. This will yet more clearly appear, if we consider that religion does not cut off Christians from the society of other men, and that the Church does not constitute a state by it self, to have nothing to do with civil society; but that those who are members of the Church, are likewise members of civil society, so that the same man is at the same time both a Christian and a Citizen.

But it is chiefly necessary to consider the nature of the Christian religion. 1. It was to be preached to all men, and to be received by all the world, without distinction of nations, kingdoms, or states. In order to this, two things were necessary. First, that there should be nothing in religion, contrary to the natural constitution of states and of civil society. For else, God by ordering the Gospel to be preached, would have destroyed his own work, Christianity could not have taken footing in the world, and the first Christians would have been justly looked upon, as seditious persons. But it is not less necessary on the other hand, that there should be nothing repugnant to the Christian religion, in the natural constitution of states and civil society; otherwise God by establishing society, would have put an insuperable obstacle to the planting of the Gospel, unless the civil order and government had been altered. But our Saviour has assured us that there was to be no such thing, by declaring † *That his kingdom was not of this world*, and by commanding his followers, ‡ *to render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsars.*

2. One of the chief precepts of the Christian religion is, || *That all men should obey and be subject to the higher powers.* Now this precept could

not

* Rom. xiii. 1.

† Mat. xxii.

† John xviii.

|| Rom. xiii.

not possibly be observed, if in the natural establishment of civil society, there was something incompatible, with the profession of Christianity.

* *No man can serve two masters*, when they command contrary things. But St. Paul goes further, he tells us, That the preservation of kings, and the submitting to their authority is a mean for Christians † *to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*.

3. It is remarkable, that whatever is good, and just in the civil, is so likewise in the religious society; and that whatever is prescribed by religion is just, and even beneficial to civil society. The law of nature, which is the foundation of civil laws, is confirmed by the Christian religion, and does perfectly agree with the principles and morals of the Gospel. An evident proof of this, is, that when Christian emperours and law-givers did set about the making of laws and constitutions, they retained the essential parts of the laws and constitutions received among the *Romans* and the *Greeks* in the time of Heathenism. And to this day the old *Roman* law is followed among Christians, excepting some laws which have been altered or abrogated, either because they were contrary to natural justice and equity, or because they were not of a general and necessary use.

4. It is certain, that religion and civil society, do mutually support one another, when both are well regulated. Religion contributes to the happiness of society, by rendering the authority of princes more sacred and inviolable; and the good order of society, contributes to the welfare and the progress of religion. Let us suppose a magistrate who loves piety and justice; it is plain, that at the same time that he promotes the interest of religion, he strengthens the welfare of society, and that he cannot procure the good of society, without advancing the interest of religion. If we suppose on the other hand, a magistrate who does not act by the principles of religion and justice; it is visible, that by suffering religion to be violated or despised, he shakes the surest foundation of his own authority, and of publick tranquility, and that by failing in the duties of his office, and in the exercise of justice, he makes the people grow vicious and neglect the duties of piety.

From these considerations it does manifestly appear, that princes and magistrates may either procure great advantages to religion, or do it a considerable prejudice, and that they are in part the authors of the corruption which reigns in the world.

When civil-society is well governed, men are disposed by that very thing to practice the duties of Christianity. In proportion as the people are well ordered, they are more tractable and susceptible of the impressions of piety. As they are used to be governed by the laws of the magistrate, they do the more easily submit to the holy discipline of Christ; yea, and by obeying civil-laws, they do already discharge some part of the duties of religion. But when princes and magistrates, either thro' ignorance, or want of probity and virtue, give way to the violation of justice and good order, it is impossible but that religion must suffer by it. For besides, that the people cannot break the civil laws, without violating the principles of religion: How can they perform the duties of Christianity, when they do not discharge those of nature? It is very hard

* Mat. vi.

† Tim. ii. 2.

hard to persuade people to the observation of the precepts of the Gospel, who do not submit to the laws of natural reason and justice. It is not to be expected that men who do not order their outward actions aright, should regulate their thoughts and resist their passions; or that being strangers to the first elements of virtue, they should come up to the practice of the most sublime precepts of Christian morals.

Besides, the want of order in the administration of justice and government, draws after it all kinds of disorders with relation to manners, such as dishonesty, and what is most dangerous, a spirit of libertinism and indiffidence, which makes men untoward and refractory to good discipline. We are to observe here that the greatest part of men's lives are taken up with civil matters. All persons are bound to obey the magistrate, and few are altogether free from law-suits and business; so that when the people are not well governed with relation to civil things, they do so accustom themselves to live without rule or restraint, that religion can no longer have any power over them. The neglect and remissness of princes and magistrates do occasion all this mischief.

But if the bare carelessness of magistrates is so fatal to society; how must it be when they themselves are vicious and unjust, either in their own particular conduct, or in the exercise of their office? The greatest unhappiness that can befall any people, is, when those who are invested with the supreme authority, favour injustice and vice. It may be said then, that the publick fountains are poisoned. The whole state is ordered by the sovereigns; they are those from whom the laws receive their force, who appoint judges and magistrates, and who regulate the administration of justice. When inferior magistrates prevaricate, this may be remedied by the sovereign, but when the sovereign himself fails in his duty, no redress can be expected.

Not but that subordinate officers and magistrates, may likewise occasion a great deal of mischief. If we suppose in a province, or a town, magistrates and judges who want integrity, who consult only their profit and interest in the exercise of their offices, who are not proof against bribes, who administer justice from a principle of covetousness or passion, who act by recommendation or favour, and who are full of artifice and dissimulation. This is enough to introduce and authorize wickedness throughout their whole jurisdiction, to pervert right, to banish justice and honesty from all courts, to make way for knavery and litigiousness, for the protracting of suits, the abuse and violation of oaths, and many other disorders. Then it is that vice is in fashion and repute, that virtue and innocence are oppressed, and that the people grow corrupt. Now all this being a direct undermining of religion and piety, let any body judge, whether I have not reason to say, that the corruption of the age may be imputed to princes or magistrates.

But all these evils are yet more unavoidable, when the princes or magistrates who are the authors of them, profess the Christian religion. A heathen magistrate has not by much that influence upon religion and manners, that a Christian has. The Church was purer and more separated from the world, when the superior powers were contrary to it; but as soon as the emperors had embraced Christianity, piety and zeal did visibly decay. Not but that religion may receive, and has actually received
great

great helps from Christian magistrates; they have sometimes contributed very effectually to the promoting of piety, and those who do so, deserve immortal honour. But it must likewise be granted, that the vices and ill examples of Christian magistrates, corrupt the Church more, than if it were under heathen governors.

The duty of Christian princes and magistrates, as well as of all the members of the Church is double. They are bound, first, to serve God, and to discharge the obligations which religion lays upon all men; and secondly to take care, that God may be served and honoured by all those, who are subject to their authority.

I. Every Christian ought to serve God and to live according to the precepts of the Gospel. That very thing then, *that a magistrate is christian*, obliges him to be a lover of piety and virtue. It is a common notion especially among great men, that piety and devotion do not become those who are exalted to dignities, and that publick persons are not to be ruled by the maxims of religion. But whosoever maintains this opinion, must deny the principles of religion, and be either an Atheist or a Deist. For supposing the truth of Christianity, it is beyond all doubt, that a Christian prince or magistrate, has as much need of piety as other men have. He is bound to be a good man by the same duty and interest, which engage private men to be so; he has a soul to be saved as well as they; and as he is a publick person, he is to give an account of his conduct to that judge, with whom there is no acception of persons, and before whom the greatest of monarches, is no more than the meanest of slaves.

If the eminent station of a magistrate makes some difference between him and Christians of a lower order, that difference obliges him to a higher degree of piety. The character he bears requires a great stock of virtue. No small measure of probity is requisite to acquit himself worthily in that calling; to do no injustice, not to seek in his dignities the means to gratify his interest, his vanity, his pride, or his other passions. Without a firm and solid virtue, he cannot withstand those temptations which offer themselves every minute, and which are the more dangerous and subtil, because in those exalted posts, ill things, for the most part, may be done with safety. If we add to all this, that an ill magistrate is answerable for the greatest part of the disorders which happen, and of the crimes which are committed in society, it must be confessed that magistracy is a kind of life, wherein piety is extremely necessary, and in which, great circumspection and a sublime virtue, are the only preservatives against a thousand opportunities, of transgressing the duties of conscience, and violating the most sacred laws of religion and justice.

II. It is the duty of Christian princes and magistrates, to labour for the promoting of virtue and the suppressing of vice among men. We have shewn already that it is their interest to do so, since religion is the surest foundation of their authority, and of the fidelity of their people; but their duty does besides indispensably oblige them to this. It cannot be denied but that this obligation lies upon them, since every Christian is bound to advance the kingdom of Christ, and to edify his neighbours as much as he can in that state and condition he is in. The duty here is answerable to the ability, so that we may apply to this purpose, that maxim of the

Gospel, * *that to whom soever much is given, of him much shall be required.* Private men cannot do much towards promoting the glory of God; their zeal and good intentions are for the most part useless; it is not in their power to hinder general disorders, this ought therefore, to be done by men of authority, and they may do it easily. Besides, a Christian magistrate is to consider that it was providence which raised him to the post he is in, and that by consequence he is engaged in justice and gratitude, to use his authority for the glory of God. Lastly, would it not be a strange thing, that Christian princes and magistrates should do no service to religion, when kings and princes who are not Christians, can do so much hurt to it? Now they may advance the kingdom of God and banish corruptions, these two ways. 1. By their example. 2. By their care.

1. By their example. This method is of great efficacy. Examples are very forcible, but their effect, depends for the most part upon the quality and character of the persons they come from. It has been made appear in the foregoing chapter, how much benefit redounds to the Church, from the good lives and examples of the governours of it. But the example of kings, princes, and magistrates is in some respects of greater weight. When a Church-man recommends virtue by an exemplary life, it is often said that his profession obliges him to live so, and this consideration makes his example to be of little force upon worldly-minded men. But when princes and magistrates are pious, those men have no such thing to say. The splendor and authority which surround greatness, gives much credit to every thing that comes from great men. They may sometimes do more good with one word, than a preacher can do by many sermons.

I have shewed in the first part of this work that one of the greatest obstacles to piety, is a false shame which restrains men from doing their duty, for fear of being observed and despised; and I am to shew hereafter, that custom has introduced among Christians a great many maxims and practices contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. These two things occasion corruption and till they are remedied, vice and impiety must still reign. But the example of great men is sufficient to remove almost intirely, both these causes of corruption. They are the judges of honour and custom; it is in their power to make any thing which is reputed shameful, to be thought honourable and to abolish that which is generally received. So that how scarce and despised soever piety may be, an idea of honour would be affixed to it, if it was favoured and professed by great men, and that would be respected in them which in others, is looked upon with indifference or contempt.

That which has hapned with relation to duels is a strong proof of what I say. To decline fighting a duel, has been thought for a long time a disgrace and an infamy: a false notion of honour did then bear down the strongest principles of nature, reason and Christianity; and drive men to that excess of brutality and madness, that they would cut one anothers throat for a trifle. But in those places where Christian princes have abolished duels, people are now of another mind, and think it no shame to refuse a challenge. And thus swearing, drunkenness, and the greatest

of

of other clamorous sins, might be suppressed, if great men pleased. Is it not observed besides, that when a prince is devout, devotion comes into fashion? It may be that this devotion which proceeds from the example of princes, is not always sincere; but at least it regulates manners as to the exterior; and such an outward reformation, may be a step toward true devotion. However this shews that the opinion and example of men in authority, has a great power. And surely if by their credit they can make vice it self to be honoured, would it not be much easier for them, to make other men honour virtue, since it is honourable in its own nature?

I am not able to express of what consequence the example of great men is, either for good or evil. A prince who is vicious, cruel, dissolute, artificeous or unjust, is enough to infect a whole state in a very little time, to banish piety from it, and to bring into repute drunkenness, lewdness, cheating, indevotion, and all the other vices which he allows himself in. This we find by daily experience. Such as the prince is, so are those about him; and from these, the evil spreads upon the whole people, by reason of the credit and authority to which they were raised, and of the influence they have upon publick and private affairs. What might not be said here of the life which is led in the courts of princes? Excepting some few courts where licentiousness is not suffered. That kind of life which is followed at court, for the generality, agrees little with the spirit of Christianity. People live there altogether in a loose and worldly manner, in luxury, idleness, pomp and pleasure. There, the strongest and the most enticing temptations are to be met with, and the most criminal intrigues, adultery it self, are rather a matter of railery, than reproach. It is almost impossible for a man to insinuate himself into the favour of princes, and to advance his fortune at court, unless he makes it his maxim to dissemble his sentiments, and to speak directly against his own thoughts. The worst of it is, that from thence corruption diffuses it self almost every where; so that many disorders which are in vogue, would be unknown, or at least very rare in the world, if they had not been introduced by that licentiousness, which reigns in the courts of princes.

I come now to the endeavours, which Christian magistrates ought to use, for the edification of the Church and the reviving of piety; these endeavours relate either to civil matters, or to religion.

1. In civil matters, it is their duty to restrain libertinism and corruption, by regulating the manners of their subjects, either by repealing the laws and customs which do not agree with religion, and which engage the people into the violation of the precepts of the Gospel, or by reforming the abuses which are introduced from time to time, particularly those which creep into the administration of justice. In relation to all these things, there are several faults which the Church cannot provide against, and which nothing can remedy but the magistrates authority.

2. The other care relates directly to religion. 1. Princes and kings professing Christianity, are bound to procure, as much as in them lies, the welfare of the Church. They ought to set about the establishing of truth and peace, provided that in order to that, they use no means but such, as are suitable to the Gospel. They ought by their authority to see that the Church and religion want nothing of what is necessary, for the maintaining of order and decency; that divine service be duly performed;

that there be both places for that purpose and a sufficient number of persons to take care of the edification of the Church; that those persons may subsist honourably, that they do their duty and keep themselves within the bounds of their calling. They must not suffer Church goods or revenues to be applied to uses meerly civil; and when these revenues are not sufficient, it becomes their piety and justice, to allot some part of the publick revenues, for the necessities of the Church. In fine, as to manners, I observed before, that they may easily give a stop to vice and impiety, to luxury, swearing, and other scandals which dishonour the Church. And if they can do this, they ought to do it, every Christian being bound to do all that is in his power, to promote the glory of God.

2. It is certain, that magistrates who are members of the Church, ought to protect it, to maintain the order which God has established in it, and not to suffer any breach to be made there. So that tho' they may regulate many things which concern religion, and tho' the Church owes them a great regard, yet they cannot without usurpation and injustice, arrogate to themselves the whole authority, with relation to the ecclesiastical affairs. They are neither the princes nor the heads of the Church, as they are the princes and the heads of civil society. An authority superior to theirs, has instituted, religion, pastors and discipline. There is a law enacted by the KING of kings, and the head of the Church, which clearly determines the rights and duties, both of the Church and of the governor of it; all these are sacred things, which earthly powers are not to meddle with. They are laws which princes and magistrates did submit to, when they became members of the Church; with respect to these (I mean still essential things appointed by the word of God) they have acquired no right by embracing Christianity; since he who becomes member of a society, cannot by that acquire a right to alter the natural form and constitution of it.

The instance of the kings of *Judah*, shews that a prince who professes true religion, may interpose in the affairs of it: but we must take care not to carry this instance too far, as those do, who ascribe to the magistrate, a supreme authority in the Church; who allow him a right to order every thing there; not excepting discipline, the calling of pastors, nor even the articles of faith. For besides that under the law, kings were by no means the judges of every thing, which concerned religion; we are not to argue altogether about the Christian religion, from what was done in the Jewish Church. Among the *Jews* the Church and the state were mixed together, and in some measure distinguished from one another. That meerly spiritual society which is called the Church, and which is confined to no state, or people, or any particular form of civil government; was properly erected since the coming of Christ. God acted among the *Jews* as a civil magistrate. The laws of the Jewish religion were for the most part external laws, which might and ought to be maintained by force and authority. The rights of divine service, and the functions of priests, were very different from the evangelical worship and from the office of Christian pastors. After all, if we should go by the practice of the Jewish Church, it would follow, that the ministers of religion are invested with civil authority, and a very great authority too. The Jewish priests held a considerable rank in the state as well as in religion.

gion. If upon some occasions kings have deposed priests; upon other occasions priests have opposed kings and altered the government.

* So that without pressing too much those instances out of the old Testament, the best way is to consult the new, and to proceed according to the laws of the apostles, and the nature of the Christian religion. And whosoever examines without prejudice those sacred books, which have been writ since the coming of our Saviour, will acknowledge, that things are now altered, and that magistrates have but a limited authority in matters of religion. It is remarkable, that the scripture never mentions them, when it speaks of the Church and of the government of it.

3. And yet as the authority of princes and magistrates, is derived from God, it ought still to subsist entire. and therefore they have an unquestionable right, to take care that nothing be done in the Church, to the prejudice of their lawful authority, and of publick tranquillity; and that the ministers of religion do not stretch their authority, beyond spiritual things. The honour and the safety of religion, require that this principal should be laid down; for religion, as was said before, ought not, to disturb society, and true religion will never disturb it. If then any Christians or Church-men under pretence of religion, should break in upon the civil government and the publick peace, kings and princes have a right to restrain them, and then they do not oppose religion, but those only who abuse and dishonour it.

After these considerations, I think any man is able to judge, whether the decay of piety and religion, is not in part to be imputed to Christian princes and magistrates. We need but enquire whether both in civil and religious matters, they observe the duties I have now described. I say no more of this, because every body is able to make the application.

But I must add, That if the want of zeal in magistrates is enough to introduce confusion and vice into the Church; the mischief is much greater, when not only, they do not what they ought for the good of religion, but when they use their authority besides, to the prejudice of it. I cannot forbear mentioning here two great abuses.

7. The first is, When princes and magistrates assume the whole authority to themselves, so that except preaching and administering the sacraments, they will do every thing in the Church: when they presume to determine articles of faith, to rule the conscience of their subjects, and to force them to embrace one persuasion rather than another; when they will by all means take upon them to call pastors, without regard to that right of the Church and Church-men, which is established in scripture, and confirmed by the practice of the first ages of Christianity; when they seize upon Church-estates, tho' there is no reason to fear that wealth should corrupt their Clergy, and tho' such revenues might be applied to several pious uses, and particularly to the relief of country-Churches, most of which are not sufficiently edified, for want of necessary endowments and funds. A great deal might be said about that which was done in the last century with relation to Church-revenues; and it were to be wished, that people had been a little more scrupulous than they were, when they invaded the possessions of the Church, and confounded them with the revenues of the state.

Besides this the magistrates authority is fatal to the Church, when he hinders the exercise of true discipline, and when he substitutes such regulations as he thinks fit, in the room of apostolical laws. This is one of the greatest obstructions to the restoring of apostolical discipline. Tho' the Church and her pastors should be willing to observe the ancient order, and to oppose corruption by those means which the Gospel enjoins, yet this is not to be done, if those who have the authority in their hands will not give way to it. The Church is not in a condition to resist, and to make head against the magistrate, when he uses force; and she ought not to do it if she could.

The second abuse is, when the magistrate makes it his business to abuse religion, in the persons of its ministers, by despoiling them as much as he can, of every thing that might procure them respect and authority in the Church. This policy is as contrary to the interest of religion, and to the promoting of piety, as it is common now adays, in several Christian dominions. It is well done of the magistrate to preserve his authority, and to keep the Clergy from exceeding the bounds of their calling; but from thence it does not follow, that he ought to trample them under foot, to bring them under a general contempt, and to vilify their character, which after all is sacred and venerable. This is to sacrifice religion to policy and pride, and this proceeding is a manifest cause of the contempt of religion, and of the corruption which necessarily follows that contempt, since commonly, nothing is more despised in the world, than that which great men despise.

I declare it once more, by all that has been said, I do not mean to detract any thing from the respect due to civil powers, neither do I speak of all Christian princes and magistrates, among whom there are some who have piety and zeal, and who labour with success for the good of religion. But the glory of God requires, that we should speak the truth, so that I could not but take notice of this cause of corruption. Upon the whole matter, it is to be hoped, that if Christian magistrates would be pleased to make serious reflections upon all these things, we should soon see an end of some of these disorders; and that a happier time will come when they will use their authority, to advance the honour of God, and to restore truth, piety and peace among Christians.



C A U S E V.

Education.

NOTHING is more natural than to look for the original of corruption, in the time at which it begins; I mean in the first years of life. It is not only when men have attained to a ripeness of age, that they are inclined to vice, but that inclination discovers it self from their youth. The root of that ignorance, of those prejudices, and of the greatest part of the ill dispositions they are in may be found

in their tender years. We had need then look back upon the beginnings of life, and seek in youth, and in infancy it self the source of corruption.

When we enter upon this enquiry, and consider that men, if nothing restrains them, will run into vice from their youth, out of a propension which is common to all, we cannot but perceive at first sight, that there must be in them a certain principle of corruption, which makes them thus prone to ill things. But if we reflect upon this matter with any attention, we may likewise be satisfied, that it would not be impossible to rectifie at least in part, that vicious inclination, and to prevent the fatal consequences of it by the means of education; and that it is chiefly the wrong method of educating children, which feeds that disposition to evil, and which encreases and strengthens it. This is what I intend to shew in this chapter. I hope to make it clearly appear, that the corruption of men, is to be imputed to the education they had in their youth; and that considering how children are brought up, it is impossible, but that ignorance and vice, must generally prevail in the world. I shall begin with general reflections, upon the education of children, and in the next place I shall speak of their education, with a particular regard to religion and piety.

My first reflection is, That the world consists for the most part of people who have no education, and whose unhappiness it is to have been wholly neglected in their youth. This may particularly be observed among persons of mean birth. Every body knows that such kind of people, have no manner of education; that from their childhood they are abandoned to themselves, without either instruction, correction, or any other help, and that living with ignorant gross and vicious parents between worldly business and ill examples, they spend their youth almost like brutes.

This first reflection, which may be applied to many thousand Christians, discovers to us already a plain reason of the extream corruption, which appears in their manners. We wonder sometimes that men are so depraved, and that great multitudes of them have almost no sense at all, either of religion or conscience, or of reason and humanity. We think it strange, that there should be among Christians, impious persons, blasphemers of the name of God, thieves, poisoners, men who defile themselves with the most infamous sins, and who make conscience of nothing. One would think human nature were not capable of such enormities; and yet they are committed by a great many. But we may easily apprehend how this comes to pass, if we consider what education those persons had. Instead of being brought up like Christians, they have not so much as been educated like rational creatures. The light of nature has been extinguished in them from their very infancy, so that having scarce any notion of good or evil, they give up themselves to vice without scruple or remorse, almost in the same manner as the Heathens did of old.

II. But as this total defect of education is not universal, so we are to enquire in the second place, How children are bred up, and to observe here the principal faults which are committed about their education.

I. The education of children is not begun soon enough, nothing is done to them in the first years of their lives. As soon as children begin

to have some kind of reason, the first principles of virtue should be instill'd into them. For tho' the ideas and actions of young children are very confus'd, yet it is in infancy that passions and habits begin to spring up. At three or four years old, children give some signs of what they are to be all their lives, and from that time it may be known, what their predominate inclinations will be. If that time was well improved, it would be an easie and compendious way to give children a good education. They may then without any great trouble be made to do those things, which they cannot be brought to without much time and difficulty, when they are once come to fourteen or fifteen; some little care and gentle correction, may stifle a passion in its birth, it may cure anger and stubbornness in a child, it may soften his inclinations, and make him obedient and towardly. A little caution us'd about his diet, may render him sober and temperate for his whole life. But that time which is so precious, is that, wherein children are most neglected.

This delay of education proceeds from two causes. 1st. That men have not a true notion of the education of children, and of the end to be aimed at in it. It is commonly imagined, that the breeding up of children, is the teaching them latin, learning a trade, or some other things, which are usually taught them, in order to fit them for those callings to which they are designed. And as children are not capable of applying themselves to arts and sciences before a certain age, so their education, is deferred till then. But if men did well understand, that the chief design of education, is to form the judgment and the temper of children, they would not stay so long before they took care of them. 2^d.

The first years of children are neglected, and their conduct then is not much minded, because vice does not then shew it self in all its deformity. All that they do is then look'd upon as innocent, and every thing in them appears pleasant, not excepting their very faults. If they are too lively, or of a resolute humour, if they happen to be in a passion, to lye, to speak undecent and filthy words, to do little sly naughty tricks; all this for the most part, makes only people laugh, commend and applaud them. It is not considered that those are the fore-runners of vice, and that these beginnings call for a speedy remedy. Young children are not capable of crimes: impiety, uncleanness, cruelty and premeditated malice, are not to be found in them, but if we narrowly observe them we may spy out the seeds and the buddings of those vices in their actions and manners. This is not much taken notice of; passions and ill habits are suffered to grow quietly during childhood, and they are quite formed and settled before they are observed. At seven or eight years of age, innocence is already lost and the heart is corrupted. People begin to think of educating their children when the fittest season for education is past, and when they have already those principles of corruption in them, which they will never shake off.

2. There is no care taken to form the mind and judgment of children. Reason being the most essential property of men, is that which ought to be chiefly cultivated in young people; and all that they are taught besides, is of little use, if they are not accustomed to this. Great labour is us'd to learn them languages and sciences, their memory is exercised, they are loaded with several instructions, their heads are filled with a multitude

multitude of words and ideas; but it would be without comparison more important, to cultivate their judgment. Whatever they may be design'd for, no greater good can be procur'd to them, than to make them able to pass a sound judgment upon things, and to govern themselves by reason. True sense is necessary at all times, and it is of a general usefulness in our whole life. It is therefore an unhappiness for children that in this respect they are so much neglected. Men have not the patience to reason with them, and to teach them to speak and to act wisely. They are suffer'd to be among people who can neither speak nor reason, they converse for the most part, only with servants or other children. By this means they accustom themselves to take up false notions, to judge of things only by their appearances, to resolve rashly and without consideration, and to be governed only by their senses, passions, or prejudices. From thence proceed almost all the faults which they commit afterwards; but this is especially the cause of that affection which men bear to sin and to the things of this world. The first quality of a Christian, is to be a rational man, it being impossible that a man who cannot make use of his reason, and who has no sense, should judge aright of spiritual things, curb his passions, renounce his prejudices, and constantly follow the rules of his duty.

3. I shall not here enumerate all the particular faults which are suffer'd in children; but there are two which I cannot but take notice of, because I look upon them as the cause of most of the passions and vices, to which men are addicted. First there are no sufficient endeavours used to make children tractable, and to subject them to the will of others. The ground-work of a good education is to keep them in awe and obedience; and not to let them grow independant, and obstinate in their own will and passions; so that when we command or forbid them a thing it is by all means necessary to make them obey. When we observe in them too strong an inclination to any thing, tho' the thing were innocent, yet because they desire it too earnestly, they are not always to be indulg'd in it. But care is to be taken, that when we cross their will, we do it with mildness, and in such a manner, as may give them to understand, that it is with reason, and for their good we oppose them, and not out of humour, or only to vex them. When children are thus dealt with, they may be turn'd which way soever we please. It keeps them from stubbornness and self-love, it teaches them to overcome their desires, to submit to corrections, and to follow the advice which is given them. In a word, tractableness in a child, is a disposition to every thing that is good, and the foundation of all virtues. But no good can be expected from a child who is not docile and obedient. If he is permitted while young to be independant, and to do what he lists, he will be much more absolute when he comes to a riper age.

The other fault which it is very necessary to prevent, is the love of the body and of the objects of sense. A carnal temper, is by the testimony of Scripture it self, the root of all vices. But the first rise of that irregular affection, which men bear to every thing that gratifies their body, is in their infancy. For besides, that children govern themselves only by sense; that bias they have towards sensible things, is forfeited by the sensual education, which is bestowed upon them. None but

gross and material objects, are proposed to them; they are entertain'd only with those things which affect the senses, and no ideas but those of bodily pleasures or pains, are excited in them. The promises and threats, the rewards and punishments, which are used to gain upon them, relate only to corporeal things. And here it ought not to be omitted, that they are chiefly spoiled, by being indulged in gluttony, and vanity of cloaths. These are the two first passions of children; the two inclinations by which they begin to grow corrupt and to love the world; nothing makes so much impression upon them as that which affects their eyes or their palate.

If children were used to a simplicity of diet and apparel, this would preserve them, from many dangerous vices and passions; it would dispose them for those virtues which are the most necessary to a wise man and a Christian; it would inure them to sobriety, labour, prudence, humility, to the contempt of pleasure, and to firmness and patience in calamities. This would make their constitution stronger, and prevent divers infirmities, which both afflict and shorten their lives. But ill custom prevails against the maxims of reason and Christianity. Little caution is used in relation to their diet; they are suffered to eat much beyond that which nature requires, and they are accustomed to be liquorish and dainty in their eating. As for cloaths and decking, fathers and more especially mothers, have that weakness, that they love to see their children fine and spruce. Besides this, the way of breeding up children of the better sort, makes them soft, effeminate and lovers of pleasure. The fruit of such an education, is, that children become slaves to their bodies and to their senses; they are taken with nothing but bodily pleasures and worldly things. From thence spring in process of time, intemperance, uncleanness, pride, covetousness, and most of the greater kind of sins. This is likewise the principal cause of indevotion, and of the little relish which men find in spiritual things, particularly in religion and piety. A sensual education occasions all these evils.

4. It will not be improper to observe here, That frequently the education which is given to those children, who are destined to sciences and considerable employments, either in the Church or in civil society, does but corrupt their inclinations. They are sent to colleges and universities, where being trusted with themselves, they live in independence and libertinism; and they are sent thither at an age, in which without a kind of miracle, they cannot fail of being undone. They are as it were emancipated from the inspection of their parents; they are expos'd without defence to the most dangerous seductions, and that at the very time, when they are the most unfit to regulate their conduct, and the most susceptible of ill impressions and vicious examples. Children would be much better educated with relation both to sciences and good manners, if their parents did not make so much haste, and if they did not spur them on to study, till their judgment was a little formed, and especially if they took care to confirm them in the principles of religion and virtue, before they were sent from home. Some alteration should likewise be made in colleges. For the very studies which youths pursue there, are instrumental to debauch them. They learn Latin and obscenity together. Authors are put into their hands, the reading of whom raises impure
ideas

ideas in their minds; and as if there was a design to stifle in them all sense of modesty, they are made to interpret and to rehearse very undecent things. When all is well considered, young people acquire but little of useful learning in colleges and academies, at the rate they live and study in those places; and there too they commonly leave their innocence.

5. The means of procuring to children a happy education, are not used as they should be. These means are instruction, encouragement, and correction.

Instruction is very much neglected, as I shall more particularly shew, when I come to speak of the education of youth with reference to religion. Parents seldom give good directions to their children, to teach them how they ought to live. They do worse, they train them up to ill things, and give them bad instructions. By the discourse and the maxims they utter in the hearing of their children, they infuse sentiments and principles of covetousness, pride, sensuality and dissimulation into them; they teach them to act upon the motives of interest and passion, or by the notions of a false honour. Nay, they do sometimes directly teach them vice, they encourage them to lye and cheat, to be revengeful and passionate. So that young people are not only destitute of good instructions, but they are besides, infected from their infancy with several most pernicious principles. I need not say, what the consequences of such an education are like to be.

If few children are formed to virtue by instruction, few are made virtuous by the good example of their parents. It is much when this example is not bad and dangerous. In most families children see nothing that favours of Christianity, except some external acts of religion; they observe that every one of the family is employed about temporal things; the discourses they hear, turn altogether upon interest, or some trifling subject. They are witnesses of a great many disorders, of the heats and quarrels of their fathers and mothers, of their avarice, their swearing, their lying, their intemperance, their impiety, and their want of respect for religion. These are the examples, which for the most part, children have before their eyes, and which corrupt them more than any thing else. At that age almost every thing is done by imitation and example; and no example makes more impression upon them, than the example of their parents, because it is always in sight; and they think besides they cannot do amiss, as long as they copy after it.

It is very useful in educating children to encourage them. I mean not only that they should be exhorted and incited to their duty, and that, from the motives of honour and from the pleasure that attends the doing of it; but that likewise, we should express our satisfaction, and our love and esteem of them, when they do as we would have them. A word of praise, a little reward, inspires new ardor into them. We may do what we please with children, when we can prevail upon them with gentle methods, and win their love: they then accustom themselves betimes to do their duty, out of inclination, and from noble and generous views. But to use always severity towards children, and to take no notice of their endeavours to do well, is the way to discourage them, and to extinguish in them the love of virtue.

Yet

Yet severity is necessary, and upon some occasions we ought not to forbear rigour and correction. Those indulgent parents, who being restrained by a false tenderness, cannot find in their heart to chastise their children, do infallibly ruin them. But if the want of correction and discipline makes children unruly; chastisement ill dispens'd produces the same effect. There are commonly three faults committed in the correcting of children.

The first relates to the cause for which they are chastised. Correction should not be used but for those faults, which have something of vice in them; as when children are guilty of malice, of some ill habit, or of great negligence; and even then we should not proceed to chastisement, but after we have tried other ways to no purpose. But this rule is little observ'd. Children are punish'd for all sorts of faults indifferently, and very often for small ones. They will sometimes be severely chastised because they cannot say their lesson without book, or for some other little disorder they have done in the house through imprudence and without malice; and at the same time faults against piety and good manners shall be pass'd over. These corrections produce several ill effects, and especially this, That children form to themselves false notions of their duty. They fancy that the faults for which they are punish'd are the most considerable, and that there is more hurt in spoiling their cloaths, or in misfing a word of their lesson, than in lying, or in praying without attention, which lessens in them the abhorrence of vice.

The second error, which relates to the nature of the correction inflicted upon children is, when no other chastisements are us'd but those which make the body smart. Such corrections without doubt are useful and necessary, because children are chiefly moved by those things which strike the senses; but they are not the only ones to which recourse is to be had. To beat children every time they do amiss, is to use them like beasts. There are other ways of punishing and mortifying them. The most profitable corrections are those, which excite in them sorrow and shame for the ill they have done.

Lastly, There is an error in the chastising of children, when they are not corrected with discretion and gentleness. Prudence and even justice requires, that regard should be had to the nature of their fault, to the disposition they are in, and to other circumstances; and it becomes that love which a father owes his children, to correct them with lenity and moderation, and to forbear excessive severities. Children should perceive the tenderness of their parents even in their corrections, and be made sensible that it is with reluctance, and only in order to their good, that they treat them with some rigour. If chastisements were dispensed with these cautions, they would at the same time that they cause pain, beget in childrens minds, a sorrow for having done amiss, and that would make them love their parents, even while they are punishing them. But for the most part, parents, or those who have an authority over children, chastise them without discretion, and with a rigour which borders upon cruelty: they punish them rather out of passion, spite or revenge, than upon wise and sober consideration. Such a proceeding discourages and provokes children, and it makes them hate their duty. I confess this method may strike terror into them, and curb them a little, but they grow

grow the more stout and incorrigible by it, and they will certainly run into licentiousness, as soon as they are no longer restrain'd by the fear of punishment.¹

From what has been said hitherto, it is plain, that men's corruption is a consequence of the education they had in their youth : but this will yet more evidently appear by the reflections I am now going to make, upon the way of bringing up children in religion and piety.

We are here to consider education, in reference to the two ends of it, which are the educating of youth, first in the knowledge; and then in the practice of religion.

I. The considerations to be insisted on concerning the first head, relate either to the things which children are to be instructed in, or to the manner of instructing them.

1. As to the things themselves, there are two articles upon which the instruction of youth ought to depend ; and those are the truths and the duties of religion.

The chief rule to be observ'd with relation to the truths of religion, is to insist upon those which are the most necessary, and to give a distinct notion of them to children. And here two faults are committed ; the first is, when they are not instructed in all the truths which are to be known in order to be a Christian ; the second is, when such instructions are propos'd to them as are unsuitable to their age, or even useless.

To explain my meaning a little further ; I say first, That there are some essential things, which children are not at all, or but imperfectly taught. Among these we may reckon the knowledge of sacred history. Religion being founded upon history and facts, it would be requisite that instruction should begin at the historical part of religion, and at the main events which are related both in the old and new Testament : so that children might know at least in general the principal ages of the world, and the most remarkable things, which did happen from the Creation to the coming of our Saviour ; what the Flood was, what were the Egyptian and Babylonish Captivities ; what time *Moses*, *David*, the Patriarchs and the Prophets lived in ; what sort of people the Heathens and the Jews were, and what kind of life our Saviour led.

It must not be said, that history is above the capacity of children ; for on the contrary, it is that, which is to them the easiest part of religion, which they hearken to with the greatest pleasure, and which they remember best. Nothing does more smoothly enter into their minds than history ; all the things I have now mention'd may be taught them in a week. And this knowledge is as necessary as it is easily acquired. A man can never understand his religion well, or be thoroughly convinced of its truth, if he does not know the facts which it supposes. We see that it was by the means of history that God chose to instruct mankind, and that matters of fact make up the most considerable part of the sacred writings. And therefore it is a strange thing, that in catechisms and other instructions given to youth, history should be so little insisted upon. This is visibly one of the causes of that profound ignorance, which the greatest part of Christians live in : this is the reason why they understand almost nothing of what they read or hear in sermons, and why the doctrines which they are taught make so little impression upon them.

Teaching

Teaching children history, gives them beforehand, some notions of the truths and doctrines of Christianity; but yet these truths and doctrines ought to be proposed to them separately, that they may have a more distinct apprehension of them. Above all things great care should be taken, to imprint upon the minds of those who are to be instructed: the knowledge and the belief of the principles of Christianity. But this likewise is not done as it should be. In catechisms, as well as in sermons, particular truths are dwelt upon, and the general ones are touched only by the by. This is a fault I have observ'd in the very beginning of this work.

Now at the same time that children are suffer'd to be ignorant about many important articles, they are perplex'd with divers useless, or not very necessary instructions. Instead of limiting them to the essential parts of religion, their minds and memories are fill'd up with many things which they may safely be ignorant of. Some would have them understand the disputes of divines, concerning the most curious and abstruse questions, and they are made to get several things by heart, which they do not understand, and which are of no great use. In the mean time children learn these things and say them without book, and being possessed with the conceit, that they are as many articles of faith, they rank among divine truths school-terms and doctrines, of which they neither apprehend the certainty nor the use. And thus having none but intricate ideas about religion: they do not perceive the beauty, the solidity, or the excellence of it, and they have neither true love nor respect for it:

When children are once instructed in the truths of Christianity, it is particularly necessary to acquaint them with the duties of it. There are two distinct sorts of duties in religion. First the duties concerning divine worship or service: and then the duties of morality. The first are adoration, the honour which is paid to God, prayer and thanksgiving: but as these duties may be perform'd either outwardly or inwardly, it is of very great moment to make children apprehend, That prayer and all other acts of divine worship, ought to proceed from the heart, that ** God will be served in spirit and in truth*, and that without this the worship which is paid to him, either in private or in publick, does only provoke his displeasure. It is not enough therefore, to tell children, That they must pray to God or go to Church, and to teach them some forms of prayer to be said at certain times and hours: all this is but external, and if we go no farther, if we do not carefully inform them, that true worship is internal and spiritual, we shall make but hypocrites of them, by teaching them to pray and to perform religious acts. The faults then which are committed in this point, are of great moment, and we may easily perceive, that hypocrisy and indevotion are the consequences of this negligence. The religion of most Christians consists only in some external actions; they think they have fulfilled their duty when they have recited some prayers, or been present at the publick worship of God, tho' in all they do of this kind, they have neither attention nor elevation of heart; but this error which is so capital, and yet so common, arises chiefly

* John iv. 23.

chiefly from hence, that children are formed only to a meer outside devotion and worship.

Young people are not much better instructed in moral duties. I shall not enter here upon all the considerations which the subject might afford, because I have treated of the want of instruction concerning morals in several places of this treatise, and particularly in the I. Chapter of the first Part. Yet I must say, that this defect proceeds from the instructions which are given to youth. Much greater care is taken to inform them about the doctrines than about the duties of Christianity. The articles of the Creed, the questions concerning the sacraments, and the other points of doctrine, are handled and examined largely enough in Catechisms, and controversy is not forgot; but the Ten Commandments are explained in so succinct and superficial a manner, that we do not find there so much as the names of a great many vices, virtues and duties. Children who should be raised up to Christian perfection, are only taught the Ten Commandments, and from the explication which is given of these, they gather that they should not be idolaters, blasphemers or profane persons, that they should neither commit murder nor adultery, that they should not steal or bear false witness. But how many other duties are there of which they have no manner of notion? They are not taught what it is to be gentle, humble, sincere, charitable, pure, sober and patient. Many persons because they were never instructed in these virtues which are the principal ornaments of a Christian, do not practise or so much as know them. We are to impute to these slight and defective instructions, that opinion which is commonly received, That whosoever is free from those six or seven great sins forbidden in the decalogue, is a good man.

2. The success of instructions depends in the second place upon the method and way of teaching. The method of teaching, should on the one hand be clear and proportioned to the age and capacity of children, and on the other, it should be delightful, and fit to make them love religion. By this, two ends which ought to be aimed at, will be attained; the mind will be enlightened, and the heart moved. What is clear informeth the mind, and what is delightful wins the heart, and inspires into it a strong affection for religion and for the duties of it.

1. Perspicuity is never more necessary, than it is in the instructing of youth. Children having no ideas as yet of most things, and not being used to the signification of words, cannot understand what is said to them, unless it be delivered with much clearness and simplicity, and unless every thing be avoided, which may puzzle or seem obscure to them. This perspicuity results first, from the things that are taught. It is a certain truth, that whatsoever is essential in religion, is always clear and easie to be understood; and that on the contrary, whatsoever is obscure and difficult, is not very necessary. So that provided instruction goes no further than essential doctrines and duties, it cannot be very hard for children, to apprehend what is said to them. Secondly, Clear expressions, and plain and popular ways of speaking, produce distinct ideas in the minds of those who are instructed; but a dark or too high a stile, figurative or learned phrases, spoil the fruit of instructions. Lastly, order and method contribute mightily to clearness. It is not fit that children

dren should be loaded at first, with many doctrines and precepts. General instructions, the principles of religion, and the simplest ideas, ought to go foremost, and then particular instructions and more complex ideas, may be proposed; but still with a due regard to the age, capacity, and progress, of children.

2. Instruction is to be delivered in a delightful manner. This is the way to insinuate our selves into the minds of children. Nothing wins more upon them, than a sweet and pleasant way of speaking, and nothing gives them so much disgust, as roughness and severity. If religion was represented to them with an attractive aspect, they would certainly embrace it with eagerness. But for the most part those who teach or speak to them of religion, do it with an air of severity, and a dismal tone, and with those circumstances, which make them averse to it. Commands, threatnings, and constraint are used, to make them take their Catechisms or say their prayers; if they fail to do this, their teachers are angry and beat them. When we exhort them to piety, instead of going about this with such a gentleness as might make virtue amiable to them, we speak in a harsh and chiding manner. The effect of this is, that children seeing nothing in religion that is enticing, take up a prejudice against it; they look upon that instruction, to which they are compelled, as a hard piece of labour and drudgery. Religion is no sooner mentioned, but it damps their good humour, they do nothing but by constraint and against their will; they free themselves from that constraint as soon as they can, and they bear during their whole life an aversion, or at least, an indifference to religion.

II. I have been discoursing hitherto, of what relates to the knowledge of religion, and I hope I have clearly proved, that generally speaking, children are ill instructed. I am now to consider education with relation to practice. For it would be to no purpose, to infuse into young people, a perfect knowledge of the truths and duties of religion, if they were not taught to make a good use of that knowledge, and to direct it to its true end, which is the practice of virtue and piety. But it is seldom that the care of parents, and of those who have the instructing of children, goes so far. If they take some care about their instruction, they generally neglect them as to the practical part, and they little enquire whether they live according to the precepts of religion. Now instructions thus dispensed, do not only prove useless, but they may likewise make children doubly wicked, and fill them with the most dangerous prejudices. When children observe that religion is proposed to them only, in an historical and speculative manner, and that provided they remember what is told them, and are able to give an account of it, they are commended for being well skilled in religion; and that as for the rest, they are permitted to live as they please, and that they are not chid, tho' they do not practise what they were taught; they conclude from all this, that religion consists wholly, in the knowledge and profession of certain truths, and that it is not absolutely necessary to frame their lives according to the rules of the Gospel. They accustom themselves besides to slight their knowledge, and to act against the principles of their own consciences. These pernicious sentiments are infused into children,

children, when instructions are not directed to practice. To prevent so great an evil, these rules are to be observed.

1. The design of proposing the truths and doctrines of Christianity to children, should be to beget in them a love and a respect for them; and in order to that, we should let them see, their certainty, their importance, and their use. It ought then to be carefully inculcated to them, that there is nothing more true and certain, nothing of greater importance, or that concerns us nearer than religion, and that in comparison with it, all that we see in the world, is of very little or no consequence; and lastly, that it was revealed for no other end, but to make us good, and to conduct us to the highest blessedness. By this method, instruction will always terminate in practice. By teaching children to know God, we shall excite in them a love and reverence towards that Supreme Being. By speaking to them of Providence, we shall make them apprehend that God sees every thing, and what reason we have to depend upon, and to fear him. By telling them the history of the Bible, we shall make them observe in those various events, the effects of God's wisdom, of his goodness power and justice. In explaining to them the doctrine of the sacraments, we shall chiefly apply our selves to make them understand, what these sacred ceremonies oblige Christians to, what an august and venerable thing baptism is, and what purity is required in those who are baptized: and so when we speak to children of Christ and his sufferings, of the resurrection and a future judgment, of the punishments and rewards of another life, and of all the other truths, we should do it in such a manner, as may stir them up to piety and holiness.

2. In the next place we ought to engage children to the practice and observation of the duties of Christianity, with relation both to worship and manners. And first it is altogether necessary, to teach them to render to God the worship that is due to him. There are few Christian families, where something is not done with this intention. Children are made to learn some prayers, to say them mornings and evenings, and to be present at the publick and private exercises of piety. But the main should be, to bring them to sincerity in divine-service, lest they fall into impiety and hypocrisy. The greatest endeavour should be, to accustom them to pray with attention and reverence. This may at first seem difficult; we neither see the heart of children, nor can regulate the motions of it. But yet I think, there are ways to fix their minds, which might be successfully used: and I hope my readers will not think it amiss if I dwell a little upon this head, considering the importance of it.

1. I would not have children pray, before they have some knowledge of what they are doing. There is a custom established every where, which I look upon as the first cause of indevotion; and that is, to make little children recite prayers, and long ones too. I do not apprehend the use of this, nor where the inconvenience would be, if children did not pray at an age when they can hardly speak an articulate word. It would be time enough to make them pray, when they are capable of some reflection. If we did wait till then they might pray with attention; and, I make no doubt, but that they would do it with pleasure and reverence.

Children think it an honour to do what is done by men; if therefore they were not permitted to pray till they came to a certain age, they would look upon praying as a particular privilege. But when they are made to pray before they have any sense of what they do, it puts this notion into their heads, that praying is nothing else but reciting of prayers: and besides, that obligation which is laid upon them, to perform regularly a duty, of which they do not yet understand the necessity or the use makes that they only observe it out of custom.

2. I could wish that when we begin to make children pray, we should teach them plain and short prayers, wherein they might say nothing but what they understood. Two or three sentences are enough in those beginnings, and as they grow in years, longer prayers may be prescribed them. Brevity is to every body a help to devotion; but children being not capable of a long attention, it is certain that long prayers are not at all fit for them.

3. It would be very useful to discourse with them about the excellency and the necessity of prayer, and to make them apprehend what an honour it is for us, to speak to God and to lay open our necessities before him.

4. In order to accustom children, to look upon prayer with reverence, and to go about it with seriousness; they should not be allowed to pray when they are strongly possessed with some passion, or object, or when they have committed a considerable fault against piety.

5. It is particularly necessary to regulate and observe their behaviour and looks, while they are at prayers, and then likewise to express a reverence our selves, and to say or do nothing that may give them any distraction. It is a custom as bad, as it is ordinary in families, to go to and fro, to be busy and to talk all the while that children are saying their prayers. How is it possible that amidst all that noise, which would even hinder older people to pray as they ought, children, whose thoughts are so rambling, should not be distracted? And what reverence can be expected from them about the exercises of piety, when their fathers and mothers who are present shew none at all? This is what I have to observe, concerning prayer, which is the principal part of divine worship.

As to what concerns the duties of morality, very particular care ought to be taken, to make children observe them. The first mean to be used next to instruction, is to exhort them to the practice of virtue, and to represent to them, that piety and holiness are the essential characters of a Christian. But the exhortations directed to them will have no great effect, if they are not dispensed with prudence. Sometimes parents spoil all, tho' they mean well. They exhort and chide at every turn, they are perpetually admonishing and moralizing; by this they give a disgust to their children, instead of winning upon them. Exhortations ought to be accompanied with discretion and gentleness; above all, we should endeavour to persuade and to prevail upon children by reason, that so being convinced in their own hearts of the justice, beauty, and usefulness of virtue, they might practise it of their own accord, out of inclination and with pleasure.

That we may be able to exhort children as is fitting, it is requisite to be well acquainted with their temper, and to observe which are their predominant inclinations; that if those inclinations are good, they may be cultivated,

cultivated, and if had corrected. And it is easy to know the temper of children, because they deal ingenuously, and have not yet learned the art of dissembling. If men did make this their study, if they did take hold of the good disposition which may be in children, if they did apply themselves to oppose the predominant faults, to which either their age or their constitution inclines them; they would preserve them from many vices, and make them great proficients in virtue.

Besides this, parents either by themselves or others, ought to watch over the conduct of their children, and to enquire strictly, whether they practise the lessons which are given them, whether they are afraid of doing ill things, whether they forbear those faults for which they have been reprov'd, whether they resist those vicious inclinations, whether they are gentle, sober, humble and moderate in their discourses, actions, and behaviour. To this end, it is very proper, that they should not have too much liberty, and that they should be for the most part under the eye of some wise persons, who may observe their deportment. I do not enlarge upon these considerations, because they would carry me too far; neither do I speak here of encouragement, correction, and example, nor of some other means which might be very usefully taken in hand for regulating the conduct of children, because these have been spoken to already.

There is ground enough to conclude from what has been said, that corruption proceeds primarily and chiefly from the ill education of youth. The ordinary education of children being not Christian, what wonder is it, that true Christianity and solid virtue should be so scarce? The first impressions are the strongest. The principles which have been imbibed in the first years of life, do not wear out afterwards; and those who had not a good education, are not often known to be wise and regular in their conduct.

Let it not be objected here, what many are wont to alledge upon this subject, That the errors of education are not so considerable, but that they may be corrected afterwards, and that wisdom comes with years. Thus those men reason who only examine things superficially; but such persons did never seriously reflect upon man's temper, upon the manner how ill habits are formed, or upon experience. Almost all good or ill habits begin in infancy, and they grow stronger afterwards. The age which succeeds youth is so far from supplying the defects of education, that on the contrary, the longer a man lives, the more difficult it is for him to return to virtue, if he did not set out well at first. For besides, that habits are then stronger and deeper rooted, business does also come with age, and people have no longer that leisure and freedom, which they had when they were young. Those therefore who do not take right measures early, and who launch into the world with ill principles, are still growing worse instead of amending. This is verified by daily experience. Age seldom alters men for the better.

I do not deny, but that people who were neglected in their infancy, or whose youth has been unruly, are sometimes known to change their manners and their conduct, when they come to a riper age. But we are to consider how this change happens, and what the nature of it is. In some it is a thorough change and a sincere return to virtue. God

sometimes works conversion in the greatest sinners ; and he does this commonly by afflictions, sicknesses and pains. But such kinds of conversion are not very frequent. The change which we think we observe both in our selves and others, is not always sincere ; it is often no more than an effect of age, of the state we are in, or of custom.

Age does two things, it deadens the passions, and it changes them. In the heat of youth passions are violent, and make a great stir ; when the prime of life is over, a man perhaps is no longer a libertine or a deboshee ; but his exterior only is reformed. The same principle of corruption remains in his heart. He that was sensual and given to lewdness, moderates himself ; but still his heart and his imaginations are defiled. He that was profane and impious, does no longer profess libertinism openly, he practises some duties of religion. But for all that, he has no more devotion, or faith than before. Age does likewise change mens passions and inclinations. Young people have their passions, and supposing these should abate about forty or fifty, or even that they should be quite left off, which yet happens but seldom ; there are other passions which succeed those of youth, and which work the stronger, because they are not so much mistrusted, and because they make less noise, and are hid under the pretence of a lawful calling. Thus we see often that libertines and deboshees, end with ambition and covetousness. The world calls the change which is observed in those men, conversion and amendment. A man is said to be reclaimed from the errors of his younger days, when his conduct is no longer scandalous, or manifestly criminal ; but if he is free from the faults of his youth, he is guilty of others, which he had not then. He is no longer dissolute, but he is a slave to ambition, he is covetous, unjust, and wedded to the world, more than ever. Nay, all things well considered, he is worse than he was in his youth ; since he has run from one vice into another, and loaded himself with the sins of the several stages of life. We are not to imagine, that every alteration which age makes in mens conduct and manners is a true conversion.

The various states, callings, and professions of men, do likewise put many of them upon altering their way of living and make them give over those excesses to which they have been addicted for some time. As soon as a man comes to be the master of a family, or to be preferred to places, he must of necessity grow more regular in his conduct, and forsake several disorders which he allowed himself in before. He becomes more serious, he applies himself closer to labour, he lives more retired, and he takes leave of the amusements of youth. Honour, decency, interest, the necessity of making a family, and other considerations, oblige him to this ; but religion has not always a share in this change.

Lastly, a habit of sinning does often blind and harden men to that degree, that they imagine, there is a sincere amendment in them, when there is none at all ; nay, when they are more corrupt than when they were young. Men at first are sensible of their faults, conscience checks them for the sins they commit ; but in process of time they perceive them no more ; conscience grows seared, and they sin without being aware of it. Habits seldom fail to produce this effect, of which we see a thousand instances in old sinners.

All this shews, that the foundations of the conduct of our whole lives are laid in youth, and that the chief reason why men live ill, is because they have not been well educated.

I do not think it necessary to mention the remedies of this Cause of Corruption: I have observed them all along, in shewing the faults which are committed in the education of youth: I shall only add, before I dismiss the subject, that all this does properly concern masters of families and pastors.

It were therefore to be wished, in the first place, that parents would take more care than they do, to breed their children well, and that in this they would proceed by the rules which reason and religion prescribe. They are mistaken if they think they may excuse themselves from this obligation, which both nature and piety lay upon them, and which cannot be neglected without a sin. But the carelessness of parents in this point, may very justly be wondered at; the education of their children is generally that of all things which they mind the least, and the reason of it is, that they themselves want religion and piety.

It would be requisite in the next place, that pastors should discharge their duty with relation to young people, and that to this end in all places and Churches, the necessary order and method were established for instructing the people and particularly children. I remark this, because in this respect things are not well ordered, so that in many places such helps and means are very much wanting. It is well known, that the opportunities of instruction and the helps to piety are mighty scarce in the country and in villages. Schools are there managed at a very ordinary rate, and many places have no school at all, whereby it happens that many persons cannot so much as read. There likewise, divine service is but seldom performed, and very carelessly too. The ministers who are appointed in those places, are generally either men of little worth, or men who do not watch over their flocks as they ought, and who are remiss in the exercise of their office. These are the essential defects which should be remedied, by those who have authority in Church or state.

Above all, it is requisite that Church-men should have a strict inspection over schools and families, and that catechisings were more frequent than they are. Young people ought to be the chief objects of the care of pastors; no part of their office is more useful, or rewards their labours with better success than that. Their endeavours to mend those who are come to age, are for the most part to little purpose, but what they do for children is of great benefit. If therefore they have a zeal for the glory of God, and if they wish to see a change in the face of the Church, let them apply themselves to the instructing of youth, and make it their business to form a new generation.

Among the particular establishments which might be made, for the edification of the Church and the benefit of young people there is one which would be of great use, and which seems to be absolutely necessary. And that is, that with relation to children, who have attained the age of discretion, the same order should be observed for their admission to the sacrament, which was practised in the primitive Church, when catechumens were to be received into the Church by baptism. This ad-

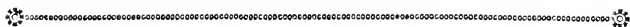
mission was very solemn. A long probation and instruction went before it. The catechumens were required to give an account of their faith, and they bound themselves by solemn promises and vows, to renounce the world and to live holy. No such thing is done at this day in the administration of baptism, because young children are baptized; but what is not done at the time of baptism, should be done when they come to years of discretion. And truly if there be not a publick and solemn profession, a promise in due form on the children's part, I do not see how we can well answer what is objected by some against infant-baptism, which yet is a good and laudable practice. A man cannot be obliged to profess the Christian religion, against his will or without his knowledge: this engagement is a personal thing, in which every body should act and answer for himself. When children are baptized, they know nothing of what is done to them; it is therefore absolutely necessary that when they come to the years of reason, they should ratify and confirm, the engagements they came under by their baptism, and that they should become members of the Church out of knowledge and choice. Now the fittest time for such a confirmation and promise, is when they are admitted to the participation of the holy sacrament.

The order then which I mean is this: first that when children desire to be admitted to the sacrament, they should be instructed for some weeks before, and that at the same time they should be informed of the sacredness and importance of this action, and of the promise they are to make, that so they might prepare for it betimes. In the next place, that they should be examined, and that they should publicly render an account of their faith. This examination being over, that they should be required, to renew and confirm in a publick and solemn manner their baptismal vow, to renounce the devil and his works, the world and the pomp of it, the flesh and its lusts, and to promise that they will live and die in the Christian faith: and then that they should be admitted to the communion by benediction and prayers.

It will no doubt, seem to some, that I am here proposing a novelty, and that too not very necessary; that there is no occasion for all this solemnity; that it is enough to examine and exhort children in private, and that this confirmation of the baptismal vow is included and supposed in the admission to the sacrament. To this I say, that the order I propose will be thought a novelty by none but such as do not know what was anciently practised, and who call innovation every thing, which does not agree with the custom of their country or their Church. This is an imitation of the ancient and the apostolical order; and besides, this establishment being altogether suitable to the nature of the Christian religion, as I have just now made it appear, it ought not to be rejected.

As for what is said, that it is sufficient if children are examined and admitted in private: I answer, that the corruption of the age we live in is so great, that in many Churches this admission, and the examination which precedes it, is but three or four hours work, and sometimes less. Pastors and those to whom this function is committed, do often go about it very negligently; they content themselves with some questions, which for the most part relate only to doctrine and controversy; they address to children general exhortations to piety, but they take no care to

instruct them in morals, or to examine their conduct; they do not require of them an express ratification of the baptismal vow. I know there are pastors who do their duty, but the best thing would be, to have this form of examination and admission regulated in such a manner, that it might not be in the breast of every minister to do in this matter as he thinks fit. And that all this might be done the more orderly, it would be fitting that according to the practice of the primitive Church, some persons should be appointed on purpose to instruct young people and catechumens. What care soever may be taken of children, and whatever may be done for them in private instructions, it is certain, that publick and solemn exhortations on the one hand, and promises on the other, would make a much greater impression upon them. They would then look upon their admission with respect, they would remember it all their lives, and this solemnity would prove as useful and edifying to the whole Church as it would be to young people. I offer this with the greater confidence, because an order like this has been settled of late in some Churches, and is there observed with extraordinary success.



C A U S E VI.

Example and Custom.

HERE is no doubt to be made, but that birth, education, and imitation, are three general principles of the irregularities of men's conduct. The state in which they are born gives them a bias towards vice. Education, as has been shewn in the foregoing chapter, cherishes and maintains in most men that vicious inclination: but custom and example give the finishing stroke to men's corruption, and make vice reign in the world with a sovereign sway. This third principle is so general and so powerful, that some have thought it the chief cause of corruption, and that we cannot better explain how sin is propagated and transmitted from the parents to the children, than by saying, that this happens through imitation. And indeed it cannot be denied, but that men are particularly drawn into evil by example and custom. If this be not the primary or the only spring of corruption, it is at least one of the principal sources of it. And therefore I thought it proper to consider this matter here with some attention.

All that I am to say in this chapter is founded upon these two suppositions. 1. I suppose that men love to act by imitation, and that example is one of those things which have the greatest force upon their minds. But when the example is general, and supported by custom and multitude, they are yet more inclined to follow it. They not only conform to custom, but they think it besides just and lawful to do so. General use is to them instead of a law, by which they judge of what is innocent and forbidden. And that which doth yet more forcibly determine them to follow example and the greater numbers, is, that they think it a disgrace to do

otherwise. So that the fear of contempt added to their inclination makes them perfect slaves to custom. If some remnant of knowledge and conscience does not suffer them to imagine that there is no hurt in complying in all things with custom, however they comfort themselves with the thought that the evil they do is not very great, and that if they are not innocent, they are excusable at least, when they can plead example and common practice in their own behalf.

I suppose 2dly, That example and custom are bad for the most part. This I think needs not be proved; and if it did, this whole treatise might afford us sufficient proofs of it, since ignorance, prejudices, false maxims and all the other causes of corruption I have mentioned, are so many dispositions, sentiments and practices, which are grown customary, and are established by the most general use.

But it is not so needful to prove that the multitude of ill examples is very great, and that custom is generally vicious, as it is to shew that under the shelter of example and custom, corruption is still spreading farther in the world and in the Church.

In order to this, I shall consider the power of custom and example, in these three respects. With relation, 1. To matters of faith. 2dly. To the order of the Church. And, 3dly. To manners. What I am to say upon these three heads will discover the source of those three great imperfections which are observed in the Christian Church, I mean error, want of order, and the bad life of Christians.

1. Matters of faith should not be subjected to the tyranny of custom. Religion does not depend upon men's fancies and opinions: the truths of it are eternal truths, it is founded upon an immutable principle, and it is not more liable to change than God who is the author of it. And yet we see but too frequently, that in religion as well as in worldly affairs, example is more prevalent than either reason, justice or truth. Men do scarce ever examine things in their own nature, but custom is the rule of their faith and sentiments; by this rule they determine what is true or false, what they are to believe or to reject. And this prejudice is so strong and men have carried it so far, that multitude and custom, are looked upon as a proof and character whereby Christians are to distinguish truth from error, and to judge what side they are to chuse in matters of religion.

What is the reason why so many people do not perceive, that certain doctrines are palpable errors, and monstrous tenets? We wonder how it is possible in so learned and refined an age as this is, that the grossest fables and extravagances should still go down with men of parts, for divine truths and adorable mysteries. A time will come, when posterity will hardly believe, that ever such opinions were received, or that ever men did in earnest dispute for or against such or such a tenet. It is only the prejudice of example and multitude, which do blind men at this day; they have been nurs'd up and educated in those persuasions, they see them obtaining among numerous societies, and that is the occasion of their obstinacy in error.

Nothing but this inclination of men to follow custom, keeps up in the Church those disputes which rend it into so many different sects. The principle and design of most disputes is no other, but that men will main-
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tain at any rate, the sentiments of their party; and by this means those who are in error, instead of being undeceiv'd, are more and more confirm'd in it. Every body swallows without chewing, all that is profess'd in the society or communion in which he lives, and condemns without examination the opinions which are maintained by small numbers or by persons of another country or society. Those who are prepossessed do not so much as make it a question, whether they may not be mistaken, and whether the truth may not be on the other side. It is to no purpose to alledge to such people the most invincible reasons, to press them with express declarations of Scripture, or with unanswerable objections; for either they do not attend to all this, or if they examine those reasons and objections, it is with a mind full of prejudices, and resolv'd before-hand to think them frivolous, and not to alter their sentiments. They satisfy themselves with some sorry argument, or wretched answer. If any scruples and difficulties remain, they shake them off in a trice, and set their conscience at rest, with this consideration, that they follow the common opinion; they make no doubt but that they are safe, as long as they side with the greater number. Besides, the advantages of the world which may be obtain'd by the adhering to the general opinion, would fully determine them, if they were not determin'd before, and they easily persuade themselves, that their spiritual welfare and the truth are to be found in that party, which agrees best with their temporal interest.

2. Custom is likewise, the chief obstacle to the restoring of order in the Church. I could here make a long article, if I would mention all the defects, which may be observed in the state of the Church and of religion, with relation to order. But having done this already in the beginning of this second part, I shall only say in general, that nothing contributes so much to the maintaining of disorder as custom does. The most beneficial laws and institutions are look'd upon as dangerous innovations, when they are not authorized by practice: men dare not so much as attempt to introduce them. On the other hand, useless or ill practices, are thought sacred establishments, as soon as they are confirmed by time and custom. If men do but endeavour to lay aside some ceremony, to make some alteration in a liturgy, or in the form of divine-service; it seems to many, that the very essence of religion is struck at. Thus it happens that abuses which are palpable, and acknowledged by all men of sense, subsist for whole ages and cannot be reformed.

The difficulty of reviving the apostolical discipline, and of restoring, Church-government and the ministry of pastors, to the state they ought to be in, proceeds from the same cause. Because a certain form of ecclesiastical government and discipline, obtains in a country, it is pretended to be the best and most perfect, in which nothing is to be altered, and those are not so much as heard, who propose the establishing of another. If any one thinks it a fault to suffer scandalous sinners in the bosom of the Church, if he thinks that they ought to be excommunicated, and that Christians ought to maintain no familiar intercourse with them; tho' such a man has the laws of the apostles on his side, yet he shall be call'd an innovator. Tho' he should plainly shew the inconveniences of the ordinary practice, and the necessity of discipline, from Scripture, from the pattern of the first Christian ages, and by the most convincing arguments;

arguments; yet custom will still be urged against him; the divine laws shall give place to common usage, and the present practice shall prevail above that of the primitive Christians.

III. Example and custom have a great force, especially in those things which concern manners. Men are not altogether such slaves to custom in matters of opinion about religion, because opinions are shut up within the heart, but in practical things and in manners, there are few men who are not carried away by the stream of the multitude. People think themselves excused from the observation of the plainest and the most sacred duties, as soon as they cannot observe them without departing from custom, and so they conform to the common use how bad soever it may be. Those who condemn the vicious and corrupt manners of the age, and practice the rules of the Gospel, who for instance abstain from swearing, and reprove those who do it, who make scruple of lying and of transgressing the rules of their duty; are look'd upon in the world as humour-some people, and stigmatized with odious names and imputations. If they plead the express commands of Christ and his apostles; instead of giving up the cause, men will strain the Scripture, and by forced explanations and impious glosses, endeavour to fix a sense upon it which may favour the ordinary practice. While piety dares not shew it self, vice is respected, and bad men carry it boldly every where, because the numbers are of their side. Maxims directly opposite to the moral precepts of our Saviour, are not only received and tolerated, but they are defended as innocent for this single reason, that the generality of men approve and practise them. This might be confirmed by innumerable instances.

We can hardly imagine any thing more contrary to the precepts of the Gospel, than that worldly life which is led by many Christians. They spend their whole time in the cares of the body, they wear out their lives in idleness, gaming, pleasures and diversifements; they deny themselves nothing, they make it their study to live luxuriously and to gratify themselves. This kind of life is inconsistent with piety, but because it obtains among persons of the higher rank, it is very hard to persuade those who follow it, that they ought to quit it. It is by alledging common practice, that men defend a soft and effeminate life, fashions contrary to chastity and modesty, the too great familiarity of the young persons of both sexes, the reading of ill books, the plays which wound honesty and religion, scandalous diversions, and those assemblies where the most enticing baits and allurements to vice are to be met with, and where the minds of young people receive the most dangerous impressions: all these things, I say, are defended by custom.

So that when luxury, and expensiveness and state in apparel, eating, or furniture, are once established; we endeavour to no purpose to bring men to Christian moderation, and to banish that multitude of scandals and vices, which must needs attend such kind of excesses. Thus in some nations where drunkenness is in vogue, it is in vain to oppose so vicious a custom. In spite of all that can be said against drunkenness and intemperance, people are so far from parting with that vice, that they fancy there is no sin in being drunk.

To put up no injuries, to indulge revenge, to be tender and nice upon the point of false honour, to stick at nothing that can promote one's fortune,

tune, to assume all shapes, to disguise one's sentiments, and to supplant others; all these are maxims which are followed without scruple, because they are authorized by use, and by the false opinions of men. It would signify nothing to alledge to those who are possessed with such sentiments, what the Gospel enjoins us concerning patience, forgiving of injuries, humility, sincerity, justice and charity; such morals will not be so much as hearkened to, because these matters are otherwise determined to custom. By the same reason it is pretended, that in offices, in trade, in arts and in the various professions of life; every thing which is usually practised by men in those several callings, may lawfully be done. Nay, even an oath is not sufficient to undeceive people; most men explain their oaths and regulate their consciences by the examples of others; they use all the methods of gain which custom has introduced, without enquiring whether they are justifiable or not.

When I speak here of custom and example, I do not only mean that which is established by general use, but that likewise which is authorized by men in credit. The quality of persons produces the same effect that great numbers do; one single example has sometimes as much force, as the united examples of a multitude. All that is done and approved of by princes, great men, magistrates, and persons of quality, is a law to a great many people. A small number of considerable persons, who join their endeavours to bring a practice into fashion, is enough to make it in a little time to be generally followed, how bad soever it may be. This is so commonly seen, that I think it needless to give instances of it.

I shall add three considerations, which deserve a very particular attention; I have already touched them by the by, but I will propose them more distinctly here.

I. That common opinion, that it is necessary to embrace the sentiments and the ways of living which are received in the world, is that which makes corruption spread and insinuate it self every where. Men make it a law to themselves, and repute it honourable to comply with custom. It is laid down for a maxim, that we must live as others do, and accommodate our selves to the fashions which are established, and that it would make us ridiculous, if in behaviour and manners we should differ from the age and the place we live in. I do not absolutely reject this maxim, because it is capable of a very good sense. A Christian should not profess an unsociable piety: he may lawfully observe certain decencies, and comply to a certain degree with the opinions and manners of those he converses with; nay, he ought to do this for the interest of religion and piety. But such a compliance and such regards become criminal, when they engage him to act against duty and conscience. If the custom be bad, he ought to depart from it, and to do in spite of it, whatsoever God commands; he does not deserve the name of a Christian, who has not the courage to do this.

And yet few people are capable of this resolution, the greatest part is overcome by the temptation of the multitude; the regard they bear to the example and judgement of others, produces in them a false shame which hinders them from doing their duty, and prompts them to evil notwithstanding all the checks of conscience. And nothing is so fatal and pernicious in the state of those who thus comply with custom, as
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that they become such habitual slaves to it, that they are no more able to alter their conduct. When a man is once got into a certain course of life in the world, he pursues it, and he is still engaging deeper into it, till at last he comes under a kind of impossibility of leaving it tho' he would; because in order to that, he must break of those ties and engagements, which he has been contracting for a great while; he must withdraw from divers companies, and enter quite upon another way of living; now it is very seldom, if ever, that people can resolve upon all this.

2. Even those persons who are well dispos'd, are shaken by example and custom: I said something of this in the chapter of falsehood. A great many are satisfied, that the side of the multitude is not the best, and that the manners of the age do not agree with religion; but they dare not swerve from custom, the fear of being hated, reproached, or despised, restrains them, and frequently, extorts sinful compliances from them.

I shall take notice to this purpose of what happens every day to young people, whom parents have endeavoured to breed up to piety and good manners. When they first go out of their father's house, they are ashamed and afraid of doing ill things, sin raises some kind of horror in them. With these dispositions they launch into the world, they are placed either in the army or at court. And there they do not find those maxims of piety practised which have been infused into them, but they have only ill examples before their eyes. They see there persons who have been recommended to them for patterns, of whom they are to learn how to behave themselves, upon whom their promotion and fortunes depend, and who are reputed honest men; they see such persons I say living in a licentious manner. This at first surprizes and troubles them, their conscience holds out for a while, but example does insensibly lessen in them the abhorrence of vice, their good dispositions vanish in a little time, and at last they swim with the stream, they embolden themselves in ill things, and they become finished libertines. They do in like manner drink in the atheistical sentiments, which commonly are in fashion among persons of quality. If they are but told, that men of wit and quality do not believe a thing, or, that they entertain any opinion; that is enough to make them embrace that opinion, and question the truths of religion.

3. In the last place men are apt to think that if custom does not justify, it does at least excuse vice, and that if they do amiss in the following the general practice, it is but a sin of infirmity which God will not take notice of. This is the last refuge of a great many persons; they will own, that mens manners are very much depraved, and that there is little of true piety among them, but they will say; this is the fashion now a-days, this is the way of the world, and he cannot be very guilty, who does only what others do. Nay, several men who are not libertines, and who see what should be done for the good of the Church, and the promoting of piety, fancy themselves under no obligation to oppose custom. Their excuse is, That it signifies nothing to strive against a torrent. So that sloth and timorousness together, magnifying the difficulties which their imagination represents to them, they make no efforts, and they let things go on at the usual rate. While custom corrupts and blinds some, it intimidates and discourages others; and thus vice and disorder are still taking deeper roots.

Now two sorts of remedies may be applied to this cause of corruption, to wit, particular and general remedies.

The particular remedies are those cautions which every body ought to use, to prevent his being seduced by example and custom. There are two principal means for a man to keep himself free from this seduction, the first is to avoid ill examples as much as possible, to withdraw from those conversations, and to abstain from those employments which draw men into sin, and to chuse a kind of life which may not engage us too far into the world; and on the contrary, to seek after good examples, and to be conversant with virtuous persons.

* But as notwithstanding all these circumspections, we cannot avoid being often tempted by ill example, so we ought in the second place to arm and fortify our selves against this temptation; by strongly possessing our minds with the sentiments which religion inspires. I have shewed elsewhere, what judgement a Christian ought to make of custom and men's opinion. It is evident, that God having set us a law, by which he will judge us, and having given us the knowledge of that law, and powerful encouragements to make it the rule of our deportment; neither example nor the judgement of the world, can any ways excuse us from doing what God commands, or deliver us from the punishment which our disobedience deserves. Those who have a greater regard to custom than to their duty, are so much the more inexcusable; because the Gospel expressly forbids us, to govern our selves by the practise or example of the men of the world. St. Paul exhorts Christians, *† Not to be conformed to this present world, not to walk after the course of this world, not to follow other men's way of living; to renounce the world and the lusts of it.* Our Saviour enjoins his disciples, *To avoid the wide gate and the broad way of the multitude, and to strike into the narrow path which is walked in but by a few.* These are reflections, which every man who believes the Gospel, should frequently and seriously make, and which should serve him for remedies against the temptations arising from example and custom.

There are other general remedies, which tend to lessen the number of bad examples, and to alter the custom and usages which are contrary to the Christian religion. For tho' it may seem, that to go about the abolishing of that which is established, by a general custom and a long use, is to attempt an impossibility; and tho' we cannot expect that this cause of corruption should be entirely removed, yet the difficulty is not so great, but that it might in some measure be overcome.

This we might have reason to hope for, if first, those who know and love their duty would discharge it with courage, and if they did add to their knowledge a zeal supported by prudence and firmness. How great soever the degeneracy of men may be, there is still something in virtue, which attracts their respect and their love. The endeavours of good men against vice, are always attended with some success: if the benefit of their exhortations and good examples does not reach far, they may at least be useful to their families and their acquaintance.

But something more than this is requisite to reform general customs
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* See Part I. Cause III. Art. II. 4, &c. Cause V. Art. II. about the end.

† Rom. xii. Eph. ii. and iv. Tit. ii. Mat. vii. 13, 14.

and practices, and none can do this more easily and effectually, than those who are raised above other men, and who are in publick stations. I say therefore secondly, That if Christian princes and magistrates, would use their authority to this end, and be exemplary themselves, the corruption of the world would considerably abate, and bad examples would neither be so frequent nor so forcible as they are. It is in their power to banish the greatest part of those customs which are commonly received, and to establish contrary ones. The care and example of pastors are likewise a most efficacious remedy. If they did instruct Christians as they ought, if they did oppose the corruption of the age with the pure maxims of the Gospel, if they did set themselves against abuses, if they did endeavour in publick and in private, to bring all those that err into the way of truth, if they applied themselves to the instructing of youth, and if their manners were edifying and exemplary, there is no doubt but that they would soon stop the current of vices and scandals. It should be their chief care to oppose abuses and ill customs in their beginnings; because when they have once taken root, the remedy is much more difficult. In fine, as customs are established by degrees, so they are not abolished all at once, and therefore those who do not succeed at first in good a design, ought not presently to be discouraged and to grow away.



C A U S E VII.

Books.

*** HIS is the last Cause of Corruption which I shall mention, but
 * T * without question, it is one of the most general and of the most
 * * * remarkable. Books are as many publick fountains, from which
 vast numbers of notions and sentiments which are commonly received
 among men, and which are the principles of their actions, diffuse themselves into the world: and as it is impossible but that among an infinity of books, a great many must be bad, so it is certain, that books contribute very much to the keeping up of corruption. If men, as we have shewed in the precedent chapters, are ignorant and full of prejudices, if they have loose and impious notions concerning religion, if great defects are observable, both in the lives of Christians and in the state of the Church in general; if the people are ill instructed, and children are ill educated, the cause of all these disorders is partly to be found in books. It is therefore a most important subject which I am to handle in this chapter, but it is likewise a very large one by reason of the prodigious multitude of books, which I might have an opportunity to speak of here. But I must confine myself to that which is most material to be said upon this head. I shall speak, 1. Of ill books. And, 2. Of books of religion.

The number of bad books is infinite, and it would be very hard to give a catalogue of them; but I think that among all the sorts of ill books none do greater mischief in the world, than either those which lead to
 irreligion

irreligion and impiety, or those which are impure and filthy. The first attack faith, and the other corrupt manners.

1. The most dangerous of all books are those which attack religion, such are not only all the books of Atheists and Deists, but such are likewise all those works which tend to overthrow either the authority of the holy Scripture, or the facts and doctrines of Christianity, or the difference between virtue and vice, or any other principle of religion. I rank also in the same order the books which introduce scepticism, and the design of which is, to render the principles of faith or morality uncertain and dubious.

Those books in which impiety appears bare-faced, are not the most pernicious. Few persons ever durst maintain Atheism openly, or deny directly the fundamentals of religion. And besides avowed Atheists and Deists have not many followers. Their opinions raise horror, and a man's mind rebels against them. But those men, who tho' they do not openly espouse the cause of impiety, but pretending all the while that they acknowledge the existence of a God and a religion; do yet shake the principal truths of faith; those men, I say, diffuse a much more subtil and dangerous poison, and this may be particularly said of the Scepticks. In the main they drive at the same thing with the Atheists, they assault religion with the same weapons, and make the same objections. There is only this difference, that the Atheist decides the question and denies, whereas the Sceptick after he has mustered up all the objections of the Atheist and started a thousand scruples, leaves in some manner the question undetermined; he only insinuates that there is no solid answer to those difficulties, and then he concludes with a false modesty, and tells us, that he dares not embrace either side, and that which way soever a man turns himself, he meets with nothing but obscurity and uncertainty: this differs little from Atheism, and it does naturally lead to incredulity.

It is an astonishing thing, that books containing such pernicious principles should have been published, and that libertinism in opinions about religion, should have grown up to that pitch which we now see it at. The enemies of Christianity did never oppose it with so much subtlety and with such vigorous efforts, as some Christians do at this day. Some books appear from time to time, which are only collections of all the objections of Heathens and Atheists against the existence of God, against Providence, the divinity of Scripture, the truth of sacred history, the foundations of morality, and many other important heads; so that impiety is now arrived at its greatest height. It might be more general, but we cannot imagine how it could rise higher.

And this occasions a very considerable objection. It may be asked, How it came to pass that incredulity and scepticism, should appear in so knowing an age as this is, and that men of parts and learning should entertain such impious sentiments? It is necessary to dwell a little upon the examining of this difficulty, because it is so apt to perplex many. The Infidels urge it with great assurance, and they pretend to infer from it, that religion cannot stand a philosophical and learned age, and that none but the mob and the credulous part of mankind believe it. They say, that ignorant ages were the most favourable times to religion, that then every

every thing was believed; but that since men have begun to examine matters a little more narrowly they are become credulous.

But any reasonable man who does not love wrangling, may easily be satisfied upon this point. First, Infidels have no ground to suppose, that men had more faith, in the ages of ignorance than they have now; for this supposition is altogether false. There was but little faith in those ages, for we are not to call by the name of faith, a silly credulity which made the grossest impostures to pass then current, for certain, and even for divine truths. The Infidels do likewise suppose falsely that the learning of an age more enlightened than the precedent, is prejudicial to religion; for on the contrary it has done great services to it. If some subtle spirits have attackt it, a great many knowing and judicious persons of extraordinary erudition and eminent worth have illustrated and proved the truth of it, with greater solidity of arguments, than ever was known before. This must be acknowledged to the honour of God, and for the credit of the Christian religion.

But it will be said, That those who make objections against religion, are learned; that they are philosophical men, who in all other things reason true, and can distinguish truth from error. Let it be so; but then I ask those who urge this objection, how it happens that we see every day men of parts and sense, who yet will obstinately maintain palpable errors, and refuse to yield to the evidence of some truths, which are clear as the sun? To this nothing else can be said, but that such men are not so knowing and perspicacious as they should be, or that they do not make that use which they ought of their parts and judgement. I confess, that indeed that a man must have some parts and subtilty to be able to find difficulties every where. But that man makes a wretched use of his parts, when they serve him only to wrangle about the most certain truths.

Those which the Infidels call strong objections against the truths of faith, are but for the most part vain subtilties and meer flights of wit, which may be used alike upon all sorts of subjects. That we may be convinced of this, I shall only name here some of those truths or matters of fact, which are thought unquestionable, and which no man, tho' he had a mind, can doubt of. It is certain that the same objections by which the Infidels attack religion, may be turned against such truths or matters of fact. The subtilties of scepticism may puzzle a man, who shall maintain, that there was heretofore an emperor at *Rome* called *Augustus*, or who shall believe with all mankind that parents ought to love their children, and that it would be a sin to murder a poor wretch who is begging an alms; I say, a man, who maintains these truths, may be hard put to it, before he can get rid of all the questions of a captious sophister. But does it follow from thence that this man is mistaken? Is it to be imagined that a man can doubt in good earnest whether or not there was ever at *Rome* an emperor named *Augustus*, or whether parents ought to love their children? Will any ever be so extravagant as to believe seriously, that it is indifferent whether we can cut a poor man's throat, or give him an alms? The subtilties of arguments signify nothing against facts which are well averred, or against those natural sentiments, which are common to all mankind. Now religion is founded upon facts, and its principles are in part natural truths and sentiments, which

which we must needs feel and believe at all times. He that would destroy religion must confute those facts and sentiments, and infidelity will never be able to do it.

Philosophical knowledge is very much extolled by the Infidels; they pretend chiefly to a great exactness in reasoning, and yet they visibly run counter to right reason, and transgress the rules which true philosophy prescribes. It is contrary to reason, to judge that a thing is false or dubious, because there are some difficulties in it; it ought to be considered, that no man knows all things, or is able to answer all objections, and that what seems obscure to one man, will appear very clear to another. When we have reasons on the other hand to believe that a thing is true, when its proofs are stronger and more numerous than its difficulties, and when there are proofs which upon other occasions are sufficient to determine our judgment, true sense requires that we should yield to such an evidence. This method is particularly to be followed, when the matter in question is of some moment. In such things we are wont to govern our selves by the greater evidence, and to chuse the safer side. What can be therefore more irrational, than to hazard eternity, and to question the truth of religion, upon such considerations as would have no weight with us, and as would not stop us a minute in the ordinary affairs of this life?

Further, it is contrary to the rules of good sense, to pass a judgment upon those things of which we have no distinct idea, or which we do not thoroughly know. Men who can give no account of the operations of their souls, or of a hundred things, they see before their eyes, will yet talk at random about the manner in which God acts, or foresees future events; about what God ought or ought not to have done for the orderly disposing of all things; about the ends which that supreme Being proposes to it self, and about the means which may conduce to those ends. This is the height of extravagance and temerity, and yet it is at this rate, that the Infidels reason.

I must add besides, that men of parts are subject to the same passions with the vulgar, and that those passions hinder them from discerning the truth. These makers of objections who pretend to politeness and wit, are not generally sound at heart, but they love licentiousness; they are not addicted perhaps to a gross and shameful, but to a more refined libertinism; they observe a little decorum, but they do not relish the maxims of devotion and piety, and they cannot endure to be tied to them. Vanity has likewise a great share in their conduct. A great many imagine, that it is for their credit to distinguish themselves from the vulgar, and not to believe the things which are believed by the people: and when they have once embraced this way and set up for Scepticks in the world, they think themselves bound in point of honour, to maintain that character.

Men of knowledge are sometimes governed by many prejudices, and false motives. A preconceived notion or a meer circumstance is sufficient to determine them to the embracing of an opinion. What has been said of the conduct of princes, may be applied to the opinions and hypotheses of the learned. Wars and such other great events, upon which the fate of nations depend, and which make so much stir in the world, do not always proceed from wise and mature deliberation; some-

times they are but the effect of a passion, of a humour, or of some particular circumstance. Thus it is with the learned: we think too well of them, if we fancy that they are always determined by the greater weight of reason. The motives which prompt them to maintain certain opinions, are often very slight. They are not sensible of this; they think themselves guided by reason, and they do perceive the true principle of their actions or judgments. If Infidels did strictly examine themselves, they would find perhaps, that their scruples were first raised, and have been maintained since, either by some book they read when they were young, or by the love they had for some persons, or by their aversion to others, or by some ill treatment they have met with, or by the praises which have been given them for their wit, or by some prejudice they have conceived against religion in general, when they heard it ill defended; or against certain tenets which are particular to the society they live in, and manifestly absurd; or by some other motion of this nature.

If we call to mind in the last place, what has been said in the beginning of this treatise, to wit, That few Christians apply themselves sincerely to the study of the general truths, and of the principles of faith; we shall not wonder that among so many, who never inquired into the proofs of religion, some should be inveigled by the objections of libertines, and fall into infidelity.

I have in a manner slept out of my way; but this digression is not impertinent, since these considerations may serve as a remedy against incredulity and scepticism, which some authors would fain establish by their writings.

One would think that every body should abhor those impious books, but yet they are read and liked by many persons. Young people especially, who for the most part love novelty, and are inclined to vanity and licentiousness, do easily imbibe the principles which are scattered through such books: they are imposed upon by the gentleness, the wit, and some kind of learning which they commonly find there: being not well grounded in religion, they are struck with the reasonings of Infidels; the very first objection puzzles them; they begin to doubt of many things, and in a little time they become thorough-paced Scepticks. I leave any one to judge, what effects this may produce in an age so prone to vice as this is, and if young people can avoid being corrupted, when they are no longer restrained by religion and conscience. There is no condition more remediless, nor is there any state more deplorable, than when incredulity is joyned with dissoluteness of manners. People then are hardly to be reclaimed; age and ill life fortify their doubts and scruples, and they continue in that state to their dying day. This is the fruit which many reap from the reading of those pernicious books, but it is not all the mischief which is occasion'd by such writings. They may fall into the hands of many who have no great compass of knowledge, and beget several scruples in the minds even of good men. After these reflections, I make no doubt but it will be granted, That no books are more dangerous than these, and that to have the confidence of publishing them, is a superlative degree of impiety.

II. The books I have now spoken of, assault religion and piety in general, and by consequence open a door to all manner of disorders and
.. vices.

vices. There are others which tho' they do not attack the principles of faith, do yet introduce licentiousness of manners. It would be a long work, if I should specify here their several sorts, which are as many as there are vices, passions, or received errors among men: this is a detail which I cannot enter into. Being then forced to stint myself, I shall only speak of impure books: and I chuse this particular species of ill books, because the number of these is not only very great, but because they are those likewise, which do most generally corrupt men.

Their number is prodigious. First we have the obscene books of the Heathens, which are not only read by men, but are put likewise into the hands of youth. Some people are so infatuated with these books, that they fancy one cannot be a master of the Greek or Latin, unless he has read all the obscenities written in those two languages; which is as extravagant an opinion, as if a man should pretend, that whosoever designs to acquire a thorough knowledge of the French, or of any other living language, and to be able to speak and write elegantly in it, must read all the lewd poems and all the scandalous books which this age has produced.

Secondly, Besides impure books of Pagan authors, we have those that are writ by Christians. The world is over-run with books of this stamp, their number increases every day, and their amazing multitude is one of the strongest proofs of the extreme corruption of the times. It is the last degree of impudence to write in that style, and then to disperse it in the world by the press: the dissolution must needs be very great, when this is done so freely and so often as it is in this age. Nothing can be imagined more lascivious or execrable than some books which have been, and still are published from time to time: Paganism did never produce any thing more abominable upon the head of impurity, than several works which were hatch'd in the very bosom of Christianity; so that in this respect Christians have no cause to reproach Heathens.

These detestable books are not the only impure ones, nor perhaps the more dangerous; vast numbers of others are current in the world. What are so many books of love and gallantry, so many scandalous novels either feigned or true, and so many licentious pieces of poetry, but the productions of that spirit of impurity and dissoluteness which prevails in this age? Nay, even books of learning which treat of serious subjects, have a mixture of impurity. This infection is diffused through all sorts of books, and appears every day in some new shape.

As the number of impure books is great, so their effect is most pernicious; and none ought to wonder that I should assign these books as one of the general causes of corruption. No bad books are more generally read than these, none can with more reason be called publick fountains of vice and dissoluteness. The mischief they do in the world cannot be imagined. They prove to an infinity of persons, but especially to young people, schools of licentiousness. It is by the reading of them, that youth learn to know and to love vice. That age is prone to pleasure and to every thing that gratifies sense; and that inclination is so much the stronger, because it is cherished and fortified by an education altogether sensual, and because young people for want of good instruction, have not much piety, nor any great aversion to vice. From whence we may easily judge, that they are susceptible of those passions which gra-

tive sensuality; and that it is hard for them to resist those impressions, which the reading of impure books conveys into their minds. We see in fact, that uncleanness is commonly the first sin and the first passion which seduces men in their youth, and which engages them into vice, for their whole life: for it seldom happens but that all the ages of life, retain a spice of the irregularities of youth.

And yet for all that, these books have their advocates. Many persons reckon, that there is no harm either in reading, or even in publishing them. If we believe some authors, who infect the publick with books full of obscenities; none but fantastical people, possessed with a ridiculous and precise devotion find fault with those that write upon this subject. And in defence of their opinion, they alledge this maxim, * *To the pure all things are pure*; as if St. Paul who does not allow Christians so much as to speak an undecent word, did permit them to read and write things which are contrary to modesty, and may occasion scandal: from this maxim they conclude, that there is nothing in those books that offends modesty or religion; and they protest that for their part, the reading of them does not defile their imagination. I do not know the particular frame of those men's hearts; perhaps impure ideas and lascivious objects, are grown so familiar to them, that they do no longer perceive, that such ideas and objects make any impression upon them. But it is unconceivable how people can preserve a chaste heart, when they delight in writing or reading filthy things. After all, tho' the reading of such works should have no ill effects upon some persons, there are a great many more who will make an ill use of them; and this is enough to make every man who has any sense of religion to detest impure books.

What I have now said will be granted by many, but it will be thought, that to rank books of love and gallantry among impure books, and to condemn the reading of them, is something too severe. I confess, that all those books are not equally bad, and that some do not hurt modesty so visibly as others do. But yet there are not many, in which a spirit of impurity and licentiousness may not be observed. That love which makes the subject of so many books, is nothing else at bottom, but an impure and irregular passion, of which the Gospel obliges us to stifle the very first motions. What the world calls a meer intrigue of gallantry, is sometimes a pretty large step towards the sin of adultery. Sin indeed may be disguised in those books under another name, and may be dress'd in a modest garb, but that makes it slide the more easily into the mind. It is dangerous to dally with things, which deserve the utmost aversion of a Christian; and it is almost impossible but that the horror of impurity and of every thing that comes near it, must insensibly abate, in any one who is addicted to such readings. There are two maxims in the Gospel which decide this matter; the one is, † *That we are to abstain from the appearance of evil* the other, that in things indifferent, we ought to avoid whatsoever may prove a scandal or an occasion of falling to any body, especially when the scandal may be foreseen. Now here is at least the appearance of evil; it is certain that divers persons will make an ill use of those books, and by consequence the reading and publishing of them cannot be excused.

But

* Tit. i. 15. † 1 Thess. v. 22. See Rom. xiv. 13. 1 Cor. 10, &c.

But as if it were not enough to maintain, that the books in question may be read without sin; it is pretended besides, that the reading of them is useful and necessary to open the minds of young people. I do not deny but that it is a valuable quality to have quick and well-fashioned parts, but there are other books which may be read without danger, and which are much fitter to form the minds and judgments of young people, than books of gallantry, the reading of which, every body knows, has often spoiled the minds of those who were given to it. The greatest mischief that attends this kind of reading, is that it corrupts the heart and sullies the imagination, at the same time that it opens the mind. Now it were better to have a little less of that fashionableness and politeness of parts, which is so much esteemed in the world, than to acquire it at the expence of one's innocence.

But some people do not stop here. They proceed so far as to say, that these books are useful even in reference to religion, and that they are proper to restrain youth from vice; because we see in them the follies and misfortunes which irregular passions betray men into. I can hardly think that this is alledged in earnest. It is a strange sort of remedy against impurity, to make agreeable pictures of love, and to represent minutely, and in a natural and insinuating manner, all the motions which that passion excites in those who are possessed with it. We must be very ill acquainted with the tempers of men, and particularly of young people, if we can fancy that the reading of such books, will put them upon moral reflections, and inspire them with an aversion to vice. Daily experience shews that nothing is more vain or false than such an imagination.

It will be said, that at least those books ought to be excepted, in which among love-matters and licentious subjects, the reader meets with fine moralities; which may however serve for a preservative. But these books are not much better than the others; nay, I cannot tell whether they are not more dangerous. Those moralities are very ill placed, and few people are the better for them. It is a very suspicious kind of morality, which comes from the pen of those authors, who write indifferently upon matters of love, and religious subjects; who sometimes seem to be libertines and sometimes devout; who after they have said a hundred licentious things, given you the history of a great many disorders, and related several scandalous passages; entertain you with devotion and piety: this is a monstrous mixture. If those authors were truly religious, they would forbear writing those things which religion condemns, and which scandalize the publick. Such books are particularly fit to confirm worldly men in their opinion, that gallantry, provided it does not proceed to the highest degree of crimes is no great sin, and to persuade young people that they may easily grow devout hereafter, tho' they now spend their youth in libertinism. From all these considerations I infer, that let people say what they will, all the books which present their readers with impurity, either bare-faced, or under some veil, are extremely pernicious.

Having thus discoursed of ill books, I come now to the books of religion. It may seem at first, that I should rather seek in these the remedy, than the cause of corruption. Indeed the end of religious books should be to banish corruption and to establish piety in the world, and

here are many of them which attack ignorance and vice with success, and which may prove excellent preservatives against the corruption of the age. But I hope no body will take it amiss if I say that there are books of religion, which do not conduce much to the promoting of piety, nay that some prove hind'rance to it.

This I shall now endeavour to shew. I shall not speak of any particular book, I will only offer some general considerations, which my readers may apply as they see cause. It is not my design to rank among bad books all those works, to which some of the following reflections may be applied. Some indeed are down-right bad, but many are in several respects good and useful tho' they have their faults; and as good books ought to be distinguished from bad ones, so is it no less necessary, to discern what is good in every book, from what is naught or useless.

The books of religion which I think ought here to be taken notice of, are of four sorts. 1. Those which explain the Scripture. 2. The books of divinity. 3. The books of morality. 4. The books of devotion.

1. It cannot be denied but that among the books of the first sort there some very good ones, and that we have at this day great helps for the understanding of the holy Scripture. But it ought likewise to be granted, that some of those books which are designed for the expounding of Scripture, do only obscure and perplex the sense of it. It would be tedious to mention here all the defects of that kind of writing, I shall therefore observe only the principal.

1. The first and the most essential is the not expounding of Scripture, according to its true meaning; and this fault, which is but too frequent in commentaries, proceeds chiefly from two causes: 1. That expositors do not apprehend the scope of the sacred writers: and, 2. That they enter with prejudices upon the reading of Scripture.

The true way to understand the Scripture, is, to know the scope of it, and never to swerve from that. Good sense and piety, joyned with the study of languages, history, and antiquity, are here very serviceable. A commentator ought in a manner to transport himself into those places and times in which the sacred authors lived. He should fancy himself in their circumstances, and consider what their design was, when they spoke or writ; what persons they had to deal with, and what notions, knowledge or customs did then obtain. But those who, being ignorant of these things, set about expounding the Scripture, can hardly do it with success. It is a wonder if they do not miss the true mark, and if they do not obtrude forced, and very often, false glosses upon their readers.

On the other hand, many authors apply themselves to the examining of Scripture with a mind full of prejudices. They explain it by the present notions of the world. Nothing is more usual with commentators than to make the faithful under the Old Testament speak as if they had been as well acquainted with the truths of the Gospel as Christians are; and as if those questions and disputes, which are treated in common-places of divinity, had been agitated at that time. When those expositors, for instance meet with the word *righteous* or *righteousness* in the *Psalms*, they fancy that *David* had in his thoughts all that divines have vented concerning justification; and upon this supposal, what do they not say, or what do they not make preachers say? It has been observed, that
almost

almost all commentators are partial, and endeavour to put upon the Scripture a sense that favours the opinions of their respective sects. This spirit of a party is chiefly remarkable in some of those commentators which these last centuries have produced.

2. The second rule of a commentator should be, to expound clearly and familiarly the literal sense of Scripture, and never to have recourse to a mystical exposition, but in those places where the spirit of God directs us to look for it: and yet a great many authors do almost intirely forsake the literal sense, to pursue mystical explications. In their opinion, every thing is mystical in the holy Scripture, especially in the old Testament. They are not contented with unfolding the true mysteries and prophecies which manifestly relate to the times of the Gospel, but they turn all things into figure. They find mysteries, allegories, types and prophecies every where, even in the plainest discourses. This they call searching and diving into the Scriptures. But this way of expounding the word of God is a fountain of illusions: for as the Holy Ghost does not explain those pretended mysteries, so they must be put to their guesses and be beholden to their imagination for the discovery of them; and he that is the most copious or lucky in his conjectures, is the greatest man. Now I leave any one to judge, whether commentators, who follow no other guide but their imagination, can avoid being very frequently mistaken, and giving a great many handles to libertines and infidels.

3. We are not to forget here the school-commentators. The holy Scripture should be expounded in a simple and popular manner; and this cannot be denied, if we consider that it was given for the instruction and the salvation of all men, and that the discourses of Christ and his Apostles were addressed to the common people, and to such persons as were far from being philosophers. Nothing therefore seems more repugnant to the design of Scripture, than to explain it philosophically, and, which is worse, according to the principles of a false philosophy, as divers commentators do. They make use of the method, notions, and terms of the schools, to find out the meaning of the sacred writings. They apply to all subjects the rules prescribed by the school-men. They carefully distinguish in a text in those things which are called in the schools *Materia*, *Forma*, *Causa efficiens*, *Finis*, *Subjectum*, *Adjunctum*, &c. They seek in all reasonings the *Major*, the *Minor*, and the conclusion, as if the Holy Ghost, inspiring the sacred authors, had followed the scheme of *Aristotle's* logick, and had intended to make syllogisms in mood and figure. I say nothing here of that spirit of dispute and wrangling which runs through the scholastical commentaries, nor of the false senses and metaphysical explications, which they put upon the Scripture. Such books are obstacles rather than helps to the understanding of the word of God; they are fit only to perplex what is clear, and to spoil divines and preachers, by taking away from them that qualification they have most need of, I mean, good sense.

4. Another very different way from that simplicity with which the Scripture should be handled, is the method of those authors, who without necessity insist upon all the circumstances of a text, who sift all the terms of it, as if a mystery did lurk in every word; who descend to the minutest things and weary themselves in conjectures and questions. This

exactness is very useless and insipid. It may be sometimes necessary to clear a difficulty, to unfold an intricate meaning, and to observe the critical signification of words: but when the sense is natural and easy, and when the words are clear, to what purpose should a man insist upon all those illustrations? What need is there for him to be always pressing the signification of words, to remark all their different acceptations, and to explain what is to be understood by the words, *Death*, *Faith*, *Just*, every time that these terms occur. The true method is to pursue the things themselves and the meaning of a text, without criticizing upon words and circumstances.

5. It is the fault of many commentators to be prolix and too large. From every verse, nay, from every word, they take occasion to run into a common-place, and to vent a multitude of notions, so that they really give us sermons, dissertations, or lectures of divinity, under the title of commentaries. I do not absolutely condemn diffus'd commentaries; we meet sometimes with good things in them, but we find there likewise a great many which signify nothing. When all is done, brevity, clearness, and exactness, are infinitely to be preferred in a commentary before prolixity and copiousness: such length breeds obscurity and confusion, it makes preachers lazy, it tempts them to fill their sermons with a hundred needless things, it brings them to a custom of being tedious, of making digressions, and of passing by that which is essential and solid: all which is very far from promoting the edification of the church.

Besides, it is evident, That the defects of commentaries contribute very much to the corruption of Christians. The holy Scripture is the foundation of religion and piety; but commentaries are the stores from which the sense of Scripture is drawn, and from which preachers commonly take the matter of their sermons. Few of them endeavour to find out the sense of a text by their own industry; they consult their commentaries like oracles, and they blindly follow their decisions; it is therefore highly requisite that these books should not lead into error those who have recourse to them. When a blind man leads another, they both fall into the ditch. If then the guides, to whose conduct preachers give up themselves, are deceitful and false, the word of God will neither be well understood, nor well preached, and both preachers and people will err.

II. It is with divinity books as with commentaries; some are good, and others bad. The diversity of opinions which we see among authors, is a proof of what I say: some maintain as divine truths, things which others reject as false and pernicious sentiments; so that there must be no small error on one side or the other. All divines will own the truth of this remark; but it is here of no use, because it does not decide which books of divinity are good, and which are bad. Every body will pretend, that the bad books are those which teach a doctrine contrary to that which obtains in the society to which he belongs. In order to know who is in the right, or in the wrong, it would be necessary to judge here upon the merits of the cause, and to enter into the examination of all the controversies which divide Christians. But this I will by no means take upon me to do: it would be fitter for me to take notice of those faults which are common to the greatest part of divinity-books, I shall say nothing but what must needs be owned by all the sensible divines of any party;

party; and the reflections I am to make, tho' general, may perhaps be of some use to direct our judgement concerning the doctrine it self contained in those books.

1. Almost all the authors who have writ of divinity, have made of it, upon the matter, a science of meer speculation. They establish certain doctrines, they deliver their opinions, they prove them as well as they can; they treat of controversies, and confute their adversaries; but they do not seem to have meditated much upon the use of the doctrines they teach, with relation to piety and salvation. They are very short upon this head, which yet is the chiefest of all; they are not by half so solicitous to assert the duties, as they are to maintain the truths of religion. Now this is not teaching divinity. The design of religion is to teach men how they ought to serve God, and to make them holy and happy. If this was considered in the handling of divinity, and if care was taken to shew what relation all the parts of religion have to the glory of God, and to the holiness and felicity of man, there would be much more piety than there is now among Christians. Those who study divinity would learn betimes to direct it to its true end; and this would likewise be a means to distinguish material from insignificant points and questions, and to ease religion of all those needless disputes, which are one of the main causes of the corruption of Christians.

2. What I have now said leads me to a second observation; which is, that as several things might be left out of divinity-books, so other things are wanting, which it would be necessary to add to them. For the purpose, common-places do not insist much upon the general truths and principles of religion. They scarce give us any instruction about Church-discipline and government, or about the belief and practice of the first ages of Christianity: as for morality, it is there touched but very superficially. And yet these are essential articles in divinity, the knowledge of which is necessary to those who are called to preach the Gospel, to guide a Church, or to direct men's consciences.

3. Divinity-books are, for the most part, too scholastical. The method of the school has been long in vogue; and tho' the schoolmen's ways of handling divinity, may justly be looked upon as a defiance to sense and religion; yet that method has prevailed to that degree, that for some ages it was not lawful to swerve from it. Of late years indeed the school-men have lost a great deal of their credit; and in divinity, as well as in philosophy, many persons have no longer that blind deference for them which was paid heretofore. Yet, for all that, a great number of divines do still set up that method for their rule, and it is still as it were sacred in colleges and universities. Common-places to this day favour too much of the barbarism of the schools, and we find there but too many remainders of that dry and crabbed theology, which had its birth in the ages of ignorance. Instead of those simple and clear ideas, which render the truth and majesty of the Christian religion sensible, and which satisfy a man's reason, and move his heart, we meet with nothing in several bodies of divinity but metaphysical notions, curious and needless questions, distinctions, and obscure terms. In a word, we find there such intricate theology, that the very apostles themselves if they came into the world again, would not be able to understand it, without the help of a particular

cular revelation. This scholastick divinity, has done more mischief to religion, than we are able to exprefs. There is not any thing that has more corrupted the purity of the Christian religion, that has more obscured matters, multiplied controversies, disturbed the peace of the Church, or given rise to so many heresies and schisms. This is the thing which confirms so many ecclesiasticks in their ignorance and prejudices, and which keeps them from applying themselves to the solid parts of divinity, and to that which is proper to sanctify men.

Now all these defects are visible causes of corruption, which may be proved by this single consideration, that it is in common-places that Church-men learn their divinity: suppose then that those books do not give them a true idea of religion, what religion or what divinity can such men teach their people? One scholastick and injudicious author who is in credit in a country, and who is patronized by a professor, is enough to spoil the minds of young divines, and to bring into repute the most absurd and dangerous opinions and systems.

Tho' catechisms are not usually reckoned among divinity-books, yet it will not be useless to say something of them here, some great men have bestowed their pains upon works of this kind to very good purpose; and yet in this respect there is still something to be desired for publick edification.

1. It is to be wished that those subjects should only be treated in catechisms, which ought to be handled there, and that all the matters and questions which are above the reach of the people and of children, or which are not necessary to salvation, should be banished from thence.
2. That some essential articles, about which catechisms are very jejune should be added to them, and particularly these three; a general idea of the history of the bible; the main proofs of the fundamental truths of religion; and an exact explication of the duties of morality. This last article is for the most part extremely neglected in catechisms; nothing can be more dry and superficial than what they say upon the decalogue.
3. It would be fitting to make some alteration in the method observed in catechisms; for they are not all familiar enough: school-terms or figurative phrases are used in them; which either the people do not understand, or to which they affix false ideas. For instance, I would not have it said, *That the eucharist is the symbol of our spiritual nourishment, and of our union with Jesus Christ*: for besides that this is not an exact definition, this style is not proper for a catechism. These words *symbol, spiritual nourishment, union with Jesus Christ*, are figurative and obscure terms, would not the thing be plainer both to children and to every body, if we should say, that the eucharist is a sacred action and ceremony, wherein Christians eat bread and drink wine, which are distributed in remembrance of the death of Christ, and of the redemption wrought by him? In those works which are intended for youth and for the common people, it concerns an author to be clear and accurate, to omit nothing that is essential, to say nothing that is needless, to use plain and proper expressions, and to propose nothing but what is natural and easy to be apprehended. Catechisms are designed to give children the first tinctures and ideas of religion: now those ideas, we know, commonly stick by them as long as they live; if then they are not clear and true, it is not possible for them ever to be well acquainted with their religion.

III. The third sort of books are those of morality. This important part of religion which regulates manners, has been treated with a great deal of solidity and force in several excellent works. Nay, it is observed, That morality is more cultivated of late than it has been heretofore. But it were to be wished that the good books of morality we have at this day, were of a more general usefulness than they are. The best works of this kind, are above the people's capacity. There are various things in them, relating either to the reasoning part, the turn of thoughts, or the style, which cannot be understood, but by knowing and discerning persons. Almost all the able men who write upon morals have this fault, That they speak too much like ingenious men, and do not accommodate themselves enough to the capacity of the readers. They do not consider, that they ought to be useful to every body, that what seems clear to them, is obscure to the greatest part of those who peruse their writings, and that a book of morality, which is only understood by men of parts or learning, is of a very limited usefulness. They should therefore, at least in some of their works, endeavour to speak in a popular manner, and to handle matters with all possible clearness and simplicity. This would be no disparagement to them, and the doing it well would, I think, require all the abilities, parts, and talents, of the best writers: it is more difficult than it seems, to speak or write in such a manner, as that a man shall say all that is proper to be said, and at the same time be intelligible to all sorts of persons.

But if there are good books of morality, there are many on the other hand, which have considerable faults in them, and those faults are of great consequence, because morality ill explained, is capable of doing more hurt than good.

1. An author who treats of morality should always have these two rules in his view. 1. To explain exactly the nature of the duties which it prescribes. And 2. To persuade men to the practice of those duties. Now these two rules have not been sufficiently observed by all these who have published moral books, 1. They do not always represent with due exactness the nature of vice or virtue. Either the notions they give of them are not true, or they are too general. On the one hand, they are not accurate enough, in describing the true characters of each virtue and vice; and on the other hand, they do not distinguish their various kinds and degrees, which yet ought to be done if they intend that men should know their own pictures. 2. They do not press men enough to the practice of virtue. The end of morality, is to work upon man's heart and passions. In order to compass this end two things are necessary. 1. That all those great motives which the Gospel affords, should be strongly urged: and 2. That the false reasons and motives which engage men into the love of this world and give them any aversion to holiness, should be confuted. Morals cannot be usefully handled without the observation of these two maxims, the second especially: for the reason why many are not prevailed upon by the arguments and motives which are offered to them, is, because they are hindered by other arguments and motives. A reader frames in himself a hundred objections against what he reads in a book of morality; man's heart is no sooner inclined to any vice, but it grows fertile in evasions, reasons, and pretences. Every
sinner

sinner has his excuses and his shifts. If these who teach morality do not obviate those objections and destroy those excuses, they can never obtain their design; but this is a trouble which few authors care to take upon them.

2. Books of morals would produce more fruit than they do, if the morality they teach was neither too much relaxed, nor too severe. Morality is relaxed, when it does not propose the duties of a Christian life in their full extent, or when it does not assert the absolute necessity of the observation of those duties. It is strained and too severe, when it imposes duties which God has not commanded, or which cannot possibly be practised; and when it ranks among sins things which are innocent. I touch this only by the by, because I have spoken already in some other places of this Treatise, both of the remiss and over-severe notions which men form to themselves about religion. See Part I. Cause I. Art. II. and Cause II. Art. V. VI. and Part II. Cause III. Art. I.

3. Some of the authors who handle morality are guilty of another fault, and that is a want of accuracy and exactness in their ideas and reasonings. They do not consider enough, whether every thing they advance is strictly solid and true, whether the principles they lay down will hold, whether their maxims are not stretched too far or absurd, whether they do not contradict themselves, whether they do not make use of frivolous reasons, whether nothing is false or mean in the motives they urge; in a word, whether or not their works will be able to stand the censure of a judicious reader. Moralists as well as the generality of preachers, are a little too much carried away by the heat of their imagination and zeal, and they do not reason enough. They often go about to move people with rhetorical figures, rather than by dint of reasons. And this is a very ill method. In matters of morality, it chiefly concerns a man to speak and to argue close; without this it is impossible that he should either convince the mind or produce a solid and discerning piety.

4. The world is full of books of morality, and yet there are several important subjects which have not hitherto been treated as they ought, or if they have, it was in works which are not read by the people. Those who study morality are often sensible of this defect, and complain justly that they do not find in books, all the light and helps they look for there: it is but of late that any thing has been writ with exactness in French, upon restitution. Who can doubt but that a good book concerning impurity would be highly useful? This sin is exceeding common, but it is one of those about which the people are the least instructed. If Christians understood the nature of this vice, its consequences, and the duties of those who have fallen into it, they would certainly avoid it more carefully than they do. I might say the same of injustice, of swearing, and of some other subjects.

IV. I come in the last place, to books of devotion: it is very necessary to make a right choice of them, because of all the books of religion they are those which are the most read.

1. I cannot help saying in the first place, That there are books of devotion which are capable of introducing corruption of manners, and diverting Christians from the study of holiness. We may easily apprehend how

how there should be books of this kind, if we consider that many, even among divines, think it dangerous to insist upon good works, and to press morality: and there are books of devotion, which were made on purpose to maintain so strange an opinion. Some authors have taught that true devotion and solid piety, is not that which consists in the practice of good works; they have writ that the doctrine which represents good works as a necessary condition in order to salvation, overthrows the doctrine of justification by faith; that works cannot be looked upon as the way to heaven; that all we have to do now under the Gospel-covenant, is to receive and to accept of the salvation purchased for us; and that the Gospel requires works, only from the motives of gratitude and love. Nay those authors enter into dispute; they attempt to refute the arguments drawn from the exhortations, promises and threatnings of Scripture which might be urged against them, and they tax with Pharisaism or Pelagianism, those who are of an opinion contrary to theirs. I cannot think the authors of such books did publish them with ill intentions, but I could wish they had abstained from writing things which give such mighty advantages to libertines, and which may blast the fruit of all the books of morality, and of all the exhortations which are addressed to sinners. And yet these books are printed, and which is more surprizing, those divines who are so rigid and scrupulous in point of books and sentiments, do not oppose the publishing of such works, but they suffer them quietly to pass for current in the world.

2. The books of mystical devotion are likewise most dangerous; and their number is greater than we imagine. For to say nothing of those in which mystical and fanatical principles are openly proposed, many works which are otherwise full of good things are sprinkled with that spirit of fanaticism. I shall not stand to give here the character of those books, nor to shew the mischief they may do in relation to libertines, or to those persons who want either knowledge or a discerning judgment; because I will not repeat what I have said of mystical piety. Part I. Cause II. Art. VIII.

3. Some authors who have put out books of piety have made it their whole business to administer comfort. Those who read their works, may easily see that they looked upon the comfortable side of religion, and that their principal design was, to fill their readers, with confidence, hope and joy. Without doubt it is a laudable and pious design, to use one's endeavours to comfort the afflicted, and particularly good men; and I confess that we find in the books which have been composed with that view, many edifying things and noble sentiments of piety; but for all that, those books may easily inspire men with security when the consolations which they dispense, are not attended with great circumspection and prudence.

I could wish that all those who have published books of this kind, had well considered these two following truths. The first is, That the comforts which religion affords, belong only to true Christians; so that is an essential part of the duty of comforters, carefully to distinguish persons, and to mark clearly who those are that have a right to religious comforts. The second is, that it is as necessary to sanctifie, as it is to comfort men; nay, That the sanctifying them is the more necessary of the two,
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because holiness is more essential to a good man, than consolation and joy; and also because men are much more inclined to presume than to condemn themselves; besides that there are but few who want comfort, in comparison with those who ought to be terrified.

The consolations of which the books of piety are full, are intended either for afflicted persons or for sinners. As for the first, it is better to teach them how to make a good use of their afflictions, and to bring them to examine and amend their lives, than to discourse to them upon some general topick of comfort, which perhaps will only lay them faster asleep in security, and which is besides generally misapplied. For all that the Gospel says of afflictions is commonly laid together, and that too with no great judgment; and what is said only of the afflictions of the faithful who suffer for Christ's sake, is applied to the afflictions which are common to all mankind. It is much more necessary to teach men how to die well, than to fortify them against the fear of death; nay, we cannot give them a more substantial comfort, than if we persuade them to live well, since a good life will most certainly bring them to a happy death.

But we ought to be particularly cautious when we comfort sinners and give them assurances of the divine mercy; for if this is not done with great circumspection, we may easily harden and ruin at the same time, that we are comforting them. This is the mischief of those books, which speak but little of repentance and insist much upon confidence, whose only design it is to encourage the greatest sinners, and to exhort them to a bold reliance upon God's mercy, without fearing either the heinousness, or the multitude of their sins. Such consolations are capable of a good sense; but if they are not proposed with due explication and restrictions, vast numbers of people will abuse them. That which has been writ by some authors in books of devotion, concerning sin and good works, is apt to lead men into this fancy, That good works signify nothing in order to salvation, and that sin does not obstruct it. Under pretence of answering the accusations of the devil and of the law, these authors enervate the strongest arguments for the necessity of good works, they confute the declarations of Scripture concerning sanctification, and they destroy as much as in them lies, the sincerity and truth of the precepts and threatnings of the Gospel. For what they call the accusations of the devil and of the law, is sometimes nothing else but the just apprehensions of a guilty conscience which are inspired by the Gospel, and which should be cherished and fortified to bring sinners to repentance, instead of being removed by ill-dispensed consolations.

It is said to this, that sinners are not to be driven to despair. But do we make sinners desperate, by saying that they are not in a state of salvation, when really they are not? Do we not comfort them enough, when we exhort them to have recourse to God's mercy and to repent? What if we should by unseasonable consolations, fill them with a vain and groundless confidence; would not that security ruin them more certainly than desperation? To make men fearless is the ready way to undo them. After all, I cannot imagine, why people should talk so much of despair, and seem so hugely afraid of it. By the endeavours used in books and sermons to keep sinners from it, one would think that we had great
reason

reason to fear on that hand, and that nothing were more ordinary than for men to despair of the divine mercy ; and yet there is nothing more unusual. For one sinner who is terrified with his sins, thousands are undone by security. It is remarkable that the Scripture speaks but seldom of despair, and when we have well examined all the places which are thought to mention it, we shall not find many that speak positively of it. Many Church-men who have cure of souls, confess that they never saw any person afflicted with despair. And as for the instances which are alledged to this purpose, it is certain that what is called desperation is commonly nothing else but a fit of the spleen and an effect of grief and melancholy. So that those who make long discourses to prevent sinners falling into despair, take great pains to little purpose, and do for the most part fight with a shadow.

4. There is another fault in some books of devotion quite contrary to this I have now observed, which is, that they terrify their readers, without reason. If authors, otherwise pious and learned, had not spoken in their writings of the sin against the Holy Ghost, of reprobation, despair, the power of the devil, and of some other matters, many people would have been free from those terrible frights which the indiscreet handling of those subjects did throw them into. The reading of such books has occasioned, and does still produce great mischiefs, when they are read by men of weak heads, that are inclined to melancholy ; and the number of such persons is very considerable. Some have fancied they had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost ; and being possessed with that dismal thought, they have spent their lives in dreadful apprehensions, of which nothing could cure them. Others have imagined, That their case was desperate, and that they were in a state of reprobation, and damnation : others have conceited, that they were given up to the power of satan ; and they have taken the disorders of imagination, for certain signs of their being possessed with an evil spirit : and the worst of it is, that such indiscreet discourses are more apt to alarm good, than wicked men. In fine, I reckon among the books that fright men without cause, all those which contain too rigid and austere maxims of devotion and morality.

5. Piety would be better known, and more esteemed than it is, if books of devotion were always writ with judgment, and good sense, and if there was nothing in them, but what, upon a severe examination, would appear to be strictly true. Those who set about works of this nature, do generally make it their business to move the heart, and to excite sentiments of piety. This is a good design ; but we ought to know that it is the force of reasons ; the evidence of proofs, the greatness of the objects proposed, and the clearness and solidity of what a man says, which does truly affect the heart. This is what judicious authors chiefly mind ; and thereby many have had good success in those excellent works which they have enriched the publick with. But other writers do not consider this ; they rather choose to say tender and pathetical things, than to think, or speak with exactness : they consult imagination more than good sense, they pour out every thing, which is in the heat of meditation, or in the fervency of their zeal, seems to them proper to move, to melt, to comfort, or to terrifie. Hence it is, that there are weak
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places in their books and thoughts ; which appear mean, and even false, to discerning readers ; contradictions, and such like defects : for on the one hand, they produce only a confused, and not a very rational devotion, in those who read and relish them : and on the other hand, they expose religion to the flouts, and contempt of libertines. We are often troubled and scandalized, to find, that some men of parts express but little esteem for books of piety : we hear it is said every day, that those books are only good for women, and for the vulgar. This contempt chiefly proceeds from a profane humour, and from libertinism ; but it springs likewise from the want of exactness and solidity, which is observable in some books of devotion.

6. Divers considerations might be offered here about those books which contain forms of prayers and devotion ; but I shall confine myself to these two, which appear to me the most material. The first is, That those kinds of forms, make all sorts of persons indifferently, and even good men say things, which cannot agree, but to the greatest and the most notorious sinners ; which gives people this dangerous notion, That all men, without excepting the regenerate, are extremely corrupt. In divers prayers we plainly see, that those who composed them, had no other design, than to draw the picture of the most heinous sinners, and that they supposed all men engaged in a deep corruption, and in the most criminal disorders. Exaggerations, and hyperboles, are so little spared by some people upon this head, that they utter absurdities and falsehoods in their prayers : as when they say, That ever since we were born, we have been continually, and every moment, offending God, by thoughts, words, and deeds.

I do not deny, but that such prayers may have their use, provided nothing be said in them that is extravagant, or contrary to truth and common sense ; they fit great numbers of persons : there are but too many of those wretched Christians, who can never sufficiently bewail the enormity of their sins, and the irregularities of their conduct. I know besides, that all men are sinners, and that the best of them have reason to humble and abase themselves in the sight of God, out of a sense of their own weakness and unworthiness. Nevertheless, since the Scripture makes a difference between good and bad men, it is at least a great piece of imprudence, to appoint the same language for both, and to make them all speak as if they were guilty of the most horrid crimes, and as if there was not one good man in the world. This takes away the distinction between the sinners and the righteous ; for if these prayers are proper for all sorts of persons, if all that is said in them is true, it is a vain thing to distinguish a good man from a bad ; and, it is to no purpose to pray to God for his converting grace, or to make any promise of amendment to him : all those lessons of holiness which the Gospel gives us, are but fine ideas ; all men are upon the matter equally bad, and they may all be the objects of God's mercy, how irregular soever their deportment may be. These are the inferences which may be drawn from those forms of devotion I have mentioned, and which sinners do actually draw from them. From all this, I conclude, That in such works it is necessary to distinguish *persons* and *conditions* : and this accordingly has been judiciously observed by some authors.

The other consideration relates to the form of prayers; these are not always plain enough. They are sometimes studied discourses, which have more of art and wit than of affection in them. And we may easily discern how far most prayers are removed from a due simplicity, if we compare them with those which are contained in holy Scripture, or with the ancient way of praying which was received in the Church, and of which we may judge by the *liturgies* which are now used, or which have reached to us. Prayers were neither so intricate then, nor so long as they are now. Long preambles were not used in the beginning of prayers, and men did not then by so many windings approach the throne of grace, to confess their sins, and to beg pardon for them. Prayers then were short, simple and natural, much fitter to excite devotion, to lift up the heart to God, and to nourish piety and zeal, than many forms which obtain at this day.

7. Of all the books of piety, none are more carefully read; and none perhaps have a greater influence upon the conduct and manners of Christians, than the books of preparation for the holy communion. The use of the sacrament is one of the most important acts of religion, and one of the most efficacious means to promote piety; and it is certain that the books which people read, in order to prepare themselves for that sacred action, contribute very much to the good or bad use of the eucharist, and by consequence to the good or ill life of Christians. Now what I have said of the other books of devotion may be applied to these. Some books of this kind are extraordinary good, but there are others, in which among many good things some defects are observable, and particularly these three.

1. All the books of preparation for the holy Communion, are not instructive and solid enough. We find nothing else in some of them, but a heap of thoughts, which have no dependance upon one another, of rhetorical figures, allegories, and comparisons fetched from the Old Testament, or from prophane history. These things may have their use; they may be placed in a sermon: but not to say that sometimes, those thoughts and comparisons are not very apposite or suitable to the subject; I shall only observe, That something more than this is necessary, to stir up devotion in the communicants. I do but just name this, because I have delivered my opinion more at large concerning this defect, in my three reflections upon books of morality, and in the fifth upon books of devotion.

2. Other books of preparation are too general. They only consider in the lump the duties of Christians in reference to the communion; they speak of self-examination, repentance, faith and charity: but all this is of no great use to many gross and ignorant Christians, who neither know those duties, nor how they ought to be performed. Besides, all those who come to the sacrament are not in the same condition, some being good men, and others impious and hypocritical persons. There are likewise several degrees of good men as well as of hypocrites and ungodly persons, and the same man may be better or worse at one time than he is at another. Therefore it would be fitting that books of preparation, were composed in such a manner, that every reader may be led by them, into those reflections which are suitable to the state he is in. It is a gross

error to imagine, that a general preparation or discourse concerning the receiving of the sacrament, is proper for all sorts of persons. I confess that this is not the fault of all the books of preparation, some we have, which are particular enough. The true characters by which every man may know his own state, are very exactly described by some authors; but it is an unhappiness that such works, are not better calculated for the use of the common people.

3. I think I may safely say in the third place, That the too severe notion which some books give of the communion, is one of the causes, why so many people do neither live, nor receive the sacrament as they ought. It is a sad thing that the minds of Christians should be filled with so many scruples in relation to the sacrament, by inconsiderate discourses and overstrained maxims; writers and preachers do sometimes speak of the holy sacrament, as if every thing in it was full of snares, and as if hell and damnation were constantly waiting about it. They represent the communion, as so extraordinary, so difficult and so dangerous an action, that those who read or hear those discourses, are tempted to keep off from the holy table, and despair of partaking of it as they ought. So that whereas there should be nothing but joy, when the eucharist is celebrated in the church, many are then agitated with extreme perplexities and terrors.

By this indiscreet severity it happens, that many good men receive the sacrament without comfort; because their consciences are disturbed with divers scruples, which proceed from the reading of those books. There is a great number of pious Christians, who never receive the sacrament but with strange apprehension and dread, insomuch that several think they receive it to their condemnation. Nay this discourages likewise many sinners who have some inclinations to good, and some desire to set about the work of repentance. Indeed we must take heed not to flatter sinners in their vices, nor to propose to them too easie a devotion and morality. It is very fit in my judgment, to give them a great idea of the purity which is required in so holy and solemn an action as the communion is, and of the state which a Christian ought then to be in. But as this state of purity and holiness is attained only by degrees; that idea, how true soever it may be, is apt to fright a sinner, in the beginning of his conversion, because he does not find in himself at first, all the characters of true repentance and sincere regeneration: he ought therefore to be informed, that the beginnings of repentance are weak, that it has its degrees and its progress; and so that he ought not to be disheartned; that God will accept of his devotion and endeavours, provided his repentance increase afterwards and he forsake his sins honestly. The matter is over-done in point of devotion and morality, not only when we propose rules which are too rigid, but also when we say things, which tho' true and consonant to the Gospel, are not sufficiently accommodated to the state of those we speak to.

These are the principal reflections I thought fit to bestow, both upon books of religion and upon bad books. All that remains now is to inquire, what remedies are to be applied to the cause of corruption. The surest of all would be to exterminate all the ill books, and to take care that none such should be made for the time to come. But as this is not to be hoped, the only remedy which can be tried, is on the one hand, to

prevent as much as we can the effect of bad books; and on the other, to engage men to read and to make a good use of good books.

The books which are contrary to religion and good manners may easily be known; but how to keep men from reading and being corrupted by them is the difficulty: and in all probability this is a point which will never be entirely gained. Yet I think it is not impossible to prevent in some measure the mischief which those books occasion in the world. In order to this, it would be requisite, to take care in the first place, that young people might not read books which inspire libertinism. To this end, the authors who have writ things repugnant to modesty and honesty, should be expelled the schools. It is a surprizing thing that the ecclesiasticks, who have the direction of academies and colleges, and who are bound by their characters to redress this abuse, have not done it yet. In the next place it would be necessary, that in families, books that are apt to corrupt youth should be taken out of their way, and that they should not be indulg'd in dangerous readings. As for the rest, I see no other remedy, but that preachers should strongly insist in their sermons, upon the reasons which ought to make Christians averse to the reading of ill books. I know that all these precautions, will not wholly suppress those books; nor prevent their being read by divers persons, but we may however gain thus much, that ill books shall not be so freely and so commonly read as they are, and that they shall do less hurt.

As for books of religion, every one should endeavour to discern those which are good, and to make a good use of them. Indeed the discerning and the choice of books of religion, is attended with some difficulty. The general rule is to chuse those which are instructive and edifying. Every body will own this to be a good rule, but all men do not agree in the application of it. What seems edifying to some, appears quite otherwise to others. In point of religion all men should be of the same mind, since they are all bound to believe the same truths, and practise the same duties, but their tastes are different, because many of them have a vitiated palate.

To speak my mind upon this subject, I think that Christians should chiefly stick to those books, which prove the truths of religion, and which establish by solid arguments the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, and to those which give a clear and exact view of the duties of morality: to these it may be useful to add the works, in which we find the examples of persons eminent for their piety and virtue. Such examples are very efficacious to excite men to the practice of what is good, and they prove a great preservative against the scandal occasioned by bad example, and against the corruption of the age. But not to enlarge further upon the choice of books, I refer the reader to what has been said in this chapter.

A judicious choice of books being once made, the next thing is to make a good use of them. And here two rules are to be observed. 1. A man should read with judgment; and, 2. he should read in order to practice.

1. What book soever we read, it is absolutely necessary to read it with discretion and judgment. We are commanded in Script ure, * *To prove*

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* 1 Theff. v. 21. 1 John iv. 1.

all things, and to hold fast that which is good; to try the spirits and the doctrines whether they are of God. This caution is to be used lest we fall into errors, since every author is a man, and by consequence may sometimes be mistaken. The common people do particularly need this advice, because they are very apt to believe, that whatsoever is read in books, especially in books of devotion, is true. But tho' a book should contain nothing but what is good; discretion is necessary to make a just application of the contents of it to our selves, because that which is proper for some is not suitable to others. The not observing this rule is the reason why some readers, who have a pure, but a timorous and short-sighted conscience, are terrified without cause, and apply to themselves what is said only of wicked men; when on the other hand, hardened sinners deceive themselves with vain hopes, by adapting to themselves, what relates only to good men.

2. We ought to read, in order to practice, and that we may grow better; this is the more important rule of the two, and that which distinguishes true from hypocritical devotion. Many are very regular and constant in reading, and they seldom fail to do it mornings and evenings: but the deportment of those persons who are so assiduous in the perusing of good books, is not always agreeable to the rules of devotion and piety. When they are but just come from their reading, we may find them often frow, peevish, and passionate; after they have read in the morning, they spend the day in slandering, gaming, or idleness, and they avoid only the grosser, and the more noisive sins. There are readers of another character; they read, and even delight in the reading of books of religion: they like well enough those works which prove the truths of the Christian religion, or treat of morals; they speak of them advantageously, and they will say fine things concerning the abuses which are crept into religion, and upon the necessity and the beauty of morals; but all this terminates only in a vain and fruitless approbation, which they give to the truths and duties of the Gospel; for after all, they reform nothing in their lives: such readings are but meer amusements, and they are good for nothing but to rock conscience into a most dangerous sleep. The end of reading, as well as that of religion, ought to be the practice of holiness.

I shall here observe, last of all, That Christians have a book, which alone might suffice to preserve them from the danger of ill books, and to secure them against the corruption of the age, if they did use it as they ought; I mean the holy Scripture: it is the best of all books, a work divinely inspired, which contains nothing but what is most excellent and true, and wherein we find every thing that is necessary to instruct, and to sanctify men. But it were to be wished,

1. That the translations of Scripture, which are in the hands of the people, should be rendered more perfect, so that they might express the sense of sacred authors with all possible exactness. All those who have studied the original text of the Bible, will own, that this is a necessary work, and that the translations need some amendments. And so we see accordingly, that now and then, divines and translators, apply themselves to the correcting of them.

2. It would be to no purpose to have exact translations of Scripture, if men could not read it: I have already remarked it elsewhere, as a crying
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and shameful abuse, that a great part of Christians should not be able to read. This abuse should have been reformed long ago; and this might easily be done, if every pastor did endeavour it in his own church, and if the magistrates did lend a helping hand towards it.

3. The holy Scripture should be read more than it is, and men should make that use of it for which it was given. Other books are only streams, but when we read the Scripture, we drink at the very fountain-head. Humane books have their faults, and therefore they ought to be read with great discretion: but this divine book is most perfect, it is a guide to whose conduct we may give up our selves without fear or danger: this being certain, is it not strange that the best of all books should be the most neglected? In many countries the Bible is a book unknown to the people. In other places the reading of it is permitted but with great cautions, as if it were dangerous for Christians to read a book, by which God was pleased to reveal his will to men. In those places where Christians have an entire liberty to read the Scripture, great multitudes make no advantage of that freedom. Many that are addicted to reading leave the word of God for other books. In a word, very few read it with suitable dispositions, and with a sincere design of learning the will of God and of growing the better by it. And thus the far greater part of mankind, is destitute of the most efficacious mean and remedy, which the divine goodness has afforded to men, to preserve them from the contagion of sin, and to make them happy. And so we need not wonder that the corruption of Christians should be such, as it hath been represented in this work.



The Conclusion of this Treatise.

THIS is what I had proposed to say concerning the Causes of Corruption. I might have been larger upon these matters, and have added many things which I have not touched. This is a very copious field, and a subject which can hardly be exhausted; yet I think I have observed what is most material.

But it will be to little purpose to have detected the causes of corruption, if those causes do still subsist; and therefore I conclude this work with an earnest entreaty to my readers, That they will make serious reflections upon it, and that if they find that in fact, corruption proceeds from those causes I have mentioned, they will strive to remove them. The undertaking will, no doubt, appear very difficult to many. They will own the truth of what I have said, but they will look upon the design of opposing the corruption of the age, as vain and chimerical. They will say that all this is very fine in the theory, but that the practice of it is impossible: I confess here is some difficulty, but yet I am persuaded, that what I have proposed might successfully be done, at least in some respects.

But the general causes of corruption can scarce be remedied but by publick

publick persons. I therefore apply my self here particularly to divines and to the pastors of the church, and I conjure them to make it their serious business, to discover and to stop the springs of corruption. Let them turn all their endeavours that way; let them labour to dispel the ignorance and prejudices which so many Christians live in, and to confute those maxims and sentiments which feed security and libertinism; let them press with zeal the restoring of order and discipline; let them incessantly lay before the people and the magistrates, the necessity of redressing several abuses which are now in vogue; let them inculcate these things and insist upon them with zeal, but at the same time with prudence and charity; let them concert measures among themselves; let them act unanimously in so noble a design. Above all things let them take care to season young people with good instruction, and to inspire them with sentiments of religion and virtue. These are the sollicitudes which become the ministers of Jesus Christ. These are enterprizes worthy of their character and their zeal, and the things which ought chiefly to be considered in the assemblies of the Clergy. But let them not be discouraged by the difficulties they are like to meet with. They will still gain something, even when they may fancy they labour in vain. If they do not obtain all that they desire, if they do not cure the whole evil, they will remove at least some part of it. So holy an enterprize will sooner or later be fortunate in the issue, and God will pour down a blessing upon those means which he himself has appointed.

One would think that Providence is at work to bring about happier times, and that things are tending that way. This is an age of knowledge, and religion is now better proved and explained than ever it was. There is a considerable number of judicious and learned divines, and pastors, who are deeply griev'd to see the present face of things, and who are sensible how necessary it would be to oppose corruption. So many books which are writ on purpose to revive true Christianity, and to bring men to holiness, seem to bode some blessed revolution, and to argue a general disposition towards it. God who presides over all things, and particularly over that which concerns religion, bless the designs and endeavours of all those, who have good intentions, and grant that we may quickly see truth, piety, peace and order, intirely restored among Christians.



THE
DESIGN
OF
CHRISTIANITY.



INTRODUCTION.

THE accusation that *Celsus* and *Julian* the grand adversaries of the Christian religion, had the impudent confidence to fasten upon it; namely, That it indulgeth men in, and encourageth them to, the practice of immorality and wickedness, is so notoriously false and groundless; that there is nothing truer, or more perspicuously held forth in the books that contain Christianity, than that the perfectly contrary is the *great design* of it. But yet notwithstanding, those that shall heedfully observe the lives and actions of an infinite number of such as call Christ their master, would be very shrewdly tempted undoubtedly to conclude, that they secretly think, what those Heathens had the face to publish.

And as for (I fear I may say) even most of those professors of faith in Christ, which have escaped the *scandalous* and more *gross* pollutions of the world; that man that shall take an exact survey of *their* conversations also, and consider what matters they most busie themselves about, what the designs are which they chiefly prosecute, and that not only as *men*, but as *Christians* too; what things they are that exercise most of their *zeal*, and for and against which is spent the greatest part of their *religious heat*; will be strongly enclined to suspect, that, though they have not entertained so highly dishonourable an opinion of their Saviour, as to esteem him a patron of vice, yet they think so undervaluingly of him, as to judge him so mean a friend to holiness, as that the promoting it in mens hearts and lives, if it was at all a design of his

his coming into the world, and of the religion he left behind him, yet it was at best but a *bye-one*, and that some other matters were much more in his eye, and principally intended by him.

Though I will not say that the greater part of our most forward professors have their heads leavened with such thoughts, yet any one may dare to affirm that they behave themselves exactly as if they had: and moreover I am absolutely certain, that it is utterly impossible, men should make such a bustle, and stir about matters of none, or but small importance, to the serving or prejudicing the real interest of their souls; and, on the other hand, be as lukewarm, unconcern'd and careless in diverse things that have the most *immediate* and *direct* tendency to their eternal welfare; if they *duly* considered and had a *quick* sence of what was now intimated, *viz.* *That the business that brought the blessed Jesus by the appointment of God the Father down from heaven; and the end of his making us the objects of such rich and transcendent kindness, was the destroying of sin in us, the renewing of our depraved natures, the ennobling our souls with virtuous qualities and divine dispositions and tempers, and (in one word) the making us partakers of his holiness.* And so long as there are but few that either believe or consider, that this is the *end of Christianity*, and that alone which it *directly* drives at, it cannot be matter of wonder, if multitudes of those which lay a great claim to it, should be (as excellent a religion as it is) little the *better*, nay, and in some respects even the *worse* for it.

And on the contrary, it is not to be in the least doubted, That nothing can be so available to the introducing of a better state of things, the abating and perfectly quenching our intemperate heats, the regulating and bringing into due order our wild exorbitances, the governing and restraining our extravagant and heady zeal, the inducing us with becoming tempers, sober thoughts, and good spirits, as would the *thorow-belief*, the *due* minding and digesting of this one principle.

And for this reason, I am not able to imagine how time may be spent to better purpose, than in endeavouring to possess mens minds with it: and to contribute thereunto, what it can, is the business of this Treatise: whereof these following are the general heads: which shall be insisted on with all possible perspicuity, and convenient brevity; *viz.*

First, *A plain Demonstration, that, True Holiness is the Special Design of Christianity.*

Secondly, *An Account, how it comes to pass, that our Saviour hath laid such Stress upon this, as to prefer it before all other.*

Thirdly, *An Improvement of the whole Discourse, in diverse (and most of them Practical) Inferences.*

S E C T. I.

A Demonstration, that True Holiness is the Design of Christianity.

C H A P. I.

The Nature of True Holiness described.

IN order to the demonstration hereof, it is necessary to be premised, That the *holiness* which is the design of the religion of Christ Jesus, and is by various forms of speech express'd in the Gospel (as by *godliness, righteousness, conversion and turning from sin, partaking of a divine nature, with many other*) is such as is so in the most proper and highest sense: not such as is subjected in any thing without us, or is made ours by a mere external application, or is only partial: but is originally seated in the *soul and spirit*, is a complication and combination of all virtues, and hath an influence upon the whole man (as shall hereafter be made to appear) and may be described after this manner.

It is so sound and healthful a complexion of soul, as maintains in life and vigour whatsoever is essential to it, and suffers not any thing unnatural to mix with that which is so; by the force and power whereof a man is enabled to behave himself as becometh a creature indued with a principle of reason; keeps his supreme faculty in its throne; brings into due subjection all his inferior ones, his sensual imagination, his brutish passions and affections.

It is the purity of the humane nature, engaging those in whom it resides, to demean themselves suitably to that state in which God hath placed them, and not to act disbecomingly in any condition, circumstance, or relation.

It is a divine or god-like nature, causing an hearty approbation of, and an affectionate compliance with the eternal laws of righteousness; and a behaviour agreeable to the essential and immutable differences of good and evil.

But to be somewhat more express and distinct, though very brief. This *holiness* is so excellent a principle, or habit of soul, as causeth those that are possessed of it. (I mean so far forth as it is vigorous and predominant in them,)

First, To perform all good and virtuous actions, whensoever there is occasion and opportunity; and ever carefully to abstain from those that are of a contrary nature.

Secondly, To do the one, and avoid the other, from truly generous motives and principles.

Now, in order to the right understanding of this, it is to be observ'd, That *actions* may become *duties* or *sins* these two ways.

First, As they are compliances with, or transgressions of divine positive precepts. These are such declarations of the will of God, as restrain

strain our liberty for great and wise reasons, in things that are of an indifferent nature, and absolutely considered, neither good, nor evil: and so makes things not good in themselves (and capable of becoming so, only by reason of certain circumstances) *duties*; and things not evil in themselves, *sins*. Such were all the injunctions and prohibitions of the *ceremonial law*; and some few such we have under the Gospel.

Secondly, Actions are made *duties* or *sins*, as they are agreeable or opposite to the divine *moral laws*: that is, Those which are of an indispensable and eternal obligation, which were first written in mens hearts, and originally dictates of humane nature, or necessary conclusions and deductions from them.

By the way, I take it for granted (and I cannot imagine how any *considerative*, supposing he be not a very *debauch'd*, person can in the least doubt it,) that there are *first principles* in *morals*, as well as in the *mathematicks*, *metaphysicks*, &c. I mean such as are self-evident, and therefore not capable of being properly demonstrated; as being no less knowable and easily assented to, than any proposition that may be brought for the proof of them.

Now the *holiness* we are describing is such, as engageth to the performance of the *former sort of duties*, and forbearance of the *former sort of sins*; for this reason *primarily*, because it pleaseth Almighty God to command the one, and forbid the other: which reason is founded upon this certain principle; *That it is most highly becoming all reasonable creatures to obey God in every thing; and as much disbecoming them, in any thing to disobey him.* And secondarily, upon the account of the reasons (if they are known) for which God made those laws. And the reasons of the *positive laws* contained in the Gospel are declared, of which I know not above three that are *purely* so, *viz.* That of going to God by Christ, and the institutions of *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*.

Again, This *holiness* is such as engageth to the performance of the *duties*, and forbearance of the *sins* of the *second kind*; not merely because it is the divine pleasure to publish commands of *those*, and prohibitions of *these*; but also, and especially, for the *reasons*, which moved God to make those publications: namely, because *those* are good in *themselves*, and infinitely becoming creatures indued with understanding and liberty of will; and *these* are no less evil in *their own nature*, and unworthy of them.

That man that would forbear, gratefully to acknowledge his obligations to God, or to do to his neighbour as he would that he should do to him, &c. on the one hand; and would not stick at dishonouring his maker, or abusing his fellow creatures in any kind, &c. on the other; if there were no *written law* of God for the former, and against the latter; doth not *those duties*, nor forbears *these sins*, by virtue of an holy nature that informs and acts him; but is induced thereunto by a mere *animal principle*, and because it is his *interest* so to do. And the reason is clear, because no one that doth thus, only in regard of the *written precepts* and prohibitions of the divine Majesty, doth so out of respect to them, as *such*, but as they have *promises*, but especially *threatnings* annexed to them: for to be sure, he that performs the one, and forbears the other from any lovely notion he hath of *obedience*, and any
hateful

hateful one he hath conceived of *disobedience*, will also make conscience of *those* and the like duties, in regard of the goodness, becomingness, and excellency he discerns in *them*; and will abstain from *these* and the like sins, because of the intrinick evil, turpitude, and deformity he apprehends in *them*: for *those* are no whit less manifestly lovely, and worthy of mankind, than is *obedience* to the divine will, considered in an abstracted notion; nor *these* less apparently vile, and abominable than is *disobedience*. For, that very reason, that makes it an intolerable thing to disobey a law of God, (*viz.* because it is highly *unjust* so to do) makes it so also to commit the forementioned, and such like sins; and so on the contrary; now this proposition, *That it is a base thing to do unjustly*, is one of those which I call *first principles*; than which there is nothing mankind doth more naturally assent to: and those sins, with many other, are alike plain instances and expressions of that shameful vice *injustice*, though not of an equal *degree* of it.

The sum of what we have said in this account of the nature of true holiness is this, *viz.* *That it is such a disposition and temper of the inward man, as powerfully inclines it carefully to regard and attend to, affectionately to embrace and adhere to, to be actuated by, and under the government of all those good practical principles that are made known either by revelation, nature, or the use of reason.*

Now though nothing is more natural to the souls of men, considered in their pure essentials, and as they came out of their Creator's hands, than this most excellent temper; yet by their apostasy from God, and sinking into brutish sensuality, did they sadly dispossess themselves of it, and so became like the beasts which perish. But it pleased the infinite goodness of the divine Majesty not to give us over so; for when we had destroyed our selves, in him was our help found. He greatly concerned himself for the recovery of fallen mankind by various means and methods, and when the world was at the very worst, did he make use of the most sovereign and effectual remedy. *He, who at sundry times, and in diverse manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, did in these last days send his dearly beloved and only begotten Son to us.* And to prove that the great errand he came upon was the effecting of our deliverance out of that sinful state we had brought our selves into, and the putting us again into possession of that holiness which we had lost, is now our next business.



C H A P. II.

A general Demonstration that the Holiness described is the Design of Christianity, by a Climax of seven Particulars.

IN the first place, in order to the proof of this, it is worthy our observation, that St. *John the Baptist* being sent to prepare the way before our Saviour, did so, by teaching the doctrine
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of *repentance*, and baptizing men thereunto; and that we no sooner read of his appearing in publick, and entring upon his office of *harbinger* or *forerunner*, but we find him preaching this doctrine, and making use of the news of the *Messiah's* approach, as a motive to persuade them to that duty. *Matth. iii. 1, 2. In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying; Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* And this was that which the angel foretold *Zacharias* he should do, when he gave him the first notice that he should be the father of such a son. *Luke i. 16, 17. And many of the children of Israel shall be turn to the Lord their God; and he shall go before him in the power, and spirit of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord:* that is, He shall make way for the *Messiah* with the same zeal against all wickedness, as was expressed by *Elias*; and likewise with an immediate reformation from heaven, as he had, in order to the working of a general reformation among the *Jews*. This sheweth that Christ's great errand to us, was our thorow conversion from sin, and the making us holy; seeing that the only preparation necessary for the entertainment of him, consisted in having this work begun in us.

Secondly, Upon the first news of Christ's near approach, brought by *Malachi* the last of the Prophets, this is expressed by him as that which should be his grand business when he was come, *Mal. iii. 1, 2, 3. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in (or, have a longing expectation of.) Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts: but who may abide the day of his coming? Or, who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner, and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold is purged, &c.*

Thirdly, Immediately after his conception in the womb of the blessed Virgin, this was foretold to *Joseph* concerning him by an angel, *Matt. i. 21. She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.* This blessing of making men holy was so much the design of Christ's coming, that he had his very name from it. Observe the words are, *He shall save his people from their sins*; not from the punishment of them: and (as will fully appear hereafter) that is the primary sense of them, which is most plainly expressed in them: that he shall save his people from the punishment of sin is a true sense too, but it is secondary and implied only; as this latter is the never-failing and necessary consequent of the former salvation.

This again was foretold by *Zacharias*, betwixt his conception and birth. He saith, *Luke i. 72, &c. That God performed his covenant in sending Christ*; which covenant consists in this, *That he would grant us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.*

Fourthly, We likewise find this expressed by *Simeon*, immediately upon his birth, *Luke ii. 32.* where having called him God's *salvation*, which he had prepared before the face of all people, he adds that, *He is a light to lighten the Gentiles*: whereby is meant, that he should bring them

them into the way of righteousness and true holiness. *Holiness* is not in a few places expressed by the metaphor of *light*, and *wickedness* by that of *darkness*: turning from darkness to light is explained by (a) *Turning from the power of Satan unto God*. And the following clause, *viz. And the glory of thy people Israel*, signifieth the same thing: namely, that in the place of their outward and ceremonial observances, called by the Apostle (b) *Beggarly Elements*, he should bring in among them a far more noble, *viz.* an inward, substantial and everlasting righteousness; and by abrogating *that*, and establishing only *this* righteousness, he should enlarge their Church, an accession of the Gentiles being by that means made unto it.

Fifthly, This is expressed by St. John the Baptist, immediately before our Saviour's solemn entrance upon his office, as the business he was undertaking, *Matth. iii. 11, 12. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance* (that is, especially from the more plain and confessed exorbitances) *but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire;* (which will take away those stains and pollutions, that water cannot:) *whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor.*

Sixthly, Again, after our Saviour's entrance upon his office, he himself declared, that *he came to call sinners to repentance*: and that he was so far from coming to destroy the law and the Prophets, that he came (c) *πληρῶσαι*, to fulfill, or perfect them, that is, by giving more and higher instances of moral duties than were before expressly given: and he tells the Jews presently after, that *except their righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees* (that is, unless it be above their partial and merely external righteousness) *they shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven*. And he abundantly made it appear, (as will be quickly shewn) that the reformation of mens lives, and purification of their natures, were the great business that he designed.

Lastly, This was frequently asserted, after he forsook the world, by the Apostles he left behind him. St. Peter told his country-men, *Acts iii. 26. That, as God sent Christ to bless them, so the blessing designed them by him, consisted in turning them from their iniquities. To you first* (saith he) *God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, by turning every one of you from his iniquities*. Again, *Acts v. 31. the same Apostle, with others, saith that, Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. Repentance first, and then forgiveness*. St. John tells us, *1 Epist. iii. 8. that, for this purpose the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*. And St. Paul calleth the gospel of Christ, *1 Tim. vi. 3. The mystery of godliness*, *1 Tim. iii. 16. The doctrine that is according to godliness*. And gives us to understand that, that which the grace of God which brings salvation teacheth, is, *That denying ungodliness, and all worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*, *Tit. ii. 12.*

(a) *Acts xxvi.*(b) *Gal. iv. 9.*(c) *Mat. v. 17. or πληρῶσαι*, may signify *fully to preach*, as *Rom. xv. 19.* and *Col. i. 25.*

C H A P. III.

A particular Demonstration that Holiness is the only Design of the Precepts of the Gospel. And that they require, 1 The most extensive Holiness, 2. The most Intensive. An Objection answered.

TO give a more particular proof of what we have undertaken.

First, It is most apparent, that *holiness* is the design, the only design of the *Christian precepts*, and that this is the mark which they are wholly levelled at. What the (d) Apostle spake of the *Jewish*, may be much more said of the *Christian law*, that *It is holy, just, and good*. For as *Clemens Alexandrinus* in his *Pædagogus* saith, ἐν Χριστῷ ὑψηλότερος τελείωσις ἐστίν, &c. *Even infant Christianity is perfection, compared with the law, or the Mosaical dispensation.*

There is no *affirmative precept* in the Gospel, but it either commands *holiness* in the general, or one or more particular virtues, or habits of holiness, or some essential act or acts of it; or means and helps to the acquiring, maintaining, or encrease of it. Such as *hearing and reading the word, prayer, meditation, good conference, watchfulness against temptations, avoiding occasions of evil, &c.*

And there is no *negative precept*, but doth forbid the contrary to some one or more of those duties; but doth forbid some thing or other that doth tend either directly or indirectly, immediately or mediately, in its own nature, or by reason of some circumstance, to the depraving of humane nature, and rendring us *perfectly wicked*, or in some degree or other *less holy*.

To make this appear by going over the several *precepts* contained in the Gospel, would be a work of too much time; but whosoever, as he reads them, shall duly consider each of them, cannot be to seek for satisfaction, concerning the truth of what I have now said; and I dare undertake he will readily acknowledge, that there is nothing that is not upon its own, or some one or other account, greatly becoming us, and perfective of humane nature, in the whole Gospel *commanded*; and that there is not any thing in it self, and in all respects innocent, there *forbidden*. This can be by no means said concerning the *precepts* of the law of *Moses*; but that it may concerning those of the Gospel, is absolutely certain.

But my whole discourse upon this present argument shall be confined to these two heads: namely to shew, *That the Christian precepts require the most extensive, and most intensive holiness*; that is, exactly such a holiness as hath been described.

First, *They require the most extensive holiness*, not only towards God, but also towards our neighbour, and our selves. In the forecited place, *Tit. ii. 12.* St. Paul puts all these together, under the phrases of *living soberly, righteously, and godly*, as making up that *holiness* which the *grace of God, that brings salvation*, teacheth. The *precepts* of our Saviour command

(d) Rom. vii.

command us not only to give unto God the things that are God's, but also to Cæsar the things that are Cæsars: not only to obey God in all things, but to be *subject* likewise to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; that is, to every ordinance of man that doth not contradict the law of God: not only to fear God, but also to honour the king, and to obey our spiritual governours, which watch for our souls, &c. and to behave our selves towards all persons suitably to the relations we stand in to them: *Wives to submit themselves to their own husbands, as unto the Lord; husbands to love their wives even as Christ loved the church: children to obey their parents in the Lord; and fathers not to provoke their children to wrath, but to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: servants to be obedient to their masters, with singleness of heart as unto Christ, &c. and masters to do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, or a harsh behaviour towards them, (e) knowing that they have a master in heaven, with whom is no respect of persons.* We are commanded to love not our relations, or our friends only, but also all mankind; and to do good to all without exception, though especially to the household of faith; to good men. Nay our Saviour hath laid a strict charge upon us, not to exclude our malicious (f) enemies from our love (that is, of benevolence) but to pray for them that despitefully use us, and to bless those that curse us. Which law, as harshly as it sounds to carnal persons, they themselves cannot but acknowledge that what it enjoyneth, is heroically and highly virtuous.

Secondly, *The Christian precepts require the most intensive holiness; not only negative but positive, as was now intimated; that is, not only the forbearance of what is evil, but the performance also of what is good: not only holiness of actions and words, but likewise of affections and thoughts: the worship of God with the spirit, as well as with the outward man; a holy frame and habit of mind, as well as a holy life. They forbid cherishing sin in the heart, as well as practising it in the conversation. They make lusting after a woman adultery, as well as the gross act of uncleanness. They make malice murder, as well as killing; they forbid coveting no less than defrauding; and being in love with this worlds goods, as much as getting them by unlawful means.*

And I shall digress so far as to say, That there is infinite reason that *thoughts* and the inward workings of mens souls should be restrained by laws, upon these two accounts.

First, Because *irregular thoughts* and *affections* are the immediate depravers of mens natures; and therefore it is as necessary in order to the design of making men *holy*, that *these* should be forbidden, as that evil *actions* and *words* should. But suppose this were otherwise; yet

Secondly, Laws made against evil *words* and *actions* would signify very little, if men were left at liberty as to their *thoughts* and *affections*. It would be to very little purpose to forbid men to do evil, if they might think and love it: for where the sparks of sin are kept glowing in the soul, how can they be kept from breaking out into a flame in the life? From the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak, and the hands act.

But to proceed, *The precepts* of the Gospel command us not only to perform

(e) Eph. vi.

(f) Matt. v.

perform good actions, but also to do them after a right manner, with right ends, &c. or in one word, from good principles. Whatsoever we do, (g) *to do it heartily, as to the Lord and not as to men.* To be (h) *servant in spirit in our service of God.* To do all to the (i) *glory of God.* To be holy (k) *as he that hath called us is holy, in all manner of conversation.* (l) *To be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect:* Which precepts shew that we ought to imitate him, not only in the matter of our actions, but likewise in the qualifications of them: among which, that which I said is essential to true holiness, is a principal one; namely, To do good actions for those reasons which moved God to enjoyn them, and, I add, which make it pleasing to him to perform them himself, viz. because they are either in themselves and upon their own account, excellent, worthy and most fit to be done, or are made so to be by some circumstance.

Our whole duty to God and our neighbour (as our Saviour hath told us) is comprehended in the love of them: and the love of God required by him is a most intense love: we are commanded to love him (m) *with all the heart and soul, mind and strength;* and that of our neighbour which he hath made our duty, is such, as for the kind of it, is like the love which we bear to our selves; such as will not permit us to wrong him in his (n) *good name,* any more than in his estate or person; such as will not allow us rashly to speak, or so much as think ill of him; such as will cause us to put the best constructions on those actions of his that are capable of various interpretations, &c. And for the (o) *degree,* such as will make us willing to lay down our very (p) *lives* for him, that is, for the promoting of his eternal happiness.

To sum up all together, We are commanded to (q) *add to our faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.* To behave our selves in all respects towards our Creator as becometh his creatures, and those which are under unspeakable obligations to him: towards one another, as becometh those that are indued with the same common nature, and according to the diverse relations, engagements and other circumstances we stand in each to other; and towards our selves according as the dignity of our nature requires we should. In short, (r) *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report. whatsoever things have virtue and praise in them,* are the objects of the Christian precepts, and by them recommended to us. Let any one read but our Saviour's incomparable sermon upon the mount, the twelfth to the Romans, and the third chapter of the epistle to the Colossians, and well consider them, and it will be strange should he find it difficult to assent to the truth of that proposition.

Even Trypho himself, in the dialogue betwixt Justin Martyr and him, confessed, that the precepts contained in the book called the Gospel are

superior

(g) Col. iii. 23.

(k) 1 Pet. i. 15.

(n) Tit. iii. 2.

(q) 2 Pet. i.

(h) Rom. xii. 11.

(l) Mat. v. 48.

(o) 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

(r) Phil. 4.

(i) 1 Cor. x. 31.

(m) Mat. xix. 19.

(p) 1 John iii. 16.

θαυμάσιον καὶ μέγαλον, *great and admirable*. He saith indeed, *that they are so admirable, as that he suspected them not to be by humane nature observable*; but in that he spake not unlike to himself, that is, a prejudiced and carnal Jew.

If it be now objected, that notwithstanding what hath been said concerning the *Christian precepts* recommending the most elevated virtue to be practised by us, it is acknowledged by all sober Christians, that they are not to be understood in so high a sense as to require of us indefective and unspotted holiness, or at least that our Saviour will accept of and reward that holiness which is far short of *perfect*; and therefore he can be no such great friend to it, as hath been affirmed: the answer is very easie and obvious, *viz.* That our Saviour's not rigidly exacting such a degree of holiness as amounts to *perfection*, proceeds from hence, that the attainment of it is in this state impossible to us; and therefore it is not to be attributed to his liking or allowance of the least sin, but to his special grace and good will to fallen mankind: Nay, moreover, it proceeds from his passionate desire that we may be as pure and holy, as our unhappy circumstances will admit; he well knowing, that should he declare that nothing short of *perfection* shall be accepted at our hands, he would make us desperate, and take the most effectual course to cause us to give over all thoughts of becoming better, nay, and to let the reins loose unto all ungodliness. But yet nothing short of *sincerity*, and *diligent, serious endeavours to abstain from all sin*, will be admitted by him in order to our being made the objects of his grace and favour: and as for *wilful and presumptuous sins* of what kind soever, he makes no allowances for *them*, but hath by himself and his ministers declared very frequently, that they shall not be pardoned, without our reformation. And, Lastly, notwithstanding the allowances and abatements that in tender compassion to us he is pleased to make us, no less than our *absolutely perfect* holiness is designed by him, though not to be effected in *this*, yet in the *other* world.



C H A P. IV.

That Holiness is the only Design of the Promises of the Gospel, shewed in Two Particulars: and of the Threatnings therein contained.

SECONDLY, the *promises and threatenings* of the Gospel have most apparently the promoting of *Holiness* for their only design. First, The *promises*, it is plain, have. This St. Peter assur-eth us, 2 *Epist.* chap. 1. ver. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.* And St. Paul doth more than intimate the same, in 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having* (saith he) *these promises, dearly beloved, (viz. those which the foregoing chapter concludes with) let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* Again, *Rom.* 12. 1.

I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be ye not conformed to this present world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, &c.

1. We always find these *promises* either limited to *holy* persons, or made use of as encouragements and exciting motives to *holiness*. The Apostles tell us, that it is *godliness* which hath the *(s)* *promises of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*. The promise of the beatifical vision is made to *the pure in heart*. *(t)* *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*. That of the kingdom of heaven to the *(u)* *poor in spirit*, or those that are of humble and lowly tempers. The promise of obtaining mercy to *(x)* *the merciful*. That of inheriting the earth (of temporal felicity) to the *(y)* *meek*, or such as live in obedience to government, &c. That of eternal life to those that *(z)* *patiently continue in well-doing*. That of sitting with Christ on his throne, to those that *overcome*, *(a)* that is, that mortifie their lusts and corrupt affections. The promise of a crown of life is used as a motive to persuade to *(b)* *faithfulness to the death*. But to what purpose do I multiply instances, when as there is not a particular *promise* throughout the whole Gospel, but it is expressed, or plainly intimated, that its performance depends upon some duty of *holiness* to be on our parts first performed, or at least heartily endeavoured. And whereas the promises of pardon, and of eternal life are very frequently made to *believing*, there is nothing more evidently declared than that this *faith* is such as purifieth the heart, and is productive of good works.

2. Nay the *nature of these promises* is such, as is of it self sufficient to satisfy us, that *holiness is the design of them*.

1. This is manifestly true concerning the *principal promises*, or those which relate to the other life. They may be reduced to these three heads; that of *the holy spirit*; of *remission of sin*; and of *eternal happiness in the enjoyment of God*.

Now for the first of these, *viz. The promise of the spirit*, that is it to which we are beholden for grace and assistance in the great work of subduing sin, and acquiring the habit of holiness; and this is the very business for the sake of which that promise is made to us.

And for the second and third, they are such as none but holy souls are capable of. That none but such are capable of having the *guilt* of their sins removed, and of being freed from the displeasure and wrath of God, is self-evident; for the *guilt of sin* must needs remain while its *power* continues; these two are inseparately from each other: sin is so loathsome and filthy a thing (as shall hereafter be shewn) that it is perfectly impossible that the blood of Christ it self should render a sinner lovely, or not odious, in the sight of God, any otherwise than by washing away the pollution of it. And nothing is more apparent, than that holy souls alone are in a capacity of the happiness that consists in the enjoyment of God in the other world; than that, as without holiness no man *shall see* the Lord, (as saith the author to the *Hebrews*) so without it none *can see* him: for the full and complete participation of God,

which

(s) 1 Tim. 4.

(x) Verse 7.

(a) Rev. 3. 21.

(t) Mat. 5. 8.

(y) Verse 5.

(b) Chap. 2. 10.

(u) Verse 3.

(z) Rom. 2. 7.

which our Saviour promifeth his difciples and faithful followers, arifeth out of the likenefs and conformity of mens souls to him : but there is fuch a perfect unlikenefs and contrariety in impure and polluted souls to the infinitely holy God, that it is impoffible there fhould be any communications from him to them, any friendly agreement and complacency between him and them. *He is not a God that hath pleafure in wickednefs, neither can evil dwell with him.* Pfal. 5. 4. *What communion hath light with darknefs* faith the apoftle, 2 Cor. 6. 14. But vicious and unholy souls are full of darknefs, whereas God is pure fplendid light, and in him is no darknefs at all. The *Platonifts* would not admit that any man is capable of being acquainted with *divine* things, that is not purged from that which they called *ἡθουμία*, and *ἀλογία*, *remiffnefs of mind and brutifh paffions*. How utterly impoffible then is it, that fuch as are not fo, fhould be acquainted with *divinity* it felf? *Hierocles* faith, *ὡς περ ὀφθαλμὸς ἀνθρώπου, &c.* *As a bleer-eye cannot look upon σφῖδρα φωτεινὰ* *things very bright and fhining, fo a foul unpoftleffed of virtue is unable to behold the beauty of truth* : how unable then is fuch a foul to behold the beauty of God himfelf, to fee him as he is, and be happy in the fight of him? thofe eyes which have continually beheld vanity (as faith an excellent late writer of our own) would be dazled, not delighted, with the beatifick vifion. (c) *Thanks be to God* (faith the apoftle) *who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the faints in light.* Thofe can by no means partake of it, that are not by holinefs made meet and difpofed for it. What happinefs can we find in the enjoyment of God, when he is of a perfectly contrary nature to our own? and moreover, how can we then enjoy him? there muft be in us a likenefs to him, or *we cannot fee him as he is*; for St. *John* proves, that *when he appeareth, we fhall be like him*, by this agreement. It was one of the maxims of the excellent *Socrates*. * *It is unlawful for an impure nature to touch pure divinity.* Now this being the happinefs promifed in the Gospel, we eafily learn from the confideration of the nature of it (it being not at all grofs and fenfual, but purely fpiritual) what is the defign of thofe *promifes* that contain it. At the firft hearing of them, though they fhould found (as they do not) like *absolute* ones, we may be certain that holinefs, and fincere endeavours after a participation of a divine nature muft neceffarily be tacit conditions of them, as without which our souls cannot poffibly be qualified and put into an apt difpofition for them.

2. As the *promifes* which concern the other life are fuch as none but holy souls are capable of: fo thofe that only relate to *this life* are fuch as none but fuch souls will be contented with. They are only *necessaries* which the Gospel gives us an affurance of, and fuch things as may be a help to the exercife of *virtue* and *holinefs*; not *superfluities*, and fuch as ferve to gratifie liquorifh appetites. So we are to underftand that of our Saviour, *Mat.* 6. 3. *First seek the kingdom of God, and his righteoufnefs*; and *all thefe things fhall be added unto you*; the words foregoing fhew, that by [all thefe things] we are only to underftand *meat, drink, and cloathes*. The temporal bleffings that Chrift engageth himfelf to

X 2

beflow

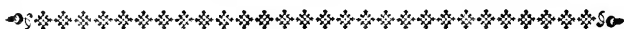
(c) Col. i. 12.

* Μη καθαρὰ καὶ θαρῆ ἰφάνεια, μὴ ἔθιμιτὲς ἦ.

bestow upon his disciples, are such alone as tend to answer *moderate* desires, not to satisfy *inordinate* cravings : in short, they are only such as are needful to keep their bodies in such a state as that they may be meet habitations and instruments of their souls, so long as it shall be fit for them to continue in them.

Secondly, and as for the *threatenings* of the Gospel, which are most terrible and dismal, that they have the same design that the *promises* have, is out of question : for they are never used to scare men from any thing but what tends to pollute and debauch their souls : and the end of them is every where to excite us effectually to diligence and industry in the pursuit of real righteousness and substantial holiness.

(d) *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven in the Gospel, against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men* : such as disbelieving and disobeying Christ's Gospel, in the general; and particularly such as (e) *idolatry, adultery, fornication and uncleanness of all sorts, theft, covetousness, drunkenness, reviling, wrath, contemptuous behaviour, implacability, unmercifulness, illiberality, malice, censoriousness, lying, pride, hypocrisie, rebellion and disobedience to governours, &c.* And therefore are the committers of these and such like sins threatened, that so those, which from the consideration of their vile nature and ugliness will not be withdrawn from them, may from a principle of self-preservation be afraid of them : and our Saviour is infinitely good to us in his terrifying *threatenings*, as well as in his alluring *promises*. For (as *Clem. Alex.* in his *Pædagogus*, saith) *his threatenings proceed not from anger, but from great good will; and he therefore threatneth punishment, that sinners being thereby scared into reformation, may by that means prevent their being punished. He doth not (as he proceeds) like a serpent bite before he giveth warning. And therefore only doth he give warning, that he may not bite.*



C H A P. V.

That the promoting of Holiness was the Design of our Saviour's whole Life and Conversation among Men; both of his Discourses and Actions. And that he was an eminent Example of all the Parts of Virtue, viz. Of the greatest Freedom, Affability and Courtesie: the greatest Candor and Ingenuity: the most marvellous gentleness and meekness: the deepest Humility: the greatest contempt of the World: the most perfect Contentation: the most wonderful Charity and tenderest Compassion: stupendous Patience, and Submission to the Divine Will: the most passionate Love of God, and devoutest temper of Mind towards him: mighty Confidence and Trust in God. An Objection answered: the most admirable Prudence.

THIRDLY, The promoting of holiness was the design of our Saviour's whole life, and conversation among men. All his discourses that are on record carried on this great business : not only

(d) Rom. i. 18.

(e) 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. Mat. v. 22. Mat. xi. 26. chap. xviii. 28. chap. xxv. 42. 1 John iii. 15. Mat. vii. 1. Rev. xxi. 27. Jam. iv. 6. Mat. xxiii. 13. Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

only his *sermons*, but likewise those which were less solemn, and that *occasionally*, and as it were *by the bye* dropt from him. There is not a *parable* he uttered, but something highly conducing to the instilling of virtue into those to whom he directed it, was the *moral* of it: and all advantages and occasions he greedily embraced for the infusing of true piety and holiness into the souls of men.

To give a few instances: when it was told him that his mother and brethren sought for him, he took that opportunity to tell them, that *whoever will do the will of God, the same is his brother, sister, and mother*, *Mark* 3. 35. When he observed a reasoning among the disciples, which of them should be the greatest in the kingdom of God, he took occasion from thence to preach to them the necessity of the grace of *humility* and *becoming as little children*, of *self-denial*, *mortification of their most beloved lusts*, and to teach them several other very excellent lessons, *Matt.* 18. in the beginning. Upon a certain woman's saying to him, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck*; he minded his hearers of the blessedness of *obedient* persons; *yea rather* (said he) *are they blessed that hear the word of God, and keep it*, *Luke* 11. 28. Upon *Martha's* desiring him to command her sister to help her in serving, he reproved her over-solicitousness about the affairs of this life, and put her in mind of the *one thing needful*, *Luke* 10. 41. From a Pharisees marvelling that he washed not before dinner, he took an advantage to reprove their superstition, hypocrisies, partial righteousness, pride, and several other immortalities, *Luke* 11. 38. &c. From a person's desiring him to speak to his brother to divide the inheritance with him, he took an opportunity to discourse against *covetousness*, and to dissuade from setting the heart upon earthly riches, from solicitousness and carking carefulness, and to exhort to several most weighty and important duties, *Luke* 12. 15, &c. Upon some mens talking of the lamentable disaster that befell the *Galileans*, he took occasion to give a caution again *rash judging*, and to preach to them the absolute necessity of *repentance*, as that without which they should all perish, *Luke* 13. begin. Upon his observing how that a feast they chose the uppermost rooms, he laid hold of that opportunity to teach the virtue of *humility*, *Luke* 14. 7. And in the same chapter he took the advantage that was offered him by other passages for the instilling of diverse other profitable instructions. And you may find in the four Evangelists abundance of observations of this nature.

And as it was the business of all his *discourses* to teach virtue, so was it also of all his *actions*: he preach'd *holiness* to mens eyes no less than to their ears, by giving them the most admirable example in his own person of all the parts of it. His whole life was one continued lecture of the most excellent *morals*, the most sublime and exact virtue.

For instance; he was a person of the greatest *freedom*, *affability*, and *courtesie*, there was nothing in his conversation that was at all austere, crabbed or unpleasant. Though he was always *serious*, yet was he never *sour*, sullenly grave, morose or cynical; but of a marvellously conversable, sociable and benign temper. Those who had checks from his disciples, as rude and troublesome, were never accused by him for being so, but were most kindly listened to, and lovingly received: even

little children, as unwelcome as they were to them, were tenderly embraced, and blest by him. He never blamed any for interrupting him in his discourses, or other business: nor was put into the least chafe by their so doing, but ever patiently heard them, and sent none of them from him (supposing they had no ill design in coming to him) without satisfaction. When he was invited to mens tables (as little as their cheer could tempt him) he readily went; nor did he esteem it as disbecoming his gravity to make one at a marriage-feast; nor to contribute to it *himself* neither. He did not think himself *defiled* by bad company, nor baulked the society of publicans and sinners themselves, (as loathsome as they were to *worse* men, the *Pharisees*) but freely in order to the reforming of them sat down, when there was occasion, and conversed with them. His first entertainment of the woman of *Canaan*, as uncivil as it might seem, was nothing less than so; for the unkind and contemptuous language he gave her, though it was but the same which the *Jews* always belted upon those people, proceeded from no *contempt* of her; nor was it designed, as the event shewed, in the least to discourage her, but on the contrary, to give her occasion to shew the *greatness* of her *faith*, in the answer she returned to it. The ever and anon infirm, imprudent and impertinent talk of his disciples, and others, could not at any time put him out of his good temper, but only gave him an opportunity of imparting to them seasonable instructions and wise counsels.

The *candour* also and *ingenuity* of his spirit did to great admiration discover it self: whereof take this one instance. Where as he (as was said) forbade censorious judging of other men; and commanded, consequently, to put the best constructions upon those actions of others that are capable of various interpretations, he hath given us no small encouragement so to do, by his behaviour towards those three disciples, whom he could not persuade for a little while to forbear sleeping, no not in his *agony*; as great obligations as he had laid upon them, to do any thing he should please to desire of them. Their *sleeping* at such a time seemed a certain sign of their being very much unconcerned for their blessed Lord, and of great coolness of affection to him; especially he having (I say) before desired them to *watch* with him, and given them the reason why he did so: yet for all this would he impute it to no worse a cause than mere infirmity, nor entertain any ill opinion of them upon that account; and when they themselves had nothing to say to excuse their fault, he makes this apology himself for them; *The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak*: nay though, for all this, and notwithstanding that friendly expostulation of his with *Peter*, [*Couldst thou not watch with me one hour?*] they fell asleep again, yet did he not at his last return to them pass any censure upon them, but carried it towards them as he was wont to do.

And the *gentleness* and *meekness* of his disposition was very marvellous: when *James* and *John* in a great heat, would have persuaded him to call for fire from heaven, after the example of *Elias*, to consume the *Samaritans* for their inhospitable and barbarous refusal to give him entertainment, he rebuked them immediately for that revengeful motion, and gave them this reply; *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of;*
for

for the son of man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them, Luke 9. 55. and so, silently went his ways, without giving them so much as a lash of his tongue for so rude an affront. Never had any one so strong provocations to wrath and revenge, as the blessed *Jesus*; but never were either so undiscernible in any as they were in him. In his carriage indeed towards the Pharisees he might seem to some to be once or twice transported with a fit of extraordinary passion, but it would not have become the zeal he had for God and true goodness, to behave himself otherwise towards such monstrously immoral wretches and most hatefully conceited and proud hypocrites. Nor was his overturning the tables of the money-changers, or whipping the buyers and sellers out of the temple, any other than a very befitting and seemly expression of his just displeasure against those sacrilegious and prophane people. But he was never so concerned for himself for his own reputation, or ought else that belonged to him, as to be put into the least heat by all the ignominious language that was from time to time given him, and the vile reproaches and unsufferable abuses that were heap'd upon him. When he was accosted with a never-to-be-parall'd impudence by his old disciple *Judas*, in the front of an armed multitude, who could have forborn to receive such a villainous and intolerably base traitor with the most emphatical expressions of an exasperated and enraged mind? but with what wonderful *mildness* was that monster of ingratitude and dissimulation treated by our dear Lord! the worst words he bestowed upon him being these, *Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?* nor did he more angrily bespeak the wicked followers than he did their leader, when they rudely assaulted and apprehended him. And so far was he from revenging himself upon them, as able as he was to do it effectually; and notwithstanding (as he gave them to understand) that he could, if he list'd, have no fewer than twelve legions of angels employed in his service, that he wrought a miracle for the healing of the wound that one of them received from the sword of *Peter*; and withal, charged him to put up that weapon.

Nor was it ever in the power either of the calumniating and black tongues, or rude and cruel hands, of his bitterest enemies to draw from him so much as a reviling or fierce word. But of so rarely moderate a temper and serene spirit was he, that (as *S. Peter* saith,) *(f) When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not. but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. (g) He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, he hid not his face from shame and spitting. (h) He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.* And thus hath he taught us by the most excellent example to obey those precepts of his whereby the practice of that virtue of *meekness* and sedateness of spirit towards injurious persons is enjoined on us.

Nor was his *meekness* less to be parall'd or more observable than his great *humility*; from whence indeed that proceeded, and was of this no small expression. And especially considering his high descent, most transcendent perfections and infinite worth, it was impossible he should

X 4

(f) 1 Pet. ii. 23.

(g) Isai. l. 6.

(h) Isai. liii. 7.

have

have been so meek as to put up such contemptuous usage and inexpressibly provoking affronts as he did, if his humility were not equal to his other excellencies ; if he had not been most lowly minded, and of a profoundly submissive spirit. God only had the glory of all his mighty works, he would not ascribe to himself the least. *The father, saith he, that dwelleth in me, he doth the works,* John xiv. 10. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, the son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the father do : for, whatsoever things he doth, these doth the son likewise,* John v. 19. *I can of mine own self do nothing ; as I hear, I judge ; and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the father which hath sent me,* verse 30. — *I do nothing of my self : but as my father hath taught me, I speak these things,* John viii. 28.

Though he was king of kings, and lord of lords, the prince of the kings of earth, yet did he hide his greatness, told his disciples that his kingdom is not of this world, and chose the condition of a subject and a private man in it : nor would he be persuaded to assume to himself so much authority, as judging but between two persons in a case of civil right did amount unto. In the above-cited place (*Luke 12. 15.*) when one desired him, to speak to his brother, that he divide the inheritance with him, he returned him this answer, *Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you ?* may he put himself into the condition, not only of a private, but also of a mean, a most despicably mean person. As he chose to be born of a mean woman, in the meanest and even vilest of places, a stable, where a manger was his cradle, and brute beasts his chamber-fellows ; so did he afterwards subject himself to his poor mother, and the carpenter her husband. He was not unacquainted, when he was but a child, with the nobility of his descent, the greatness of his extraction, he even then did well understand whose son he was, and that no less a person was his father than the infinite God of heaven and earth ; for said he to *Joseph and Mary*, when after a sorrowful search after him they found him in the temple, *wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ?* yet notwithstanding, he went down with them from Jerusalem, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them, *Luke ii. 49, 51.* And under *Joseph*, though he knew him to be but his reputed Father (if we may believe *one of the most ancient Fathers) he wrought at his own trade, and, as he saith, *τεκτονὰ ἔργα ἐργάζετο*, did carpentry-work ; and particularly busied himself in making *ἀροτὲς καὶ ζυγά*, ploughs and yokes.

Again, the persons that he took for his most intimate associates were of no better quality than sorry fishermen, and men of the lowest rank. As for his worldly estate, I cannot say 'twas mean, for he had none at all (that is, but what he was beholden to others for.) *The foxes, said he, have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where he may lay his head.* And as for employments, he thought not himself too good to undertake the vilest, even one in comparison of which making ploughs and yokes was most gentle, viz. *The washing of his disciples feet.* In short, so marvellously humble was this infinitely great person, that (as he saith, *Matth. xx. 28.*) *He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister ;* and was in this world as one that serveth, *Luke xxii. 27.* and that, *though he was rich, he became poor, that we through his*

his poverty might be rich. (i) That, though he was in the form of God, he thought it no robbery (or spoil) to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, Phil. ii. 6, 7. And our Saviour hath declared that he was our pattern both in his meekness and humility; For, learn (said he) of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, Matth. xi. 29. And therefore did he submit to that meanest office of a servant (which was but now mentioned) that we might from the consideration of his example, not look upon the lowest, whereby we may serve our brethren, as below us: for, after he had washed his Disciples feet, and was sate down again, he said thus to them, John xiii. 12. Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am: If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one anothers feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do, as I have done unto you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Considering what hath been said of his chusing so mean and despicable a condition in this world, I need not spend time in shewing what an example he hath given us of contempt of it. Never was any one so dead to its pleasures as he was: nor were ever its glories so trampled on as by our Saviour: and that, not as were the carpets of Plato by that cynick Diogenes, who was truly enough (no question) told by that great philosopher, that he trod under foot the pride of Plato, with a greater pride; for he was guilty of no insolent behaviour either towards great men or their greatness, nor of any thing that looked in the least like it. But he gave most eminent demonstrations of the mean opinion he had of popularity and applause among men, of titles of honour, and vast revenues, and that he infinitely despised them in comparison of mental endowments and accomplishments. He confuted the idle fancies of the world concerning these and the like things, and disparaged those vain estimations that are founded upon them, in that he chose to be wholly devoid of them, and in the very other extreme to those which abounded with them: whereby he likewise signified how little evil he apprehended in disesteem, reproach and poverty; which we vain creatures have such frightful conceptions of, and so greatly dread; in that he did not at all matter them, nor in the least concern himself at them.

So great and generous a soul had he, as to be so far from suffering his mind to be at all disquieted with them, that he voluntarily and freely chose them, For it lay in his power to be the richest man under heaven, and most to abound with this worlds goods, if it had so pleased him; and he could, if he had listed, have been also the most popular person upon earth; could always have kept the credit which for a while he had among the common people, and gained, the like among all sorts: for he had infinitely the advantage above all that ever appeared in the world to have raised to himself a most mighty renown,

and

and to be adored by all people. So that the truth of that saying of *Epiſtetus*, [**They are not the things themselves which ſo affright and ſcare men, but the false opinions they have conceived of them,*] is greatly confirmed as to the forementioned reputed evils, by our Saviour's practice.

And this blessed person, *choſing* ſo mean and contemptibly poor a condition of life, I need not tell you that he was perfectly *contented* with it; nor that he was altogether free (though he had many times ſcarcely from hand to mouth) from thoughtfulness and anxiety of mind, concerning his future maintenance. For as he cautioned his Diſciples againſt *taking thought for their life, what they ſhould eat, what they ſhould drink, and wherewith they ſhould be clothed*; and ſhewed the folly and ſinfulneſs thereof, as proceeding from diſtruſtfulneſs of the divine providence, (*Matt. vi. 25, &c.*) So was he ſo far from being guilty of that fault himſelf, that he was no leſs *liberal* than he was *poor*. For when he was provided with a ſmall pittance of victuals, inſtead of hoarding it up, or being ſaving of it, he would not think much of ſpending it upon others whoſe needs craved it: we read twice of his beſtowing the little ſtock that he and his Diſciples had gotten between them, upon the hungry multitude, and of his working a miracle to make it hold out among them.

And how full he was of *charity*, and *tender compaſſion*, is beyond expreſſion: for as he commended to his diſciples, and inculcated upon them nothing more, nor ſcarcely ſo much, ſo in the exerciſe of no virtue was he more exemplary. We read often of the yerning of his bowels towards miſerable mortals, and his pity did always exert it ſelf in acts of mercy. Never did any make application to him for deliverance from the evils that did afflict them, that had not their requeſts granted them: nor were any more forward to beg relief of any kind of him, than he was to beſtow it upon them: nay he frequently made poor creatures the objects of his mercy before it was ſought for by them. It was even his whole buſineſs to oblige the world by ſignal kindneſſes, and (as ſhall be farther ſhewn anon) be continually went up and down doing good either to the bodies or ſouls of men. Nay his charity was of ſo large and univerſal extent, that the wicked and unthankful, and even his bittereſt enemies, were (as well as others) very ample partakers of it. Whereas the duty of *bleſſing thoſe that curſe us, and praying for thoſe that deſpitefully uſe us*, is to our corrupt natures one of the harſheſt and moſt difficult of any he hath impoſed upon us, he hath taken a courſe by the admirable example he hath herein given us, to make it one of the eaſieſt and moſt pleaſant to us. For the devilish malice that by the vileſt of men was expreſt towards him, could not in the leaſt imbitter his ſpirit or harden his heart againſt them: nor could he be diſſwaded by it from perſiſting in doing good to them: but continued to entreat them to accept of life from him, to grieve at their infidelity, and with tears to bewail their moſt obſtinate perverſeneſs. And laſtly, when their inveterate and implacable hatred came to vent it ſelf in the cruelleſt and moſt barbarous manner imaginable upon him, did he pray to his father for them; even whiſt they were tormenting him, did he beſeech him to forgive them;

nay,

* Ταράττει τὸς ἀνθρώπους ἐν τὰ πρᾶγματα ἀλλὰ τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν δόγματα.

may, and in order thereunto laid down his very life for them ; even for them, I say, that took it from him.

And this gives occasion to discourse something of his most wonderful *patience*, and submission to the will of God, which he gave us in his extreme sufferings an example of. We are exhorted, *Heb. xii. 1, 2. to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, &c.* The ignominy that was cast upon him by ungodly creatures, he despised ; and as for the excessive tortures felt by him, them he endured : he did not indeed *despise* these also, but neither did he *faint* under them ; according as we are forbidden to do, *verse 5. of the now mentioned chapter, My son despise not thou the chastisement of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him.* There were on the one hand no *stoical* rants heard from him, such as that of *Possidonius* in the presence of *Pompey* (when he was afflicted with a fit of the gout, or some such disease,) viz *nihil agis dolor, &c. O pain, thou art an insignificant thing, I don't matter thee* : For we find that our Saviour had as quick a sense of pain, as have other men ; and his agony in the garden did so affect his soul, as to force, *δαμνῶν αἱματὶ*, *cladders of blood* through the pores of his body. We read that he was *fore amazed*, and *very heavy* ; and he told his Disciples that *his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death* : But yet, on the other hand, notwithstanding the immense weight and most heavy pressure of *grief* his mind suffered under, through his Father's with holding the wonted influences of his love from him, and the intolerable torments of *body* that he underwent, (though, both in regard of the greatness of his sufferings, and also his most perfect innocence, and therefore non-desert of them, he might have the greatest temptations imaginable to be *impatient*) he never uttered a murmuring or discontented word, nor conceived the least displeasure at the Divine Majesty, or doubted either of his *justice* or *goodness* ; but intirely submitted himself to this his severe dispensation of providence, and willingly acquiesced in it. He prayed indeed to his Father, that this bitter *cup*, if it were possible, might *pass from him* ; but it was on this condition, that it might seem good to him. And as so much is implied in those words, [*If it be possible*] so is it expressed, *Luke xxii. 42. where it is said, Father, if thou be willing, remove the cup from me* : And it immediately followeth ; *Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done* ; according as he hath, in the absolute form he left us, required us to pray. And again, saith he, *John xviii. 11. The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it ?* And *John xii. 28.* After he had put up the forementioned petition to be delivered from that most dismal hour that was approaching near him, he doth, as it were, *recall* it presently, in these words, *But for this cause came I unto this hour* ; and then put up this second, *Father glorify thy name* : which is plainly as much as if he had said, *Father, as dreadful and terrifying as the thoughts are of my future sufferings, seeing glory will redound to thy self by them, I am not only contented but also desirous to undergo them.*

Celsus having mentioned that celebrated Bravado of *Anaxarchus* to the tyrant of *Cyprus*, when he cruelly pounded him in his mortar ; and the merry laying of *Epicletus* to his master when he brake his leg, and

and thereupon scoffingly demanded of the Christians, what saying like to either of those, was uttered by their God in the midst of his sufferings, *Origen* makes this good reply to him, *viz.* That our Saviour's silence in the midst of the tortures he endured, shewed greater patience and fortitude of mind, than did all the sayings of the Greek philosophers in the like cases: And he adds that those words of Christ, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*, were not only *φωνὴ ἡνδρακίτου, ἡναγεσχεμένῳ δὲ τοῖς συμβαίνουσιν, &c.* the voice of one that patiently suffered, but also that was well pleased with his sufferings, and spake his preference of what was appointed for him by the divine providence before his own desires and natural affections.

In the next place, our Saviour gave us the most eminent and noble example of *Love to God*, and the devoutest temper of mind towards him. That love of him, with all the heart and soul mind and strength which he commended to us as our duty, did he himself give the highest demonstrations of. His last mentioned *patience*, and perfect submission to the divine pleasure under the most dreadful sufferings, is alone sufficient to convince us that his *love* to his father was most intense: for it was utterly impossible that his *will* should be so entirely resigned up to the *will* of God, if his *love* of him had not been, as sincere, so of the highest degree and absolutely perfect. So his heavenly Father might thereby be glorified, he was willing to endure the extremest miseries, that ever were inflicted on any mortal: and indeed his mere well interpreting so severe a providence was a great expression of no small love. And besides, it was (as he told his Disciples) his very (*k*) meat to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work. As he was heartily well pleased to suffer his will, so he took infinite content, satisfaction and delight in the doing of it. It was to him the most pleasant thing in the whole world to be about his Father's business; and therein he abounded, and was indefatigable. All he did was referred by him to the honour of God; and of each of his glorious works he gave him the glory, and him only: which thing was no less an argument of the ardency of his love, than (as we have said it is) of the depth of his humility. In all his ways he acknowledged God, and took all occasions to make mention of him, and to speak of his excellent perfections. When the ruler called him but good master; which was an epithet, had he been but a mere man, he was infinitely worthy of; as sleight an occasion as this may seem to some, it minded him to speak of God's goodness; and he presently replied, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good* (that is originally and from himself) *but God only*. He was much in delightful converse with God, and in prayer to him, and ever and anon retired from all company for that purpose; according as he hath enjoined us to do, *Mat.* vi. 5, 6. And we read *Luke* vi. 12. of his continuing on a mountain a whole night in prayer.

A mighty confidence and trust in God, as it could not but be an effect of our Saviour's no less love of him, so did he give marvellous instances thereof. The storm that put his Disciples into a dreadful consternation, could not terrifie, nor so much as discompose him; no, though he was suddenly awaked out of a sound sleep by their dismal cries. When he was hoisted up into the air by his grand adversary,

the devil, and set upon a pinnacle of the temple, and then by abusing scripture solicited to cast himself down; as much as he seemed to be abandoned to his power, and under as great a disadvantage as he was through extreme fasting, his *mind* was as *strong* as his *body weak*, his constancy remained unshaken, his thoughts undisturbed, and with an undaunted courage he readily replied to him, *It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, Mat. iv. 5.* Where you have also two other signal instances of the like nature. By all which he shewed that his *trust in God* was so invincibly strong, and his *adherence* to him so inseparably close, that the utmost attempts, and fiercest assaults of the devil could have no other effect than to prove them so. Our Saviour could never be prevailed upon to go the least *step* out of God's way, in order to his preservation from the most imminent dangers, so firm was his *faith* in him: and he still doing the things that were pleasing in his sight, he was undoubtedly assured of the continuance of his presence with him. This he hath himself told us, *John viii. 29. And he that hath sent me, is with me, the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him.*

So visible and apparent was his *trust in God*, that when he was given up to his adversaries most barbarous rage, they themselves could not but take notice of it, and scoffingly when he hung on the cross (and therefore seemed to be in a desperate condition) did they upbraid him with it: *He trusted in God, said they, let him deliver him now if he will have him, for he said, I am the Son of God, Mat. xxvii. 43.* And whereas it hath been objected by some of our Saviour's adversaries, that a little before his death, he expressed very great distrust, if not perfect despair of his Father's love, in that tragical exclamation, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* There are those that conceive it may be satisfactorily enough answered, that it is most unreasonable and barbarous to take advantage from words uttered in the very *pangs* of death, accompanied with unsupportable misery; it being not ordinarily supposable that any can be *themselves*, who are in such circumstances; and why the *Man* Jesus, or our Saviour, according to his *humane nature*, should not be under as great disadvantages as others in such a condition, he being as was said, no less sensible of pain than other men, no reason can be assigned: Yet we stand not however in any necessity of this reply. But I say, secondly, though we should suppose our Saviour to be now as perfectly master of his thoughts as he ever was, these words may not be understood in so harsh a sense; for they were but a repetition of the first verse of the 22d. *Psalms*; which does relate not to *David's* case only, but also to the *Messiah*, whom he often personated, and was a type of. The ancient *Jews* themselves did so understand this *Psalms*. Nor can it be gathered from our Saviour's rehearsal of these words, that he either concluded, or at all doubted, he was utterly rejected and cast off by his Father, but the contrary: for several verses in the forementioned *Psalms* assure us that they are not *there* to be so understood; for *David* doth again and again afterward, not only pray for, but likewise expresseth good *hopes*, nay, and *undoubted assurance* of a gracious deliverance; and praiseth God for it too, as if it were already effected. So that this sad complaint of the

bleſſed *Jeſus*, as it could not be occaſioned by the leaſt *diſtruſt*, ſo it may be more than preſumed, to have proceeded from the higheſt and intenſeſt degree of *love*, which cauſed in his ſoul the moſt pungent and ſmart ſenſe of his Father's hiding his face, and abſenting himſelf (though but for a while) from him. But the leaſt favourable interpretation it is capable of is no worſe than this, *viz.* That our Saviour did thereby expreſs how exceſſive the miſery was which he then felt; eſpecially ſince the word [*Lama*] doth ſignifie *how* as well as *why*. But laſtly, his dying words, and the laſt he uttered, expreſs his retaining his *confidence in God* (as much as he might ſeem to be caſt off by him) to the very laſt; which were theſe, *Father, into thine hands I commend my ſpirit.*

I will inſtance in one virtue more wherein our Saviour was alſo ſingularly exemplary. Whereas he adviſed his Diſciples to be *wiſe as ſerpents*, and *innocent as doves*, they beheld in his converſation a pattern to walk by in following the former as well as the latter part of this advice: nor was the *wiſdom of the ſerpent* leſs conspicuous in him, than was the *innocence of the dove*. *Prudence* is the firſt of the primitive virtues, or of thoſe from whence all other have their original. She is the chief governeſs of humane actions; and thoſe which are performed without her direction, do want a main circumſtance that is neceſſary to give them the denomination of truly virtuous. A raſh and heady doing of thoſe actions which are for the matter of them praiſeworthy, will render them culpable as to the manner of their performance: and he that hath no regard to *prudence*, though he may do good things, and poſſibly may ſometimes *mean* well, yet he will never merit the commendation of a well-doer. I ſay therefore that our bleſſed Saviour, as he hath by his *example*, no leſs than by his *doctrine*, taught us the exerciſe of all other virtues, ſo hath he of this alſo; and his *prudence* did wonderfully diſcover it ſelf through his whole life. As very great as was his zeal for the *Glory of God*, and the *good of men*, it was not too ſtrong for his *reaſon*; it was not a *blind* zeal; but he was ever very careful to give each of his actions their due circumſtances. As eagerly as he was bent upon accompliſhing the work that he was ſent into the world about, he was not for making more haſte than good ſpeed. He ſhewed great *prudence* in his injunctions, his preaching, and diſcourſes: He never urged any duties *unſeaſonably*, and had a care not to give ſuch ſevere precepts to his novice Diſciples as might diſcourage and over-burthen them. (1) He was not for putting a piece of new cloth into an old garment, or new wine into old bottles.

He very wiſely *timed* his diſcourſes; did not preach all his doctrines at once: what was ſaid of the orator *Demosthenes*, cannot be truly affirmed of him, *viz.* *That he knew what to ſay well enough, but not what not to ſay*: for as he well underſtood what doctrines to preach, ſo did he alſo what not to preach. *He ſpoke the word unto them as they were able to hear it*, Mark iv. 33. And ſaid he, John xvi, 12. *I have yet many things to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.* He knew both when to ſpeak, and when to hold his peace; and in whatſoever he ſaid, he conſidered the *genius*, *temper*, and *capacity* of his auditors. He would

(1) See Matt. ix, 14. to 17.

would not cast pearls before swine, as he cautioned his Disciples not to do, for this reason, (*m*) *Left they turn again and rend them.* When he thought good to deliver those doctrines that were likely to exasperate, as that of the calling of the Gentiles, and rejection of the Jews, &c. he chose to fold them up in parables, unfolding them in private to his Disciples, who were fitly disposed for the receiving of them; and therefore had the favour bestowed upon them *to understand the mysteries of the kingdom*, as he told them.

We find that till he knew his time of suffering was come, he wisely still avoided danger (wherein he properly shewed the wisdom of the serpent) one while by withdrawing himself, as *Matt. xii. 14.* and at other times (as was now said) by concealing those doctrines, which he was well aware the unbelieving Jews would be so far from embracing, and making good use of, that they would take occasion from them the more indutritiously to design his ruine: we read *John x. 33. to 36.* That he would not expressly own himself to be the Son of God in any other sence, than such a one as he might acknowledge with the least danger; and concealed that which he very certainly knew would but confirm them in their opinion of him as a wicked blasphemer, and make him so much the more obnoxious to their spight and rage. So far was he from running headlong upon sufferings, and making himself through a rash and indiscreet zeal, liable to those that hated him; so far was he from being in love with persecution, that he did (as the Apostle exhorted the *Ephesian* Christians to do) *ἐξυποτάξαι τὰ καίρια, buy out or gain time, because the days were evil*, and full of danger.

Again, how wisely did our Saviour from time to time defeat and render unsuccessful, the plots and machinations of the *Pharisees*, and his other enemies against him! we find in *Matth. xxii. 15.* the *Herodians* (or those of the Jews that adhered to the *Roman* authority) and the *Pharisees* (who esteemed it as an usurpation) combining together to intangle him in his talk: and they so ordered their plot, as that they might get an advantage from whatsoever he should say, either to render him obnoxious to *Herod*, and the *Roman* party, or to irage the most popular and highly esteemed sect of the Jews, the *Pharisees*. In order hereunto they cunningly put to him this question, *viz. Whether it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar?* if he should answer that it was, he would make himself liable to the latter mischief; if that it was not, to the former, and the far greater. Now (as is to be seen in the *19, 20, 21. verses*) our Saviour with such admirable prudence contrived his answer, that (*verse 22.*) both factions are said to wonder at it, and to be baffled by it. *When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.* Diverse other instances there are of a like nature; as in *John viii. 3. to 9. Matth. xxi. 23. to 27. Matth. xxi 41. to 46, &c.*

And thus we have sufficiently and fully enough proved, that it was the whole business of our Saviour's life to make men in all respects virtuous and holy; and that thereunto were subservient, as his discourses with them, so his actions likewise, and whole behaviour. *Plus docent exempla quàm præcepta*: examples are the most natural and easie way of teaching,

teaching, and they are so by reason of mankind's being so greatly addicted to imitation; and, I say, it doth from our past discourse sufficiently appear, that our Saviour's whole conversation was a rare exemplification of all kinds of virtue and true goodness.

C H A P. VI.

That to make Men truly virtuous and holy; was the Design of Christ's unimitable Actions, or mighty Works and Miracles. And that these did not only tend to promote it, as they were convincing Arguments that he came forth from God, but were also very proper to effect it in a more immediate manner.

U T it cannot be amiss if we moreover add, That it was not only the design of our Saviour's *imitable* actions, to teach the world virtue, but also of those which are *not imitable*, viz. of his *miracles* and *mighty works*: and that *these* did not only tend to the promoting of that design, as they were convincing and infallible arguments that he came forth from God, but were likewise very proper to effect it in a more *immediate* way. For they were not only *argumentative*, or a proof of the truth of his doctrine, but also *instructive*, and minded men of their duty. Those miracles which he chose to work, were of such a nature, as to be hugely fit to accomplish at one and the same time both these businesses. They were not such as the foolish and carnal Jews expected, that is, *signs from heaven*, that were apt to produce *directly* no other effect than that of pleasing their childish phantasies, or striking their senses with admiration and astonishment, by making prodigious and amazing shews and representations before their eyes; but most of them were expressions of the greatest *kindness* and *charity* to mankind. For instance, his healing the sick of all manner of diseases; his making the lame to walk, and the blind to see, and the deaf to hear; his cleansing the lepers, feeding the hungry, raising the dead, and ejecting of evil spirits out of those that were miserably possessed with them, and tormented by them, &c. In *Acts* x. 38. the Apostle expresseth our Saviour's working of miracles, by this phrase [*Doing good*] who (saith he) *went up and down doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil*. And in his *miracles* did he give instances of great kindness and good will even unto those which did least deserve it: for he made use of his *divine power* for the healing and relief of the *dissingenuous* and *unthankful*, ill natured and wicked, as well as of the *better-disposed* and *more worthy* persons: therein imitating his heavenly Father (as he required us to do) *who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust*, *Matth.* v. 45. And the last miracle we (I think) read of before his crucifixion, was the cure of one of those his enemies that came with clubs and slaves to apprehend him.

And

And the few miracles besides those that consisted in doing *kindnesses* to men (for those we have on record are almost *all* such) were such as by which he gave us an example of other virtues: as particularly of *piety*, *trust in God*, and *zeal for him*. Of his *piety* and *trust in God*, his fasting forty days and forty nights was a great evidence: it was so of his *trust* in him, and constant adhering to him, as by thus doing he put himself by his Father's appointment upon most violent and strong temptations; in conflicting wherewith (as hath been shewn) he came off a most noble conqueror. Of his *zeal* for God was his whipping the buyers and sellers out of the temple a great instance; as it was also of his most gracious respect to the contemned Gentiles, whose court they were whip'd out of; they making *their house of prayer a den of thieves*, as our Saviour told them. And this may deservedly be numbered among his miracles, because it is unconceivable how a man unarmed, in no authority, and of mean esteem in regard of his parentage, poverty, and low circumstances, should strike such a fear into those people, as to force them without the least offer of resistance to flee before him, if the cause thereof were not extraordinary and more than natural.

And even that miracle which might seem the most inconsiderable, namely his causing his disciple *Peter* to catch a fish with a small piece of money in its mouth, was also instructive of a duty; it being an instance of his *loyalty* to the supreme magistrate; for the money was expended in paying tribute, and taken out of the sea in that strange manner for no other purpose.

In short, I know no one miracle that our Saviour wrought, but over and above its being a seal for the confirmation of his divine mission, it teacheth some one or other good lesson, and is proper for the bettering of the souls of those that seriously consider it.

And that great miracle, which after his ascension (according to his promise) he shewed in sending the Holy Ghost, did promote the business of making men *holy*, in a far higher way than that of example: for the grand and standing office of the spirit in the world, is the exciting in us *holy desires*, and the assisting of us in the performance of *holy actions*: it is the making the Gospel, and all means, effectual to the renovation and reformation of our hearts and lives.

If it be objected, that we read of two miracles, namely, his cursing the fig-tree, and sending the devils into the herd of swine, which are so far from containing any lessons of *morality*, or tending to the least good, that they seem to be on the contrary only of an evil and mischievous consequence.

I answer, That as for our Saviour's cursing the *fig-tree* that bare *leaves*, and had no *fruit* on it, it was a most significant document unto men, that their profession, which is answerable to bearing *leaves*, must be joyned with a suitable practice, and have *fruit* accompanying or 'twill be nothing worth: and *fruitless* persons were taught by that emblem, what they must look for, if they continued so. But the most pregnant meaning of it is (as the learned doctor *Hammond* hath shewn) that the Jews which were just like that leafie-tree without fruit at that time on it, a mere professing people, were to expect speedy destruction from

him, on supposition that they persisted in their unfruitfulness. It is not once to be imagined that this which our Saviour did to the *fig-tree* was any other than *emblematical*; for no one that deserveth the name of a man, would be guilty of such a piece of foolish revenge, as to wreak his anger on a *senseless tree*, or on any thing that's incapable of being faulty. And besides, it is mentioned in the story as related by St. *Mark*, chap. xi. 13. that *the time of figs was not yet*, or, it was not then a season for figs; that is, it was not a good fig-year; which is given as the cause of the tree's being at that time without fruit: and 'tis very probable, that, *that* clause was purposely added, that it might be the more easily observed that our Saviour's curse was not designed to be determinated in the tree, but that it was pronounced against it only as it was an apt resemblance of a professor that is *barren* of good works. So that this miracle was designed no less than the forementioned, to be *instructive* to the spectators of it, and to all that should afterwards hear or read the story concerning it.

And as for that other, *viz.* his sending the devils, which he had ejected out of a poor man, into a herd of swine, and by that means causing them to run violently down a steep hill into the sea, and to perish there: we read, First, That our Saviour did not *command* them, but only *(n)* *suffered* them (as 'tis expressed both by St. *Mark* and St. *Luke*) at their own request to take possession of those beasts. Nor doth the saying unto them, *(o)* *Go*, (which is in St. *Matthew's* relation of the story,) speak any more than a bare permission; seeing their beseeching him to suffer them to go is there expressed as the occasion of his so speaking. So that the mischief that was done, the *devils* only were the authors or the proper causes of. Nor, secondly, could our Saviour *permit* this, either to make *sport*, or to *please* him with the *destruction* of the *poor creatures*; for both these were infinitely below him, and perfectly contrary to the *seriousness* of his *spirit*, and *goodness* of his nature; but there were very weighty and great reasons why he should thus do.

As, First, To expose the hateful nature of the devils, and to give men to understand and take notice, how extremely they delight in doing mischief; which it doth greatly concern the welfare of our souls, both not to be ignorant of, and well to consider. By this experiment it appeared, that those unclean spirits are so maliciously disposed, and so bent upon mischievousness, as that rather than want objects to vent their spite on, they will be glad to do it upon brute beasts. But especially the devils most inveterate and deadly hatred to *mankind* was hereby shewed; in that when they were no longer permitted to do them a greater, they were glad of an opportunity to make them the objects of a less mischief: and to procure to them what hurt they were able in their *goods*, when they ceased to be in a capacity of tormenting them in their *minds* and *bodies*.

Secondly, By this means there was a discovery made what a *multitude* there were of them that possessed that *one*, or at most (according to St. *Matthew*) *two* persons; inasmuch as that those which were cast out of them, were enough to actuate the bodies of a herd of swine, consisting of no fewer than about two thousand, as St. *Mark* saith; and none could

(n) Mark v. 13. Luke viii. 32.

(o) Matt. viii. 31, 32.

could tell (but he that cast them out of the men, and suffered them to enter the swine) how very many each of these might be possessed with. This was of great importance to be known, in order to the understanding of the greatness of the miracle that was wrought in behalf of the miserable wretches, and to their being made sensible how mighty a deliverance Christ had given them. For though the devils declared that their name was *legion*, to signify that they were a huge multitude; yet what they said was too incredible to be received upon the bare word of those who had been liars from the beginning; but this permission of our Saviour gave a plain demonstration that in *this saying* of theirs they were *not liars*.

Thirdly, These persons were by this means most effectually taught how infinitely they were obliged to the divine providence, in not suffering this vast number of fiends, all the time they had possession of them, to destroy them; when as they no sooner entered into the herd of swine, but immediately they dispatch'd them all.

Fourthly, This permission was also a just punishment to the *Gadarens* to whom those beasts belonged; who (as afterward it appeared) were a generation of muck-worms, who preferred their *swine* before their *souls*; and so likewise it was a most proper and effectual means for the conversion of them. Several other reasons of this action might be instanced in, but these, nay any one of them, may well suffice. So that it is apparent that this miracle was so far from being a *mischievous* one, or of no use, that there was scarcely any one wrought by our Saviour, more pregnant with profitable instructions.



C H A P. VII.

That to make Men holy was the Design of Christ's Death, proved by several Texts of Scripture: and how it is effectual thereunto, discovered in six Particulars.

FOURTHLY, the making of us holy, as it was the business of our Saviour's whole life, so was it also the great end and design of his death. And this we are assured of by abundance of express scriptures; some few of which we will here produce, *Rom. vi. 6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

2 Corinthians v. 15.—*He died for a'l, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.*

Galatians i. 4. *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, (viz. From its corrupt practices) according to the will of God and our Father.*

Ephesians v. 25, 26, 27. *Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it with*

the washing of water by the word, that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Colossians i. 21, 22. *And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, hath he now reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable in his sight.*

Titus ii. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

1 Pet. i. 18. *For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish, and without spot.*

1 Pet. iii. 18. *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, &c.* That is, saith Calvin upon the place, That we might be so consecrated to God as to live and die to him.

1 Pet. ii. 24. *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live to righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.*

Now the death of Christ is greatly effectual to this end of making us holy, these several ways.

First, As it gave testimony to the truth of his doctrine; which (as hath been shewn) hath no other design. Christ took his death upon it that that was true; was willing to expose himself in the defence thereof to a most ignominious and painful death.

Secondly, As the shedding of his blood was a federal right confirming the new covenant, wherein is promised in and through him the pardon of our sins, and eternal happiness, on condition of our sincere repentance, faith, and new obedience: so the blood of Christ is called the blood of the covenant, Heb. x. 29.

And the blood of the everlasting covenant, Heb. xiii. 20.

Thirdly, As it is exemplary of the highest virtue, 1 Pet. ii. 21. *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* The greatest humility and self-denial, the greatest meekness, patience and submission to the divine will, the most wonderful charity, and forgiveness of enemies, &c. are exemplified in our Saviour's death; and so it must needs be very highly effectual towards the promoting of these most excellent graces, and the like, in us, and the expelling and utter extirpating the contrary vices.

One would think it impossible that he should be of an haughty spirit and a proud mind, that seriously considers how the only-begotten Son of God humbled himself to the death, even the shameful and ignominious death of the cross; that he should covet great things in the world, that frequently affects his mind with the thoughts of his Saviour's emptying himself and becoming poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich, and preferring the death of the vilest of wretches before the life of the greatest and most honourable personages.

ages. How can he be vain and frothy, that considers his Saviour's horrid agony, what a man of sorrows he was, and how acquainted with griefs? How can he storm at the receiving of injuries, and swell with indignation against those that offer him incivilities, and rudely behave themselves towards him, that fixeth his thoughts upon his Saviour's meek putting up the vilest and most contemptuous usages, and considereth how gentle, sedate and lamb-like he was when barbarous villains mocked, buffeted and spit upon him, crowned him with thorns, put a robe in a jeer upon his back, and a reed for a scepter into his hand, and at last acted the parts of the most inhumane butchers towards him. One would think it no uneasie matter to perswade our selves to forgive very heartily the spitefullest and most malicious enemies, whilst we take notice that Christ shed even his precious blood for those that carried in their breasts the greatest malignity against him, and bare him the most deadly hatred; that he suffered death for those which in the cruellest manner they were able, took away his life. What temptation can be forcible enough to prevail upon us *sinners*, to murmur and repine at the hand of God in the afflictions he lays upon us, while we observe how much greater sufferings than ours, were with profoundest submission to, and also the heartiest approbation of the *divine will*, endured by the not only perfectly *innocent*, but also the *infinitely well deserving* Jesus?

Fourthly, As the death of Christ was likewise a *sacrifice for sin*, it was in an eminent manner effectual to this great purpose. In the death of Christ considered as an *expiatory* and *propitiatory sacrifice*, is the offence that God Almighty hath taken against sin, and the hatred he bears to it, as well as his love to us sinners, abundantly declared; in that he would not forgive it to us without the intervention of no meaner an offering than the blood of his only-begotten Son. Observe what the Apostle St. Paul saith to this purpose, *Rom. iii. 25, 26. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare I say at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* The plain sense of which words (as I conceive) is this; That God might at one and the same time demonstrate how *holy* he is, and how much he *hateth sin* on the one hand, and how infinitely *gracious* he is in his willingness to *forgive sinners* on the other, was Christ set forth by him to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. There are many (and they no adversaries to the doctrine of our Saviour's satisfaction) that do not question but that God could have pardoned sin without any other satisfaction than the repentance of the sinner, (and in the number of them were Calvin, P. Martyr, Musculus, and Zanchy, as might be fully shewn out of their several works,) but he chose to have his Son die for it, before he would admit any terms of reconciliation, that so he might perform the highest act of *grace*, in such a way, as at the same time to shew also the greatest *displeasure* against *sin*. And therefore would he thus do, that so he might the more effectually prevent wicked men's encouraging themselves by the consideration of his great mercy, to persist in their *wickedness*. Therefore was Christ set forth to be a propi-

tiatory sacrifice for sin, I will not say that his Father (who is perfectly *sui juris*) might be put by this means into a capacity of forgiving it, but that it might be a cogent motive, and a most prevailing argument to sinners to forsake their sins.

There is an excellent place to this purpose, *Rom. xviii. 3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh: God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin (or by the means of sin) condemned sin in the flesh*; that is, what the precepts of the *Mosaical* law could not do, in that they were weak by reason of the impetuosity of men's fleshly inclinations, that the Son of God (coming in the humane nature, and in all respects becoming like to us, sin only excepted) did; and by being a sacrifice for sin (so the word [*sin*] signifieth in diverse places, as *Leviticus* iv. 29. *chap. v. 6. 2 Cor. v. 21.* and, as I suppose, also *Gen. iv. 7.*) condemned sin in his flesh; he by this means shewing how hateful it is to God, took a most powerful course to kill and destroy it. And moreover, the most dearly beloved Son of God undergoing such extreme sufferings for our sins, it is evidently thereby demonstrated what dismal vengeance those have reason to expect that shall continue impenitent, and refuse to be reclaimed from them: for faith he, *Luke xxiii. 31. If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* If God spared not his own most innocent, holy and only Son, than whom nothing was, or could be, more dear to him, but abandoned him to so shameful and painful a death for our sins, how great and severe sufferings may we conclude he will inflict upon those wretches, that dare still to live in wilful disobedience.

And from the death of Christ considered as a sacrifice we farther learn, what an esteem God hath for his holy laws, that he would not abate their rigour, nor remit the punishment due to the transgressors of them, without a consideration of no meaner value than the most precious blood of his own Son.

And lastly, In that Christ hath laid down his life at the appointment of God the Father for the purpose of making an atonement for sin, this gives all men unspeakably greater assurance of the pardon of true penitents than the bare consideration of the divine goodness could ever have done: and so by this means have we the greatest encouragement our hearts can wish for, to become new men, and return to obedience; and have all ground of jealousy removed, that we have been guilty of such heinous and so often repeated impieties, as that it may not become the holiness and justice of God to remit them to us, though they should be never so sincerely forsaken by us.

In the death of our Saviour thus considered, are contained (as we have seen) the strongest and most irresistible arguments to a holy life; and I farther add, such as are no less apt to work upon the principle of *ingenuity* that is implanted in our natures, than that of *self-love*. For who that hath the least spark of it, will not be powerfully inclined to hate all sin, when he considereth, that it was the cause of such direful sufferings to so incomparable a person, and infinitely obliging a friend as Christ is? Who but a creature utterly destitute of that principle, and therefore worse than a brute beast, can find in his heart to take

pleasure in the *spear* that let out the *heart-blood* of his most blessed Saviour; and to carry himself towards that as a loving friend, which was (and still is) the Lord of glory's worst enemy?

Again, Hath Jesus Christ *indured* and *done* so much for our sakes, and we are able to give our selves leave to render all his sufferings and performances unsuccessful by continuing in *disobedience*? Can we be willing that he should do and suffer so many things in *vain*, and much more do our parts to make him do so? Is this possible?

Nay hath he been crucified for us by the wicked *Jews*, and don't we think that enough? But must we ourselves be crucifying him afresh by our sins, and putting him again to an open shame by preferring our base lusts before him, as the *Jews* did *Barabbas*.

Hath he expressed such astonishing love to us in dying for us, and wo'nt we accept of it? Which we certainly refuse to do while we live in sin. Hath he purchased eternal salvation for us, and such great and glorious things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which have not entred into the heart of man, to be conceived by him; and can we perswade our selves to be so *ungrateful* to him, as well as so *wanting* to our selves, as to refuse to receive these at his hands on those most reasonable terms on which he offers them?

Hath he bought us with such a price; and can we refuse to be his servants, and rather chuse to be the slaves of satan, the devil's drudges?

Where can we find so many strongly inciting motives to hate and abandon all sin, as are contained, and very obvious in the *death* and sufferings of our Saviour for it?

Fifthly, The death of our Saviour is in a special manner effectual to the making of us in all respects virtuous and holy, as he hath thereby procured for us that grace and assistance that is necessary to enable us so to be. In regard of his *humbling* himself as he did, and *becoming obedient to the death of the cross*, hath God highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. Now by virtue of the authority he is by this means invested and dignified with, and particularly as he is king of his church, hath he sent the Holy Ghost to sanctifie us, to excite us to all holy actions, and to assist us in the performance of them.

Sixthly, The death of Christ doth also apparently promote this great design, as by his patient submitting to it he vindicated God's right of *sovereignty* over all his creatures, and the power he hath to require what he pleaseth, and to dispose of them as seems good to him. Whereas the *first Adam* by contumacy, pride and rebellion, did put an high affront upon the authority of his maker, and his wretched posterity followed his example, and have by that means done what lay in them to render his *right* to their obedience questionable; this blessed *second Adam* by acting directly contrary, viz. by *obedience*, *humility*, and *submitting* himself to the divine pleasure in the severest expressions and significations of it, hath done publickly and before the world, an infinite honour to his Father: and his absolute right of dominion over his

whole creation, and the power he hath to prescribe to it what laws he judges fitting (which was before so eclipsed by wicked sinners) hath he by this means in the most signal manner manifested and made apparent. And of what force this is to promote our holiness and universal obedience, the dullest capacity may apprehend.

From what hath been said, it appears to be a most plain, and unquestionable case, that our Saviour in his *death*, considered according to each of the notions we have of it in scripture, had an eye to the great work of making men *holy*; and that this was the *main* design which he therein drove at.

And I now add, that whereas it is frequently affirmed in the holy scriptures, that the end of Christ's death was also the *forgiveness* of our sins, and the *reconciling* of us to his Father, we are not so to understand those places, as if these blessings were absolutely thereby procured for us, or any otherwise than upon condition of our *effectual* believing, and yielding obedience to his Gospel. Nor is there any one thing scarcely we are so frequently minded of, as we are of this. Christ died to put us into a capacity of pardon; the actual removing of our guilt is not the necessary and immediate result of his death, but suspended till such time as the forementioned conditions, by the help of his grace, are performed by us.

But moreover, it is in order to our being encouraged to sincere endeavours to forsake all sin, and to be universally obedient for the time to come, that our Saviour shed his blood for the pardon of it: this was intended in his death, as it is subservient to that purpose; the assurance of having all our sins forgiven upon our sincere reformation, being a necessary motive thereunto. Therefore hath he delivered us from a necessity of *dying*, that we might *live* to God; and therefore doth God offer to be in his son Jesus reconciled to *us*, that we may thereby be prevailed with to be reconciled to *him*. Therefore was the death of Christ designed to procure our justification from all sins past, that we might be by this means provoked to become new creatures for the time to come. Observe to this purpose what the divine author to the Hebrews saith, *chap. ix. 13, 14. If the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God. Purge your consciences from dead works (for what end? it follows) to serve (or in order to your serving) the living God?*

And thus much may suffice to be spoken concerning the design of our Saviour's death.

C H A P. VIII.

That it is only the promoting of the Design of making Men holy, that is aimed at by the Apostles, insisting on the Doctrines of Christ's Resurrection, Ascension and coming again to Judgment.

✠ I MIGHT in the next place proceed to shew, that the resurrection of our Saviour did carry on the same design his precepts, promises and threatenings, life and death aimed at, but who knows not that these would all have signified nothing to the promoting of this or any other end, if he had always continued in the grave, and not risen again as he foretold he would. *If Christ be not risen, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 13. then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.* So that whatsoever our Saviour intended in those particulars, the perfecting and final accomplishment thereof must needs be eminently designed in his resurrection. The Apostle Peter tells his countrymen the Jews, *Acts iii. 21. that, To them first God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless them in turning every one of them from his iniquities.* But farthermore we find the doctrine of Christ's resurrection very much insisted on, by St. Paul especially, as a principle of the spiritual and divine life in us; and proposed as that which we ought to have not only a speculative and notional, but also a practical and experimental acquaintance with. And he often telleth us, that it is our duty to find that in our souls which bears an analogy thereunto. He saith, *Phil. iii. 10. That it was his ambition to know, or feel within himself, the power of his resurrection, as well as the fellowship of his sufferings; to have experience of his being no longer a dead but a living Jesus by his enlivening him, and quickening his soul with a new life.* And again he saith, *Rom. vi. 4. that, Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life; that is, Christians being plunged into the water in baptism, signifieth their obliging themselves in a spiritual sence to die and be buried with Jesus Christ (which death and burial consist in an utter renouncing and forsaking of all their sins) that so answerably to his resurrection, they may live a holy and a godly life.* And it followeth, *verse 5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; that is, If we are ingrafted into Christ by mortification of sin, and so imitate his death, we will no less have a resemblance of his resurrection, by living to God, or performing all acts of piety and christianity.* And then from *verse 8. to 11. he thus proceeds; Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall (or we will) also live with him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once, (or for sin once for all) but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God; that is, in heaven with God. Likewise reckon ye your selves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord; that is, after the example of his death and resurrection, account ye*
your

your selves obliged to die to sin, and to live to the praise and glory of God.

And the same use that the Apostle here makes of the *resurrection* of our Saviour, he doth also elsewhere of his *ascension* and session at the right hand of God, *Coloss. iii. 1, 2.* *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth: for you are dead,* that is in profession, having engaged yourselves to renounce your past wicked life, *and your life is hid with Christ in God, &c.* that is, and the life you have by embracing the Christian religion obliged your selves to lead, is in heaven, where Christ is. So that this sheweth the informations the Gospel gives us of these things to be intended for *practical* purposes, and incitements to *holiness*. And Christ's *resurrection*, with his following advancement, we are frequently minded of, to teach us this most excellent lesson, that obedience, patience and humility are the way to glory; and therefore to encourage us to be followers of him, to tread in his holy steps, and make him our pattern. This we have in the fore-cited place, *Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7, &c.* and *Heb. xii. 1, 2.* we are exhorted *to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and to run with patience the race that is set before us: looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* And verse 3. *To consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself* (that is, especially how he is now rewarded for it) *lest we be weary and faint in our minds.*

And that the meaning of our being so often minded of our Saviour's coming again to judgement, is to stir us up to all *holiness* of conversation, who can be so ignorant as not to know? for we are sufficiently told that we must be judged according to our *works*, especially *such works*, as the hypocrites of this age do most despise, and leave to be chiefly performed by their contemned moralists; as appears from *Matt. xxv. 34.* to the end of the chapter. And, lastly, that is very certain, which is intimated in the 123 page of the *Free Discourse*, namely, "That all the doctrines of the Gospel, as merely speculative as some at the first sight may seem to be, have a tendency to the promoting of real righteousness and holiness, and are revealed for that purpose." But as I did not *there*, so neither will I *here* proceed to shew it, in all the several instances, or in any more than I have now done: and that for the reason that is there given. But besides, I conceive that what hath been discoursed in this section, is abundantly sufficient to demonstrate what we have undertaken, *viz. That to make men truly virtuous and holy, is the design, the main and ultimate design of Christianity.*

S E C T. II.

Upon what Accounts the Business of making Men holy came to be preferred by our Saviour before any other thing, and to be principally designed.

C H A P. IX.

Two Accounts of this: The First, That this is to do the greatest good to Men. And that the blessing of making Men holy, is of all other the greatest, proved by several Arguments, viz. First, That it containeth in it a Deliverance from the worst of Evils; and Sin shewed so to be.

PROCEED in the next place to shew how it comes to pass, that of all other good things, the making mankind truly virtuous and holy, is the grand and special design of Christianity. There are these two accounts to be given of it.

First, *This is to do the greatest good to men.*

Secondly, *This is to do the best service to God.*

First, The making of us really righteous and holy, is the greatest good that can possibly be done to us. There is no blessing comparable to that of purifying our natures from corrupt affections, and induing them with virtuous and divine qualities. The wiser sort of the Heathens themselves were abundantly satisfied of the truth of this: and therefore the only design they professed to drive at in their philosophy, was the *purgation, and perfecting of the humane life* *. *Hierocles* makes this to be the very definition of it: and by the purgation of men's lives, he tells us is to be understood, the cleansing of them from the dregs and filth of unreasonable appetites; and by their *perfection*, the recovery of that excellency which reduceth *πρὸς τὴν Θεῖαν ὁμοίωσιν*, to the divine likenesses. Now the blessing of making men *holy*, is of all the greatest.

First, Because it contains in it a deliverance from the worst of evils. Those are utterly ignorant of the nature of *sin*, that imagine any evil greater than it, or so great. It was the doctrine of the *Stoicks*, that there is nothing evil but what is *turpe et vitiosum*, vile and vicious. And *Tully* himself, who professed not to be bound up to the *Placita* of any one sect of philosophers, but to be free-minded, and to give his reason its full scope and liberty, takes upon him sometimes most stiffly, and seemingly in very good earnest, to maintain it and dispute for it. But as difficult as I find it to brook that doctrine as they seem to understand it, that more modest saying of his in the first book of his *Tusculan Questions* hath, without doubt, not a little of truth in it, *viz. That*
there

* Φιλοσοφία ἐστὶ ζωῆς ἀνθρωπίνης κάθαρσις καὶ τελειότης.

there is no evil comparable to that of sin*. Hierocles, a sober philosopher, and very free from the high-flown humour, and ranting genius, of the Stoicks, though he would allow that other things besides sin, may be χαλεπά καὶ δυσδιάβητα, very grievous and difficult to be born, yet he would admit nothing besides this to be ὄντως κακόν, truly evil; and he gives this reason for it, viz. Because that certain circumstances may make other things good, that have the repute of evils; but none can make this so. He saith that the word καλῶς [well] can never be joyned with any vice, but so may it with every thing besides: as it is proper to say concerning such or such a person, νοσεῖ καλῶς, πίνειαι καλῶς, he is well diseased, he is well poor, that is, he is both these to good purpose, behaving himself in his sickness and poverty as he ought to do; but, proceeds he, it can never be said, ἀδικεῖ καλῶς, ἀκολατάνει καλῶς, &c. he doth injury well, or he is rightly and as becomes him, intemperate.

Now that wickedness is the greatest of evils, is apparent, in that it injures men's better part, their souls, whereas it lieth in the power of no other, as the now mentioned philosopher also observeth, so to do. † Do I say, it injures them? that's too gentle a word, it maims and spoils them; as again that person doth in another place speak. ‡ Other evils may ruine our bodies, our fortunes, &c. and may, I confess, by that means disquiet and disturb our souls; but they can be depraved by nought but sin; this alone can deprive them of the image of God wherein consists their excellency. And when I say that sin undoes our souls, and sin only, I say that this, and this alone, undoes our selves. || For, as saith the same brave man, Thy soul is thy self; thy body thine; and all outward things, thy body's. And the excellent Simplicius speaking of death, hath this saying, that it is only τὸ σῶμα κακόν, ἢ ἡμῶν, an evil to our bodies, not to us. And this both the Stoicks and Platonists do much insist upon, and make great use of it. They stick not to tell us, that it is improper to say that a man consists of two parts, whereof the body is one; and that this is not μέρος συντεταγμένον, ἀλλ' ὄργανον, a constituent part of man, but only his instrument: that it is but our prison wherein we are confined, our leather-bag, our satchel, our case, our sheath, our house, our clothing, and the like. And we find such a notion of the body in the holy Scriptures, as well as in the Heathen writing. St. Paul also calls it our clothing, our earthly house, our tabernacle, 2 Cor. v. 1, 4. St. Peter calleth his body, this tabernacle; I think it meet, saith he, so long as I am in this tabernacle, &c. 2 Pet. i. 13. Knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle, verse 14. So that other evils have that denomination because they are so to such things only (immediately I mean) as belong to our selves, but sin is an immediate evil, and the greatest imaginable to our very selves; in that in whomsoever it is entertained, it changes the man's nature, spoils his constitution, and makes him quite another thing: from a lovely, noble and excellent, it transforms him into an ignoble, base and contemptible creature. We are not ignorant what names the Scripture bestoweth upon wicked men, even those of the

* Nè malum quidem ullum cum turpitudinis malo comparandum.

† Ταῦτα, &c. εἰ δὲ τῇ ψυχῇ βλαπτεῖται τὸ κακόν. In Car. Pythag. p. 105.

‡ Φθора δὲ ἀθανάτου πράγματι κακία. p. 162.

|| Σὺ γὰρ εἰ ἡ ψυχὴ, τὸ δὲ σῶμα σὸν, τὰ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ τῷ σώματος. p. 153.

the *uncleanest* and most impure *beasts*. There is no such filthiness (said Cicero *) as the *Fæditas turpificati animi*, that of an unclean soul: and the philosophers used to express vice by *turpitude* and τὸ αἰσχρὸν *filthiness*, as being that which is infinitely disbecoming, below and unworthy of humane nature. † And the wise man in his book of the *Proverbs* saith, that a *wicked man is loathsome and cometh to shame*. There is no such hideous monster in nature as a reasonable creature living in contradiction to the dictates of his understanding, trampling under-foot the eternal laws of righteousness, and opposing himself to the known will of the great Sovereign of the world, of him in whom he liveth, moveth and hath his being, to whom alone he is obliged for all he is or hath, and for the capacity he is in of having any thing for the future which for the present he is destitute of. A body in which the head and feet have exchanged places, is not more deformed and monstrous than is a vicious soul: for her *superiour* and *governing* part is subjected to, and lorded over by her *inferiour*, and that which was designed by nature to be kept in subjection and governed. Her ἡνιοχὲν (as the *Pythagoreans* phrase it) or holder of the reins, and *ruling* faculty, is become the ἡνιοχόμενον, the *reined in* and *ruled* faculty.

I add moreover, that well may sin be said to spoil and mar men's souls, for we read in the writings of the Apostles that it *kills* them. *She that liveth in pleasures is dead, while she liveth*, 1 Tim. v. 6. *You hath he quickned who were dead in trespasses and sins*, Eph. ii. 1. *S. Jude*, speaking of certain ungodly wretches, saith, that they are *twice dead*, ver. 12. And the very same notion had diverse of the Heathens also. *Pythagoras* used to put a κενοτάφιον, or *empty coffin* in the place of that scholar that left his school, to betake himself to a vicious and debauch'd life, as thereby signifying, that he was *dead*, dead as to his *nobler* part. And his followers tell us that the souls of men *died*, when they apostatized from God, and cast off the divine life. And such a one, as in whom sin reigneth, may be called a *dead man*, because according to them, the definition of a *man* belongs not to him, nor doth he any longer deserve the name of a *reasonable* creature. The philosopher we have so often quoted, and shall have occasion to do it oftner, will have wickedness to be θάνατος λογικῆς ψυχῆς, *the death of the reasonable nature*: ‡ And *Simplicius* doubts not to assert, that a *man that is drowned in sensuality, hath no more of reason in him, than a brute creature*.

To return to God and to a right mind, to be without God and without understanding, were of one and the same signification with those excellent men. And our Saviour tells us that the prodigal *came to himself* when he resolved upon returning to his father's house; as if while he persisted in disobedience, he was as very a *brute*, as those whose hawks he fed on, and had utterly *lost his understanding*. Though that last saying of *Simplicius* may seem somewhat hyperbolic, yet this following one of *Hierocles* hath not the least of a *figure* in it, τὸν. That wicked men do render the *reason* that remaineth in them ἀνθρωπίνου φαιλότερον,
more

* In lib. III. de Officiis.

† Τα κακὰ αἰσχροῦ λέγονται, ὡς ἀπρεπὴς καὶ ἀνάξια δεῖσθαι ἐπὶ λογικῆς ψυχῆς. Hieroc. p. 78.

‡ Μηδὲν μᾶλλον λογικὴ καὶ ἀλογον ζῶν ὑπάρχει. Comment. Epict. p. 4.

more base and wretchedly contemptible than the vilest slave. They use it altogether in matters of very bad, or (at best) of most mean concern; and therefore as upon that account, it were better, so upon this it would be even as well, if they had none at all: for the sagacity that is in beasts is not less serviceable to them, than is the reason of a wicked man to him: nay, had he only that sagacity that is observable in many unreasonable creatures, it might stand him in as much stead as his reason doth, and perhaps more. So that from what hath been discoursed, it appeareth evidently that wickedness is the worst, incomparably the worst of evils; that it is so in its own nature, as well as in its consequences: and therefore to deliver us from it, by purifying our lives and natures is to confer upon us the greatest blessing, and consequently is an undertaking, of all others, the most worthy of the Son of God.



C H A P. X.

The second Argument, viz. That the Blessing of making Men holy is accompanied with all other that are most desirable, and which do best deserve to be so called: particularly with the Pardon of Sin, and God's special Love. And that those things which sensual Persons are most desirous of, are eminently to be found in that blessing.

***SECONDLY, This is the greatest blessing, because it is accompanied with all other that are most desirable, and which do best deserve to be so called. Where sin is sincerely forsaken, it will certainly be pardoned: the nature of God is such as speaks him most ready to be reconciled to a true convert. They are our iniquities alone that make, or can make, a separation betwixt us and our God, and our sins only that hide his face from us: but the cause being removed, the effect ceaseth. When the divine grace that is offered to sinners, becometh effectual to the turning any one from his evil ways, God's favour doth naturally return to him: even as naturally as doth the sun's light into those places, where that which before intercepted between it and them, is taken away. He is of so infinitely benign and gracious a nature, that no man can continue an object of his displeasure one moment longer than while he is *unable* of his favour; and nothing, I say, but sin and wickedness, as he hath often enough assured us, can make men so. Nay, a holy soul is ever the object of his dearest and most special love. He is not only friends with, but takes pleasure in those that fear him, *Psalms* cxlvii. II. He is said to make his residence within such persons, so great is the delight that he taketh in them. *Isaiah* lxvi. 1, 2. Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth my footstool, where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? for all those things have mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

John

John xiv. 23. *Jesus said unto him, If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* And it is said particularly of him that dwelleth in love, which is the fulfilling of the law, that *he dwelleth in God, and God in him.* And I might shew that the Heathens themselves had this very notion. It was a saying used by the *Pythagoreans*; that *God hath not in the whole earth a more familiar place of residence than a pure soul* *.

And *Apollo* is brought in thus speaking,

Εἰσεβῆσιν δὲ βροτοῖς γαῖνυμι τόσον ὅσσον Ὀλύμπῳ.

*To dwell in heaven doth not more please me, then
Within the souls of pious mortal men.*

And *Hierocles*, which reciteth that verse, doth himself assert, that *God hateth no man*; but as for the good man, he embraceth him with an extraordinary and surpassing affection †. The righteous Lord loying righteousness, his countenance cannot but behold the upright. Wheresoever he finds any impressions of true goodness, as he cannot but highly approve of them, so is it not possible but they should attract his singular love to those which are the subjects of them: according to that measure and proportion that any one participates of his goodness, he must needs have a share in his grace and kindness. A holy person is a man after God's own heart, as his servant *David* is said to be: he is a man that carrieth his image, and bears a resemblance to him, and upon that account he cannot fail to be very dearly beloved by him. Now I need not go about to prove, that there is no blessing whatsoever but is implied in an interest in the *divine love*, and especially in such a love as that which we have shewed good men are made the objects of.

It might be here shewn alio that those things which sensual and carnal persons are most desirous of, viz. riches, honours, and pleasures, are eminently to be found in the blessing we are now discoursing of; and indeed those which best deserve to be so called and are in the properest sense so, no where else. Nothing enricheth a man like the graces of God's holy spirit: what *S. Peter* said of meekness, is true of all the virtues; they are in the sight of God (and he judgeth of things as they are) of great price. ‡ They are called gold tried in the fire, *Rev.* iii. 18. The true and our own riches, *Luke* xvi. 12. Which is as much as to say, that these only are ours, and all but these are false and counterfeit. These enrich our souls, which alone, as was said, deserve to be called *our selves*, and will abide by us when all other have bid *adieu* to us. These do as much excel in true value and worth all those things which the world calls riches, as do our immortal spirits transcend our frail and corruptible carcases. It was one of the maxims of the *Stoicks*, ὅτι μόνον ὁ σοφὸς πλέσιον, that the wise, whereby they meant the truly virtuous, man is the only rich man. And *Tully* hath this saying upon it. *A man's chest cannot properly be called rich, but his mind only: and though thy coffer be full,*

ἢ

* Ψυχῆς καθαρεῶς τόπον δικαιοτέρων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς θεὸς ἂν ἔχει.

† —ὁς μιστὶ μὲν ἕδνα ἀνθρώπων, τὴ δὲ ἀγαθὴν διαφερέντως ἀσπάζεταιται. p. 70.

‡ Nihil neq; meum est neq; cuiusquam, quod auferri, quod eripi, quod amitti potest. Cicero in paradoxis.

so long as I see thee empty, I shall not think thee a rich man *. And saith Hierocles, ὅ ἐξω τῆς ψυχῆς, πάντα μικρά. All things that are without a man's soul, are but little and insignificant trifles. And the righteous, saith Solomon, is more excellent than his neighbour; or he is of greater worth than any other person that is not righteous, Prov. xii. 26.

Nothing, again, makes men so honourable as doth virtue and true goodness, or at all truly so. Seeing he and he alone that is indued with it, lives up to his highest principle, like a creature possessed of a mind and reason; nay, this man is moreover, as was said, like to God himself, and imitates his glorious perfections, viz. his moral ones. And therefore well might wisdom say as she doth, Prov. viii. 18. *Riches and honour are with me.* To overcome our unruly lusts, and keep in subjection all impetuous desires and inordinate appetites, makes us more, deservedly glorious than was Alexander or Julius Cæsar: for he that thus doth, hath subdued those that mastered those mighty conquerors. And such a one hath praise of God, of the holy angels, and of all men that are not fools, and whose judgements he hath cause to value. *He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city,* Prov. xvi. 32.

And no pleasures are comparable to those that immediately result from virtue and holiness: for that man's conscience is a very heaven to him that busieth himself in the exercise thereof. While we do thus, we act most agreeably to the right frame and constitution of our souls and consequently most naturally; and all the actions of nature are confessedly very sweet and pleasant. This also very many of the Heathens had a great sense of; even those of them which much doubted of another life wherein virtue is rewarded, commended very highly the practice of it, for this reason, that it is *sibi præmium* a reward to it self. Simplicius in his comment upon Epictetus, hath this observable saying, that the observation of the rules of virtue in that book prescribed will make men so happy and blessed even in this life, that they shall not need μετὰ θάνατον τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀμοιβὰς παραγγέλλεσθαι, &c. *to be promised any reward after death,* though that also will be sure to follow.

These things, I say, might be insisted on in this place, but they are such large and spacious fields of discourse, that should we make any considerable entrance into them, we shall find it no easie matter to get out of them. I therefore proceed.

* *Animus hominis dives, non arca appellari potest. Quamvis illa sit plena, dum te inanem videbo, divitem non putabo.* In paradox.

C H A P. XI.

The third Argument, viz. That whatsoever other Blessings a Man may be supposed to have that is utterly destitute of Holiness, they cannot stand him in so much stead, as only to make him not miserable. And all evil and corrupt affections shewed to be greatly tormenting in their own Nature, and innumerable sad Mischiefs to be the necessary Consequents of yielding obedience to them.

THIRDLY, whatsoever other blessings a man may be supposed to have, that is utterly destitute of this of holiness, they cannot stand him in so much stead as but to make him not miserable. We may by the first particular, and what was said upon it, be sufficiently convinced of the truth of this: but I farther add, That sinful lusts are extremely trouble some, disquieting, and painful. *The wicked faith the prophet Isaiah) is like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.* The labyrinths that sin involves men in, are innumerable; its ways are so full of intricate turnings and windings, that they sadly perplex those poor creatures that walk in them; and it is impossible but they should do so. The greatest outward inconveniencies and disastrous misfortunes are very frequently as might be largely shewn occasioned by them; but vexations of mind, and troublesome thoughts are the constant and never-failing effects of them. Tully in the forementioned book, saith thus to the vicious man, *+ Thy lusts torment thee, all sorts of cares oppress thee, and both day and night torture thee.* And Hierocles saith, that it is necessary that the worst life should be most miserable, and the best most pleasant and delightful. Covetousness and ambition put men's minds upon the rack to contrive ways of enriching and advancing themselves: and when they have attained to so large a proposition of earthly profits, or so high a degree of honour as they at first designed, they are so far from being at ease and rest (as they vainly promised to themselves they should) that their cravings encrease as do their fortunes; and in the midst of their abundance they continue in the same straits that at first afflicted them. Nay, so impetuous is the fury of those lusts, that they drive them into still greater, and cause in their souls that are possessed by them a more pungent and a quicker sense of want than they felt when their condition was most mean, and their estate at the lowest. Nor is this mischief any other than a natural and unavoidable consequent of forsaking God (who is, as the scriptures call him, the rest, and as Plato, the center of souls) and of seeking satisfaction in such things, as are infinitely too little for their vast capacities: which the forementioned are, and all worldly enjoyments.

What a multitude of tormenting cares is independency on God and
distress

(+) *Tuæ libidines te torquent, te ærumnæ premunt omnes, tu dies noctesq; cruciaris.*—*ἡ δὲ λυπηρότατος ἀνάγκη εἶναι, ἢ κακίον βίον, τερπνότατος δὲ ὁ ἄριστος.*

distrust of his providence perpetually attended with ? how impossible is it to give a comprehensive and just catalogue of the many mischiefs and miseries that are the necessary products and genuine off-spring of *intemperance* and *lasciviousness* ? *Solomon* enumerates some of the evils that are the fruits of the former of these, *Prov.* xxiii. 29. But to give a perfect account of them would be an endless work. And as for the latter, besides the loathsome and painful disease that is ordinarily the consequent of satisfying the cravings of that filthy vice, the *unclean* person is continually in a *restless* condition, and as it were, in a *constant* fit of a *burning fever* ; and the evil accidents that are occasioned by it are so many, that *they* are not neither to be reckoned up. The *Epicuræans*, though they placed man's chief happiness in *corporeal* pleasures, did strictly notwithstanding forbid *adultery*, because (as they said) in stead of performing its promise of pleasure, it robs men of it.

He that is *proud* and *highly conceited* of himself, is disordered and discomposed by the least sleighting word, or neglect of respect, and I had almost said, by the smallest commendation of his neighbour too : and it lieth in the power of any sorry creature, when he list, to afflict his mind.

The *inward* sad effects of *envy* and *malice* are sufficiently observable in the *dismal countenances* of those that are under the power of them ; and these hateful and devilish lusts do eat into, and prey upon, the very hearts of those in whose breasts they lodge ; and are like *fire* in their bosoms unceasingly torturing them : not to say any thing of the many *outward* and most direful mischiefs that are caused by a full satisfaction of them. * In short, there is not any one inordinate affection, but is so disturbing and disquieting a thing in its own nature, that it cannot but make those who are in subjection to it, though they should have never so many good things to set against it, exceeding miserable in *this*, as well as in the *other* world. So that, had our Saviour come into the world, only upon such a design as the carnal Jews expected *their Messiah* would, *viz.* that of making us partakers of a mere *temporal* happiness, he must in order to the succeeding of it *chiefly* have concerned himself to make us *holy*.

If it were possible (as it hath been shewn it is not) that a wicked man should have *God's pardon*, this would not make him cease to be miserable ; all it could signify would be no more than an exemption from being immediately by *him* punished : but tho' the divine Majesty should not in the least afflict him, his very *lusts* would be of themselves no light punishment, but such as under which he could never enjoy himself in this life, but will be found to be intolerable in the life to come : seeing there will *then* be nothing to be met with that can at all suit with his sensual inclinations, or that will have any aptness in it to please and gratifie them : whereas now all places abound with such things as are fit for that purpose ; as are able, I say, to gratifie, though

* *Qui Appetitus longius evagantur, &c. & non satis ratione retinentur, &c. ab iis non modo animi perturbantur, sed etiam Corpora : licet ora ipsa cernere iratorum, aut eorum qui aut libidine aliquâ aut metu commoti sunt, aut voluptate nimia gestiant : quorum omnium vultus, voces, motus, statusque mutantur. Cicero lib. 1. de Officiis.*

though not to satisfy such appetites. So that this man's condition in the *future* state must needs be very exactly like to his, that is, even parcht and dried up with excessive thirst, but can by no means obtain wherewithal to quench it; nor yet so much as a little to slake it, and mitigate the pain of it; as he in this state very frequently makes a shift to do.

Were it possible that *Christ's Righteousness* could be imputed to an *unrighteous* man, I dare boldly affirm that it would signify as little to his happiness, while he continueth so, as would a gorgeous and splendid garment to one that is almost starved with hunger, or that lieth racked by the torturing diseases of the stone or cholick.

And could we suppose such a man to be never so much an object of the divine *benevolence*, nay, and *complacency* too (as there is nothing less supposable) this could not make him, he continuing wicked, so much as *not miserable*: he being rendred by his wickedness utterly incapable of such effects of the love of God, as could have upon him so good an influence.

Nay, farther, were our phantasies so very powerful, as that they could place him even in *heaven* itself; so long as he continueth unturned from his iniquities, we could not imagine him happy *there*; nay, he would carry a *hell* to heaven with him, and keep it there. It is not the being in a *fine place*, that can make any one cease to be miserable; but the being in a *good state*; and the *place* heaven without the *heavenly state*, will signify nothing. An unhealthful and diseased *body* will have never the more ease for residing in a *Prince's* court, nor will a sick and unsound soul have an end put to its unhappiness, though it should live for ever in the presence of *God* himself. That saying to this purpose doth well deserve our repeating, which I find in the excellent book called, *The causes of the decay of christian piety*; alas, *what delight would it be to the swine to be wrapped in fine linen, and laid in odours: his senses are not gratified by any such delicacies, nor would he feel any thing besides the torment, of being with-held from the mire. And as little complacency would a brutish soul find in those purer and refined pleasures, which can only upbraid, not satisfy him.*

It is not to be doubted that such habits of mind as men carry hence with them, they shall keep in the *other* state; and therefore if we leave this earth with any unmortified and reigning lusts, they will not only make us incapable of the happiness of *heaven*, but also of *any* happiness. For there will be (as was but now intimated) no satisfaction or so much as *gratification* of *carnal* and *brutish*, and much less of *devilish* appetites, in the celestial mansions: and therefore they cannot be otherwise than very grievously painful to the person that is fraught with them; though, I say, we could suppose him to be safely possessed of those glorious habitations.

To sum up all I shall say on this argument, I fear not to assert, that omnipotency itself cannot make a wicked person happy, no not so much as *negatively* so (except he should be annihilated) any otherwise, than by first giving him his grace for the subduing and mortification of his lusts: and that to deliver one from all misery while sin is vigorous in his soul, and bears the sway there, is not an object of *any* power,

and implieth in it a palpable and apparent contradiction. For *misery* is no less of the essence of sin and wickedness, than is light of the sun; so that it is impossible they should ever be separated from one another, but that they must like the twins of *Hippocrates*, live and die together.



C H A P. XII.

The fourth Argument, viz. That Holiness being perfected is Blessedness it self; and the Glory of Heaven consists chiefly in it. This no new Notion; some Observations, by the Way, from it.

UT in the last place, well may we call *holiness* the greatest of **B**lessings, for when it is *perfected*, it is *blessedness* it self, and the *glory of heaven* is not only entailed upon it, but doth chiefly consist in it. Beloved (saith S. *John*) *Now are we the sons of God; but it doth not appear what we shall be; but this we know that when he appear-eth, we shall be like him, &c.* As if he should say, I cannot tell you particularly and distinctly what the *blessedness* of the other life will be, but this I am sure of, that *likeness to God* is the general notion of it; and that it consists, for the substance thereof, in a perfect resemblance of the divine nature. The happiness of heaven doth not lie in a mere fixing of our eyes upon the divine perfections, and in admiring of them, but mainly in so beholding and contemplating them, as thereby to be changed into the express and lively image of them: and in having so affecting a sense of God's infinite justice and goodness, purity and holiness, as will make the deepest impressions of those most amiable qualities on our own souls.

The glory that heaven conferreth upon its inhabitants, consists not so much in an external view of God and Christ, as in a real and plentiful participation of their glorious excellencies; whereby are chiefly to be understood those, that are implied in that general word *holiness*: for as for their other attributes, such as *knowledge*, *power*, &c. the devils themselves who are most of all creatures unlike them, have a large measure of them.

This *blessedness* principally implieth a rapturous love of God, a *feeling*, as well as *understanding*, the goodness that is in him; an inseparable conjunction of the faculties of our souls with him, and a perfect assimilation of our natures to him. The felicity of heaven is an operative thing, full of life and energy, which advanceth all the power of mens souls into a sympathy with the divine nature, and an absolute compliance with the will of God; and so makes him to become all in all to them. So that the happiness of heaven, and perfect holiness are by no means to be accounted things of a different nature, but two several conceptions of one and the same thing, or rather two expressions of one and the same conception. *All that happiness* (as said the learned and pious

pious Mr. John Smith) which good men shall be made partakers of, as it cannot be born up upon any other foundation than true goodness, and a godlike nature within us, so neither is it distinct from it.

Neither are we to look upon this as any upstart or late notion, for our ancient divines have long since taught it, in this saying that was frequently used by them, *viz.* Grace is glory begun, and glory is grace perfected.

And I cannot but by the way observe, that those which have considered this, will need no other argument to satisfy them, That *that* talk of some [that it is mere servile obedience and below the ingenuity and generosity of a Christian spirit, to serve God for heaven, as well as for the good things of this life only] is very grossly ignorant, very childish prattle: for to serve God in hopes of heaven according to its true notion, is to serve him for himself, and to express the sincerest, and also the most ardent affection to *him*, as well as concernment for our own souls. And therefore it could not but highly become the Son of God himself, to *endure the cross, and despise the shame, for the joy that was set before him*, taking that joy in no other sense than hath been generally understood, *viz.* for the happiness of heaven consisting in a full enjoyment and undisturbed possession of the blessed Deity: nor is there any reason why we should enquire after any *other* signification of that word, which may exclude this.

And on the other hand, to be diligent in the service of God for fear of hell, understanding it as a state perfectly opposite to that which we have been describing, is in a like manner from a principle of love to God and true goodness, as well as self-love, and is no more unworthy of a Son of God, than of a mere servant. And thus, the truth of this proposition, *That to make men holy, is to confer upon them the greatest of blessings*, by the little that hath been said is made plainly apparent.



C H A P. XIII.

The second Account of our Saviour's preferring the Business of making Men holy, before any other, viz. That this is to do the best Service to God. An Objection answered against this Discourse of the Design of Christianity.

IT remains secondly to be shewn, *That to promote the business of holiness in the world, is to do God Almighty the best service*: And this will be dispatcht in a very few words. For is it not, without dispute, better service to a prince to reduce rebels to their allegiance, than to procure a pardon under his seal for them? This is so evidently true, that to do this latter, except it be in order to the *former* business, is not at all to *serve* him, nay, it is to do him the greatest of *dis*services. I need not apply this to our present purpose. And therefore, to be sure, the work of making men holy, and bringing over sinners to the obedience of his Father, must needs have been much more in the eye of

our blessed Saviour, than that of delivering them from their deserved punishment, *simply* and in it *self* considered : for his love to *him* will be (I hope) universally acknowledged to be incomparably greater than it is to *us*, as very great as 'tis.

None can question, but that by our apostasie from God, we have most highly dithonoured him, we have robbed him of a right that he can never be willing to let go, *viz.* The obedience that is indispensably due to him as he is our creator, continual preserver, our infinitely bountiful benefactor, and absolute sovereign. And therefore it is as little to be doubted, that Christ would in the *first place* concern himself for the recovery of that right. And, but that both works are carried on together, and inseparably involved in each other, he must necessarily be far more solicitous about the effecting of *this* design, than of *that* of delivering wicked rebels from the mischiefs and miseries they have made themselves liable to, by their disobedience.

So that laying all these considerations together, what can be more indisputable, than that our Saviour's chief and ultimate design in coming from heaven to us, and performing and suffering all he did for us, was to turn us from our iniquities, to reduce us to intire and universal obedience, and to make us partakers of inward, real righteousness and true holiness? and we cannot from this last discourse but clearly understand, that it is most infinitely *reasonable*, and absolutely *necessary*, that it should be so.

But now if after all this it be objected, that I have defended a notion concerning the *design of Christianity*, different from that which hath hitherto been constantly received by all Christians, *viz.* That it is to display and magnifie the exceeding riches of God's grace to fallen mankind in his son Jesus : I answer that he will be guilty of great injustice, that shall censure me as labouring in this discourse to propagate any *new* notion : for I have endeavoured nothing else but a true explication of the *old* one, it having been grossly misunderstood, and is still, by very many, to their no small prejudice. Those therefore that say, that the Christian religion designeth to set forth and glorifie the infinite grace of God in Jesus Christ to wretched sinners, and withal understand what they say ; as they speak most truly, so do they assert the very same thing that I have done. For (as hath been shewn) not only the grace of God is abundantly displayed and made manifest in the Gospel to sinners for this end, that they may thereby be effectually moved and perswaded to forsake their sins ; but also the principal grace that is there exhibited, doth consist in delivering us from the *power* of them. Whosoever will acknowledge *sin* to be (as we have proved it is) in its own nature the *greatest of all evils*, and *holiness* the *chiefest of all blessings*, will not find it easie to deny this. And besides (as we have likewise shewn) men are not capable of God's *pardoning grace*, till they have truly repented them of all their sins, that is, have in will and affection sincerely left them : and also that if they were capable of it, so long as they continue vile slaves to their lusts, that grace by being bestowed upon them cannot make them *happy*, nor yet cause them to cease from being very *miserable*, in regard of their disquieting and tormenting nature, in which is laid the foundation of hell. The
free

free grace of God is infinitely more magnified, in *renewing* our natures, than it could be in the bare *justification* of our persons: and to *justify* a wicked man while he continueth so, (if it were possible for God to do it) would far more disparage his *justice* and *holiness*, than advance his *grace* and *kindness*: especially since his *forgiving* sin would signify so little, if it be not accompanied with the *subduing* thereof.

In short, then doth God most signally *glorify* himself in the world, when he most of all communicates himself, that is, his *glorious* perfections, to the souls of men: and then do they most *glorify* God, when they most partake of them, and are rendered most like unto him.

But because nothing is, I perceive, more *generally* mistaken, than the notion of God's glorifying himself, I will add something more for the better understanding of this, and I am conscious to my self that I cannot do it so well, as in the words of the excellent man we a while since quoted, Mr. *John Smith*, * sometime fellow of Queens College in Cambridge: *When God seeks his own Glory, he doth not so much endeavour any thing without himself: He did not bring this stately fabrick of the universe into being, that he might for such a monument of his mighty power, and beneficence, gain some Panegyricks or applause from a little of that fading breath which he had made. Neither was that gracious contrivance of restoring lapsed men to himself, a plot to get himself some external hallelujahs, as if he had so ardently thirsted after the lauds of glorified spirits, or desired a quire of souls to sing forth his praises: neither was it to let the world see how magnificent he was. No, it is his own internal glory that he most loves, and the communication thereof which he seeks: As Plato sometimes speaks of the divine love, it ariseth not out of indigency, as created love doth, but out of fulness and redundancy: It is an overflowing fountain, and that love which descends upon created beings is a free efflux from the Almighty source of love: And it is well-pleasing to him that those creatures which he hath made, should partake of it: (p) Though God cannot seek his own glory so, as if he might acquire any addition to himself, yet he may seek it so, as to communicate it out of himself. It was a good maxim of Plato, Τῷ Θεῷ ἐδδῆς φθόνος. There is no envy in God, which is better stated by St. James, God giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. And by that glory of his which he loves to impart to his creatures, I understand those stamps and impressions of wisdom justice, patience, mercy, love, peace, joy, and other divine gifts which he bestoweth freely upon the minds of men. And thus God triumphs in his own glory, and takes pleasure in the communication of it.*

I proceed now to consider what *useful* inferences may be gathered from our past discourse.

* See his Select Discourses, page 409.

(p) Chap. i. 5.

S E C T. III.

An Improvement of the whole Discourse in diverse Inferences.

C H A P. XIV.

The First Inference.

That it appears from the past Discourse, that our Saviour hath taken the most effectual course for the purpose of subduing Sin in us, and making us partakers of his Holiness. Where it is particularly shewed, that the Gospel gives advantages infinitely above any those the Heathens had, who were privileged with extraordinary helps for the improvement of themselves. And

- 1. That the good Principles that were by natural Light dictated to them, and which reason rightly improved perswaded them to entertain as undoubtedly true, or might have done, are farther confirmed by divine Revelation in the Gospel.*
- 2. That those Principles which the Heathens by the highest Improvement of their Reason could at best conclude but very probable, the Gospel gives us an undoubted assurance of. This shewed in four Instances.*
- 3. Four Doctrines shewed to be delivered in the Gospel, which no man without the assistance of Divine Revelation could ever once have thought of, that contain wonderful inducements, and helps to Holiness. The first of which hath five more implied in it.*

✠ FIRST, it appears from what hath been said to demonstrate, ✠ F ✠ That our Saviour's grand design upon us, in coming into the ✠ ✠ world, was to subdue sin in us, and restore the image of God, that consisteth in righteousness and true holiness to us: that he hath taken the most effectual course imaginable for that purpose; and that his Gospel is the most powerful engine for the battering down of all the strong holds that sin hath raised to it self in the souls of men, and the advancement of us to the highest pitch of sanctity that is to be arrived at by humane nature. This (as hath been shewn) was the business that the philosophy of the heathens designed to effect; but alas what a weak and inefficacious thing was it, in comparison of Christ's Gospel: wherein we have such excellent and soul-ennobling *precepts* most perspicuously delivered; and moreover such mighty *helps* afforded to enable us, and such infinitely pressing *motives* and *arguments*, to excite us to the practice of them.

And it will not be amiss if we particularly shew, what exceeding great advantages Christians have for the attaining of true virtue, and the sublimest degrees thereof, in this state attainable, above any that were ever vouchsafed to the world by the divine providence, before our Saviour's descent into it. And (not to make a formal comparison between the *Christian* and best *Pagan-Philosophy*, this not deserving upon innumerable accounts to be so much as named with that, and much less to dishonour the religion of our Saviour so far as at all to compare it with

with any of those which were professed by heathenish nations, or that of the impostor *Mahomet*, which as well as those, in not a few particulars tends greatly even to *corrupt* and *deprave* mens natures) we will discourse according to our accustomed brevity. First, what advantages the Gospel gives us above those which such heathens, as were privileged with extraordinary helps for the improvement of their understandings, had; and secondly, above those which God's most peculiar people, the children of *Israel*, were favoured with.

First, As for those the Gospel containeth above such as the best and most refined heathens enjoyed, it will be worth our while to consider,

First, *That the good principles that were by natural light dictated to them, and which reason rightly improved did perswade them to entertain as undoubtedly true, or might have done, are farther confirmed by divine revelation in the Gospel to us.*

As, *That there is but one God: That he is an absolutely perfect Being, infinitely powerful, wise, just, merciful, &c. That we owe our lives, and all the comforts of them to him; That he is our Sovereign Lord, to whom absolute subjection is indispensably due: That he is to be loved above all things; and the main and most important particular duties which it becomes us to perform to him, our neighbour and selves.* We Christians have these things as plainly declared from heaven to us, and as often repeated and inculcated, as if there were no other way to come to the knowledge of them, but that of *Revelation*. So that (as hath been shewn in the *free discourse*, p. 88.) what the heathens took pains for, and by the exercise of their reason learnt, we have set before our eyes, and need but read it in order to our knowledge of it. It is true, for our satisfaction whether the holy scriptures are divinely inspired, and have God for their author, it is necessary that we employ our reason, except we can be contented to be of so very hasty and easie a belief as to give credit to things, and those of greatest concernment too, we know not why; or to pin our faith on our fore-fathers sleeves; and so to have no better bottom for our belief of the *Bible*, than the *Turks* have for theirs of the *Alcoran*. But although it is necessary that we should exercise here our disparfivè faculty, if we will believe as become creatures indued with reason, yet this is no tedious task, nor such as we need much belabour our brains about. An unprejudiced person will soon be abundantly satisfied concerning the scripture's divine authority, when he doth but consider how it is confirmed, and how worthy the doctrine contained in it is of him whose name it bears. Now, I say, this little pains being taken for the establishment of our faith in the holy scriptures, we cannot but be at the first sight assured of the truth of the contents of them. For no man in his wits can question his veracity who (as even *natural light* assures us) is truth it self.

Secondly, *Those good principles that the heathens by the greatest improvement of their reason could at best conclude but very probable, are made undoubtedly certain by Revelation: As,*

First, *That of the immortality of our souls.* The vulgar sort of heathens, who were apt to believe any thing that was by tradition handed down to them, ('tis confessed) did not seem to doubt of the truth of this

this doctrine, but to take it for granted ; which (no question) is also to be imputed to the special providence of God, and not merely to their credulity. But the more learned and sagacious, that would not easily be imposed on, nor believe any farther than they saw cause, though by arguments drawn from the notions they had truly conceived of the nature of humane souls, they have diverse of them undertaken to prove them *immortal* ; yet could their arguments raise the *best* of them no higher than a *great* opinion of their immortality. *Cato* read *Plato* of the immortality of the soul, as he lay bleeding to death, with great delight ; but that argues not that he had any more than great *hopes* of the truth of it. *Socrates* did so believe it, that he parted with *this* life in expectation of *another* ; but yet he plainly and ingenuously confessed to his friends, that it was not *certain*. *Cicero*, that sometimes expresseth great confidence concerning the truth of it, doth for the most part speak so of it, that any one may see that he thought the doctrine no better than probable. He discourseth of it in his book *de Senectute*, as that which he rather could not endure to think might be false, than as that which he had no doubt of the truth of. And after he had there instanced in several arguments which he thought had weight in them for the proof thereof, and expressed a longing to see his ancestors, and the brave men he had once known, and which he had heard of, read and written of, he thus concludes that whole discourse, * *If I err in believing the souls immortality, I err willingly ; neither so long as I live will I suffer this error which so much delights me, to be wrested from me. But if when I am dead, I shall be void of all sense, as certain little philosophers think, I do not fear to have this error of mine laughed at by dead philosophers.*

But now the Gospel hath given us the highest assurance possible of the truth of this doctrine ; *life and immortality* are said to be brought to light by it : He who declared himself to be the Son of God with power, gave men a *sensible* demonstration of it in his own person, by his resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven : And both by himself, and his Apostles (who were also indued with a power of working the greatest of miracles for the confirmation of the truth of what they said) did very frequently, and most plainly preach it.

Secondly, *The doctrine of rewards and punishments in the life to come* (which is for substance the same with the former) according to our behaviour in this life, the learned heathens did generally declare their belief of ; which they grounded upon the justice, purity and goodness of the divine nature. They considered that good men were often exercised with great calamities, and that bad men very frequently were greatly prosperous, and abounded with all earthly felicities : and therefore thought it very reasonable to believe that God would in another life shew his hatred of sin, and love of goodness, by making a plain discrimination between the conditions of virtuous and wicked persons, by punishing these, and rewarding those without exception. But this, though it was, in their opinion, a very *probable* argument, yet they looked not on it as that which amounted to a *demonstration*. For they could not but be aware,

* *Quod si in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro : nec mihi errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo. Sin mortuus, &c.*

aware, That that doctrine which was so generally received by them, viz. That virtue is in all conditions a reward, and vice a punishment to itself, did very much blunt the edge of it: and that other very harsh one, That all things besides virtue and vice are *ἀδιάφορα*, neither good nor evil, did render it (as the perfect *Stoicks* did seem too well to understand) too insignificant. But I must confess that *Hierocles*, who (as hath been said) did not admit that notion, but in a very qualified sense, saith of those that think their souls mortal (and consequently that virtue will hereafter have no reward) that when they dispute in the behalf of virtue, *κομψεύονται μᾶλλον, ἢ ἀληθεύουσιν*, they rather talk wittily, than truly and in good earnest. The excellent *Socrates* himself, when he was going to drink off the fatal drug, thus said to those that were then present with him, “I am now going to end my days, whereas your “lives will be prolonged; but whether you or I upon this account are “the more happy, is known to none but God only.” intimating that he did not look upon it as *absolutely certain* that he should have any reward in another world, for doing so heroically virtuous an act, as chusing martyrdom for the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead. But now, what is more frequently or clearly declared in the Gospel, than that there will be rewards and punishments in the world to come futable to men actions in this world? than, that Christ will come a second time to judge the world in righteousness, and that *all must appear before his judgment-seat, to receive according to what they have done, whether it be good or whether it be evil*, 2 Cor. v. 10.

Thirdly, *That mens sins shall be forgiven upon true repentance*, from the consideration of the goodness and mercy of God, the heathens were likewise perswaded, or rather hoped: but we Christians have the strongest assurance imaginable given us of it, by the most solemn and often reiterated promises of God; and not only that some or most, but also that all without exception, and the most hainous impieties, upon condition of their being sincerely forsaken, shall in and through Christ be freely forgiven.

Fourthly, *The doctrine of God's readiness to assist Men by his special grace in their endeavours after virtue*, could be no more, at the best, than *probable* in the judgment of the heathens, but we have in the Gospel the most express promises thereof, for our mighty encouragement. *Tully* in his book *de Natura Deorum* saith, that their city *Rome*, and *Greece*, had brought forth many singular men, of which it is to be believed, none arrived to such a height *nisi Deo juvante*, but by the help of God. And after he tells us, that *Nemo vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu Divino unquam fuit*, No excellent man was ever made so but by some divine afflation. And *Pythagoras* in his golden verses exhorts men to pray unto God for assistance in doing what becomes them.

— ἀλλ' ἔρχεν ἐπ' ἔργον
θεοῖσιν ἐπευξάμενοι τέλεισσι.

And *Hierocles* (with whom I confess my self so enamoured, that I can scarcely ever forbear to present my reader with his excellent sayings, when there is occasion;) He, I say, upon this clause of *Pythagoras*, hath a discourse, concerning the necessity of our eudeavours after virtue

on the one hand, and of the divine blessing to make them successful on the other, which I have often admired. And even *Seneca* himself, very unlike a *Stoick*, saith, *Bonus vir sine deo nemo est*, &c. No man can be made good without God; for can any one raise up himself without his help?

But none of these could have assurance, that God would not deny his special assistance to any that seriously seek after it; especially since men have brought themselves into a state of imbecillity and great impotence, through their own default. But this, I say, the Gospel gives all men very serious offers of, and assures them, if they be not wanting to themselves, they shall obtain. Hence our Saviour saith, *Ask, and it shall be given unto you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? if ye then being evil, know how to give gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy spirit unto them that ask him?* *Luke xi. 9, &c.* And the same thing is told us by *St. James*, in these words, *Chap. i. 5. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.* *Antoninus* the philosopher puts men upon praying for a good mind above all things, but all the encouragement he could give was, *ἡ δὲ δαίμων τί γίνεσθαι*, and see what will come of it.*

Thirdly, We have other doctrines made known to us by the Gospel, which no man could ever without divine revelation in the least have dream'd of. As,

First, *That God hath made miserable sinners, the objects of such transcendent kindness, as to give them his only-begotten Son.* And there are these five doctrines implied in this, which are each of them very strong motives and incentives to holiness, viz.

1. That God Almighty hath made such account of us, and so concerned himself for our recovery out of that wretched condition we had by sinning against him plunged our selves into, as to send his own Son from heaven, to shew us on what terms we may be recovered, and also in his name even to (q) *pray and beseech* us to comply with them. That he should send no meaner a person than one who was the (r) *Brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person by whom also he made the worlds*, upon this errand, is such a motive to holiness as one would think no sinner could be able to stand out against. That God should send an ambassador from heaven to assure us that he is reconcilable, and bears us good will, notwithstanding our high provocations of him, and to lay before us all the parts of that holiness which is necessary to restore our natures to his own likeness, and so to make us capable of enjoying blessedness; and most pathetically moreover to entreat us to do what lieth in us to put them in practice, that so it may be to eternity well with us; and that this ambassador should be such a one also as we now said, never was there so marvellous an expression of the divine love; and

* *Lib. 9. Sect. 40.*

(q) 2 Cor. v. 20.

(r) Heb. i. 2, 3.

and therefore one would *conclude* it perfectly irresistible by all persons that have not extirpated out of their natures all ingenuity.

2. That this Son of God conversed upon equal terms with men, and was incarnate for their sakes (*s*). *Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the flesh.* That he should become the son of man, submit to be born of a woman, is a demonstration that God is so far from having cast off humane nature, that (as much as it is depraved) he beareth a very wonderful good will still to it, and hath a real desire to re-advance and dignifie it: even this simply considered, and without joyning with it the consideration of the *design* of it, might make us conclude this: seeing Christ's taking *our* nature is the bringing of it so near to the *divine*, as to lodge it within one and the self-same person. And therefore, besides the motive to holiness drawn from God's infinite *love* therein expressed, this doctrine containeth another very powerful one, *viz.* That it must needs be the vilest thing to dishonour our nature by sin and wickedness, and far more so, than it was before the incarnation of *Jesus* Christ; in that it may now be properly said, that it is in his person advanced above even the nature of *angels*; for him who is invested with it do they themselves worship. And how can any Christian while he considereth this, be able to forbear thus to reason with himself? Shall I by harbouring filthy lusts debase that nature in my *own* person, which God hath to such an infinite height exalted in his *Son's*? God forbid. What an additional motive is this, to do as *Pythagoras* advised his scholars, in these words, *Above all things revere and stand in awe of thy self**. Do nothing that is disbecoming and unworthy of so excellent a nature, as thine is.

3. That this Son of God taught men their duty by his own example, and did himself perform among them what he required of them. Now that he should tread before us every step of that way, which he hath told us leadeth to eternal happiness, and commend those duties which are most ungrateful to our corrupt inclinations, by his own practice; our having to brave an example is no small encouragement to a cheerful performance of all that is commanded. For how honourable a thing must it needs be to imitate the only begotten Son of God, and who is God himself. How glorious to follow such a pattern! Those who have any thing of true generosity, cannot but find themselves by the consideration hereof, not a little provoked to abandon all sin, and to set themselves very heartily to the performance of whatsoever duties are required of them. And as for *those*, which we are so apt to look upon as unworthy of us, and too low for us (such as meek putting up of affronts, and condescending to the meanest offices for the serving of our brethren) how can *his* spirit be too lofty for them, that considers *Christ's* was not. Now these are all such motives and helps to holiness, the like to which none but those who have the Gospel, ever had.

4. That this Son of God was an expiatory sacrifice for us. We have already shewn what cogent arguments to all holy obedience are herein contained.

5. That this Son of God being raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven is our high priest there, and *ever lives* (as the author to the *Hebrews* saith) *to make intercession* with his Father *for us* (*t*). The Hea-
thens,

(*s*) 1 Tim. iii. 16. * Πάντων δὲ μέγιστος αἰχμὴν σώζων. (*t*) Chap. vii.

thens, it is confessed, had a notion of *dæmons* negotiating the affairs of men with the supreme God; but they could never have imagined in the least that they should be so highly privileged, as to have one who is the begotten Son of this God, and infinitely above all persons dear to him, for their perpetual mediator and intercessor. I need not say what an encouragement this is to an holy life.

And as the doctrine of God's giving his Son, which containeth the five forementioned particulars, is such as the highest improvement of reason could never have caused any thing like it to have entered our thoughts, or that is comparable thereunto for the effectual provoking of men to the pursuance of all holiness of heart and life: so,

Secondly, *The doctrine of his sending the Holy Ghost, to move and excite us to our duty, and to assist, cheer, and comfort us in the performance of it, may go along with it.* How could it have once been thought, without divine revelation, that a person indued with the divine nature, with infinite power and goodness, should take it upon him as his office and peculiar province to assist men's weakness in the prosecution of virtue? But this doth the Gospel assure us off; as also that those which do not resist and repel his good motions shall be sure to have always the superintendency of this blessed spirit, and that he will never forsake them, but abide with them for ever, and carry them from one degree of grace to another, till at length it is consummate and made perfect in glory. And to this I add,

Thirdly, *The doctrine of our union with Christ through this spirit: which union, (to speak in the words of the learned Dr. Patrick in his Mensa Mystica) is not only such a moral one as is between husband and wife, which is made by love; or between king and subjects, which is made by laws; but such a natural union as is between head and members, the vine and branches, which is made by one spirit or life dwelling in the whole.* The Apostle saith, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. *As the body is one and hath many members; and also the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ; for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body.* Now see what use the Apostle makes of both these, 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19, 20. *Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.* And then he thus proceeds in the 19 and 20 verses, *What, know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own, but ye are bought with a price: therefore glorifie God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.* What helps and incitements we have to the perfecting of holiness in the fear of God, from these two doctrines, is inexpressible.

Lastly *The doctrine of the unconceivably great reward, that shall be conferred upon all good and holy persons, which the Gospel hath revealed, is such as could not possibly by the mere help of natural light enter into the thoughts of those that were strangers to it.* We are therein assured not only of another life, and that good men shall therein be rewarded but likewise that the reward that shall be conferred upon them, shall be no less than an hyperbolically hyperbolical weight of glory: as are the words of S. Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 17. *Those that overcome, are promised that they shall sit with Christ on his throne, even as he overcame and is set down with*

his Father on his throne, Rev. iii. 21. In short, the happiness that our Saviour will reward all his faithful Disciples with, is so expressed, as that we are assured it is inexpressible, and likewise far exceeding the short reach of our present conceptions: of which their *souls* are not only to partake, but their *bodies* also, they being to be made (as vile as they are in this state) (*u*) like the glorious body of Jesus Christ, and though sown in corruption and dishonour to be raised in glory, 1 Cor. xv.

Now though, as we said, the learned Heathens did many of them, by the exercise of their reason, make it probable to themselves that their souls were immortal, and that in another world virtuous persons shall be richly rewarded; yet no reasoning of theirs could ever enable them so much as to conjecture, that this reward shall be such an *immensely* great one, as that the Gospel assures us of; there being a wonderful disproportion betwixt the best services that the most virtuous persons are in a possibility of performing, and such a reward as this: and it being also impossible that so great a felicity as that of the *soul* only, should be a necessary and natural result from the highest degrees of holiness that are attainable in this low and imperfect state. But yet it is too well known to be concealed, that the *Pythagoreans* and *Platonists* do speak very great things of the happiness of heaven; and those of them that discourse intelligibly concerning it, do give in the general the Gospel-notion of it. I have found *Simplicius* somewhere, in his comment on *Epicletus*, calling it an *eternal rest with God*. And the *Pythagorean* verses conclude with these two.

"Ἦν δ' ἀπολείψας σῶμα ἐς αἰθέρ' ἐλεύθερον ἔλθης,
Ἔσσειαι ἀθάνατον Θεός, ἄμβροστον, ἔκ' ἐτ' ἀνθρώπος.

When from this body thou'rt set free,

Thou shalt mount up to th' sky:

And an immortal God shalt be,

Nor any more shalt die.

Whereby [*Thou shalt be an immortal God*] the commentator *Hierocles* understands, thou shalt be like to the immortal gods, and by them he meaneth, as appears by his comment upon the first verse, those excellent spirits that are immediately subordinate to their Maker the supreme God, and the *God of gods*, as he calls him; by which he seemeth to understand the same with those called in the Scripture *arch-angels*; for I find that he gives the name *angels* to an order next below them. So that, according to him, it was the *Pythagorean* doctrine, That good men shall, when they go to heaven, be made in state and condition like to those that are likest to God Almighty. But how they should learn this, by mere natural light, is unimaginable, That which is most probably conjectured, is, that they received these with several other notions from the ancient traditions of the *Hebrews*. But as for their *σῶμα ἀνγοιοδές*, and *Ὅχημα πνευματικόν*, the *splendid body*, and *spiritual vehicle* they talk of, they mean not that glorious *celestial** body, which

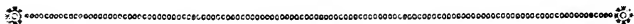
(u) Phil. iii. 21.

* This notion of a fine body did Tertullian retain his belief of, after he was converted to Christianity, and took it for the inner man, spoken of in Scripture.

which the Apostle tells us this *terrestrial* one shall be changed into, but, a thin subtil body, which they say the soul even while it is in this gross one is immediately inclosed in: and which being in this life well purified from the pollution it hath contracted from its case of flesh, the soul taking its flight from thence with it, enjoyeth its happiness in it. But, I say, the change of this *vile* into a *glorious* body they were perfectly strangers to.

Now what an unspeakable encouragement to *holiness* is the happiness which the Gospel proposeth to us, and gives us *assurance* of also, that the now mentioned, or any of the philosophers could never by the best improvement of their intellectuals have conceived to be so much as likely to be attainable by mankind! and who would still serve their filthy lusts, and in so doing be the vilest of slaves here, that look to reign with the King of the world for ever hereafter? *He that hath this hope in him*, saith S. John *purifieth himself even as he is pure*, 1 John iii. 3.

And what hath been spoken of the greatness of the *reward* which is promised in the Gospel to obedient persons, may be said also of the *punishment* it threatneth to the disobedient. It would make, one would think, an heart of oak, and the most hardened sinner to tremble and shake at the reading of those expressions it is set forth by. Some of the philosophers do speak very dreadful things concerning the condition of wicked men in the other world; but they fall extremely short of what the Gospel hath declared. But I confess a discourse on this head will not very properly come in here. For mere reason might make it exceedingly probable, that so highly aggravated sins as those which are committed against the Gospel are, shall be punish'd as severely, if impenitently persisted in, as is declared by our Saviour and his Apostles they shall be. But however it is no small awakening to us Christians, that we have such an undoubted assurance from God himself, what we must expect if we will not be prevailed upon by all the means afforded us for our reformation, but shall notwithstanding them persevere in the neglect of known duties, and in the allowance of known wickedness.



C H A P. XV.

That the Gospel containeth far greater Helps for the effecting of the Design of making Men inwardly righteous, and truly holy, than God's most peculiar People, the Israelites, were favoured with. Where it is shewed,
 1. *That the Gospel is incomparably more effectual for this Purpose than the Mosaical Law was.* 2. *And that upon no other Accounts the Jews were in Circumstances for the obtaining of a thorow Reformation of Life and Purification of Nature, like to those our Saviour hath blessed his Disciples with.*

IN the second place, it is the clearest case, *That the Gospel of our Saviour containeth far greater helps and advantages for the effecting of the great work of making men really righteous and truly holy,*

holy, than God's most peculiar people, the Israelites, whom he knew and favoured above all the nations of the earth, were partakers of.

First, Nothing is plainer than that the Gospel is incomparably more effectual for this purpose, than the *Mosaical* law was. For indeed that was *directly* designed only to restrain those that were under the obligation of it from the more *notorious* sins. *It was added*, saith the Apostle, *because of transgression, till the seed should come, &c.* Gal. iii. 19. *Justin Martyr* saith particularly of the *sacrifices*, that the end of them was to keep the Jews from worshipping idols, which *Trypho* also, though a Jew that greatly gloried in the law, acknowledged. They were an extremely carnal and vain people, exceedingly prone to be bewitched with the superstitions of the Gentiles; God gave them therefore a pompous way of worship that might gratifie their childish humour, and so keep them from being drawn away with the vanities of the Heathens among whom they dwelt: and he gave them, withal, such *precepts* inforced with threatnings of most severe and present punishments, as might by main force hold them in from those vile disorders, immoralities and exorbitances that had then overspread the face of the woefully depraved and corrupted world. It is certain that the law of *Moses*, strictly so called, did *properly* tend to make them no more than externally righteous; and whosoever was so, and did those works it enjoyned (which they might do by their own natural strength) was esteemed according to that law, and dealt with, as just and blameless; and had a right to the immunities and privileges therein promised. But much less was it accompanied with grace to indue the observers of it with an inward principle of holiness.

And the Apostle *S. Paul* expresseth this as the great difference between that *law* and the *gospel*, in calling *this* the *spirit*, and *that* the *letter*, as he several times doth. Not that God, who was ever of an infinitely benign nature, and *love* it self (as *S. John* describes him) was wanting with his grace to well-minded men under the Old Testament; or that the Jews were all destitute of an inward principle of holiness; nothing less: but the law which *Moses* was peculiarly the promulger of, did not contain any promises of grace, nor did the obligation thereof extend any farther than to the outward man. But there ran, as I may so express my self, a vein of Gospel all along with this law, which was contained in the covenant made with *Abraham* and his seed, by virtue of which the good men among the Jews expected justification and eternal salvation, and performed the substance of those duties which the New Testament requireth, and which were both by *Moses* and the Prophets, at certain times, and upon several occasions, urged upon them.

But as for this law of *Moses* considered according to its *natural* meaning, it is called a *law of a carnal commandment*, Heb. vii. 16. And the services it imposed, *weak and beggarly elements*, Gal. iv. 9. And a *law which made no man perfect*, Heb. vii. 19. Its promises therefore were only *temporal*; upon which account the author to the Hebrews saith, that the Gospel is established on *better promises*. Nor was justification before God obtainable by it, as *S. Paul* frequently sheweth; and therefore did account the righteousness of it very mean and vile in compari-

son of that which the Gospel indued men with. No man could be acquitted by the severest observance of this law from any other than *civil* punishments, nor were its *sacrifices* able to make the offerers *perfect as pertaining to the conscience*, Heb. ix. 9. And though it be true (as Mr. Chillingworth observeth in his sermon on Gal. v. 5.) *That the legal sacrifices were very apt and commodious to shadow forth the oblation and satisfaction of Christ; yet this use of them was so mystical and reserved, so impossible to be collected out of the letter of the law; that without a special revelation from God, the eyes of the Israelites were too weak to serve them, to pierce through those dark clouds and shadows, and to carry their observation to the substance.* So that, proceeds he, *I conceive those sacrifices of the law in this respect are a great deal more beneficial to us Christians: for there is a great difference between sacraments and types: types are only useful after the antitype is discovered, for the confirmation of their faith that follow.* As for example, Abraham's offering of Isaac by faith did lively represent the real oblation of Christ; but in that respect was of little or no use till Christ was indeed crucified; it being impossible to make that history a ground-work of their faith in Christ. *The like may be said of the legal sacrifices.*

And for a clear understanding of the direct use of this law, I refer the reader to that sermon: where it is fully, and, in my opinion, as judiciously discoursed as I have ever elsewhere met with it.

Secondly, Nor were these special favourites of heaven upon any other accounts in circumstances for the obtaining of a thorow reformation of life, renovation and purification of nature, comparable to those which our Saviour hath blessed his disciples with. For though they had, as we said, for the substance the same *spiritual precepts* which are enjoined in the Gospel over and above the *Mosaical law*; yet these were enforced by no *express* promises of eternal happiness, or threatnings of eternal misery: nor was so much as a *life to come* otherwise than by tradition, or by certain ambiguous expressions (for the most part) of their inspired men, or by such sayings as only implied it, and from which it might be rationally concluded, discovered to them: as for instance, in that place particularly, where God by his representative, an angel, declared himself to his servant *Moses* to be *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob* (x); from whence our Saviour inferred that doctrine for this reason, *That God is not the God of the dead, but of the living* (y). And that the notices they had hereof were not very plain and clear, is apparent, in that there was a sect among them, *viz.* the *Sadduces*, that professed to disbelieve it; and yet, notwithstanding, were continued in the body, and enjoyed the privileges of the Jewish Church. But that one forecited assertion of the Apostle, 2 Tim. i. 10. putteth this out of all question, *viz.* *That Christ hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.* From whence we may assuredly gather thus much at least, *viz.* That in the Gospel is manifestly revealed life and immortality which was never before made known so certainly.

I add moreover, that the Israelites were required to keep at such a distance from all other nations, that they could not but be by that means greatly inclined to morosity, self-conceitdness, and contempt of their fellow-creatures: and were ever and anon employed in such

services

(x) Exod. iii. 6.

(y) Matth. xxii. 32.

services as naturally tended, through the weakness of their natures, to make their spirits too angry and fierce, not to say *cruel*. As for instance, that of destroying God's and their enemies, and sometimes their innocent children too, and the cattle that belonged to them. And several connivences and indulgencies they had (as in the cases of divorce and polygamy and revenge) which did not a little conduce to the gratifying of sensuality, and the animal life; all which are taken away by our saviour Christ. These things, with diverse others, made it in an ordinary way impossible for those people to arrive at that height of virtue and true goodness, that the Gospel designeth to raise us to. And though we find some of them very highly commended for their great sanctity; we are to understand those *encomiums* for the *most* part, at least, with a reference to the dispensation under which they were; and as implying a consideration of the circumstances they were in, and the means they enjoyed.

And thus have we shewed what a most admirably effectual course our blessed Saviour hath taken to *purifie us from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit*, and to make us in all respects righteous and holy: and how much the Christian dispensation excelleth others as to its aptness for this purpose. And from what hath been said we may safely conclude, That neither the world, nor any part of it was ever favoured by God with means for the accomplishment of this work, comparable to those which are contained in the Christian religion.

So that, well might S. Paul call the Gospel of Christ *the power of God to salvation* (z), that is, both from misery and the cause of it. Well may the weapons of the Christian warfare be said *not to be carnal and weak, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, and casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ* (a). Great reason had Clemens Alexandrinus to call our Saviour ἀνθρωπότητος παιδαγωγός, the *instructor and school-master of humane nature**; and to say, as he doth in the following words, *That he hath endeavoured to save us by using with all his might, all the instruments of wisdom, or all wise courses, and draws us back by many bridles from gratifying unreasonable appetites*. And Justin Martyr, speaking of the Gospel, had cause pathetically to break out as he did, in these words, ὁ παθῶν δειῶν φευγαδελήριον, &c. † *O thou expeller and chaser away of evil affections! O thou extinguisher of burning lusts! This is that which makes us not poets or philosophers or excellent orators, but of poor mortal men makes us like to many immortal gods, and translateth us from this low earth to those regions that are above Olympus*. And well, again, might the same good Father, having thoroughly acquainted himself with the *Stoick and Platonick* philosophy, (by which latter he thought himself to have gained much wisdom) and at last by the advice of an old man a stranger, having studied the Gospel, thus express himself, ταύτην μόνην φιλοσοφίαν εὐρισκον ἀσφαλῆ καὶ σύμφερον, &c. ‡ *I found this alone to be the safe and profitable philosophy, and thus and by this means became I a philosopher*.

A a 2

Simplicius

(z) Rom. i. 16.

(a) 2 Cor. x. 5.

* Pædag. p. 120.

† Oratio ad Græcos, p. 40.

‡ Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 225.

where the Gospel is most truly and powerfully preached, and particularly in this our nation, there is but little more to be taken notice of in the far greater number, than the *name of Christians*; nor any more of religion, than insignificant complementings of God, and a mere bodily worship of him. But what abominable vice is there, that doth not here abound? Nay, where doth the *highest* and most daring of impieties, *viz. Atheism* it self, so boldly shew its head as it doth here? And as for those among us that make the greatest pretences to Christianity, besides a higher profession, a more frequent attendance on ordinances, and a mighty zeal for certain fruitless opinions they have taken up, and little trifles which signifie nothing to the bettering of their souls, and carrying on that which we have shewed is the Design of Christianity; there is little to be observed in very many, if not most, of them, whereby they may be distinguished from other people. But as for the sins of covetousness, pride and contempt of others, disobedience to authority, sedition, unpeaceableness, wrath and fierceness against those that differ in opinion from them, censoriousness and uncharitableness; it is too obvious how much the greater part of the sects we are divided into are guilty of *most*, if not *all* of them. And that which is really *the power of godliness* doth appear in the conversations of but very few.

God knows, the wickedness of those that *enjoy* and profess to believe the Gospel, is an extremely fertile and copious theme to dilate upon; and is fitter to be the subject of a great volume (if any one can persuade himself so far to rake into such a noysome dunghil, as sure none can, except enemies to Christianity) than to be discoursed by the bye, as it is here. Nor can there be any easier task undertaken than to shew, that not a few mere *Heathens* have behaved themselves incomparably better towards God, their neighbour, and themselves, than do the generality of those that are called *Christians*. Nay, I fear it would not be over-difficult to make it appear, that the generality of those that never heard the Gospel, do behave themselves in several respects better than they do.

But I have no list to entertain my self or reader with such an unpleasant and melancholy argument, but will betake my self to answer the sad objection which is from thence taken against the truth of our last discourse.

1. And, in the first place, let the Gospel have never so little success in promoting what is designed by it; whoever considers it, and what hath been said concerning it, cannot but acknowledge that it is in *it self* as fit as any thing that can be imagined for the purpose of thoroughly reforming the *lives*, and purifying the *natures* of mankind: and also incomparably more fit than any other course that hath ever been taken, or can be thought of. So that we may certainly conclude, That the depravedness of Christendom is not to be ascribed to the inefficacy of the Gospel, but to other causes: namely, men's unbelief of the truth of it: as much as they *profess* faith in it: their inexcusable neglect of considering the infinitely powerful motives to a holy life contained in it; and of using the means conducing thereunto prescribed by it. And these are inseparable concomitants, and most effectual promoters of each other. Every man's inconsideration is proportionable

to his incredulity, and his incredulity to his inconsideration: and how much of carelessness is visible in mens lives, so much of unbelief doth possess their hearts; and so on the contrary. Upon which account *to believe* and *to be obedient*, and *not to believe* and *to be disobedient*, are synonymous phrases, and of the same signification in the New, and likewise in the Old Testament. Now it is a true saying of *Tertullian*, *Pervicaciae nullum opposuit remedium Deus*, God hath provided no remedy, that is, no ordinary one, against wilfulness. And though the Gospel hath such a tendency as hath been shewn, to work the most excellent effects in men, yet it doth not operate as *charms* do, nor will it have success upon any without their own concurrence, and co-operation with it. The excellent *rules of life* laid down in the Gospel must necessarily signify nothing to those, that only *hear* or *read* them, but will not *mind* them. - Its *promises* or *threatnings* can be exciting to none, that will not *believe* or *consider* them: nor can the arguments it affordeth to provoke to assent, be convincing to any but those that impartially weigh them; its helps and assistances will do *no* good, where they are totally neglected. And though there be preventing as well as assisting grace going along with the Gospel, for the effectual prevailing on mens wills to use their utmost endeavour to subdue their lusts, and to acquire virtuous habits; yet this grace is not such as that there is no possibility of refusing or quenching it. Nor is it fit it should, seeing mankind is indued with a principle of freedom; and that this principle is essential to the humane nature.

I will add, that this is one immediate cause of the unsuccessfulness of the Gospel, to which it is very much to be attributed; namely, mens strange and unaccountable mistaking the design of it. Multitudes of those that profess Christianity are so grossly inconsiderate, not to say worse, as to conceive no better of it than as a *science* and *matter of speculation*: and take themselves, (though against the clearest evidences of the contrary imaginable) for true and genuine Christians, either because they have a general belief of the truth of the Christian religion, and profess themselves the Disciples of Christ Jesus in contradistinction from *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Pagans*; and in and through him alone expect salvation: or because they have so far acquainted themselves with the doctrine of the Gospel, as to be able to talk and dispute, and to make themselves pass for *knowing people*: or because they have joyned themselves to that party of Christians which they presume are of the purest and most reformed model, and are zealous sticklers for their peculiar forms and discriminating sentiments; and as stiff opposers of all other that are contray to them. Now the Gospel must necessarily be as ineffectual to the rectifying of such mens minds, and reformation of their manners, while they have so wretchedly low an opinion of its design, as if it really had no better: and so long as they take it for granted its main intention is διδάξαι, ἡ βελτιῶσαι, *to make them orthodox, not virtuous*, it cannot be thought that they should be ever the more holy, nay, 'tis a thousand to one but they will be in one kind or other the more unholly for their Christianity.

And lastly, There are several unoward opinions very unhappily instilled into professors of Christianity, which render the truths of the Gospel

Gospel they retain a belief of, insignificant and unsuccessful as to the bettering either of their hearts or lives, as infinitely apt and of as mighty efficacy as they are in themselves for those great purposes.

2. Secondly, Whereas it was said also, that the generality of heathens live in diverse respects better lives, than do multitudes, and even the generality, of those that profess Christianity; it is so far from being difficult to give a satisfactory account how this may be without disparaging our excellent religion; that it is to be expected that those people should be even much the *worse* for it, that refuse to be *bettered* by it. It is an old maxim, that *Corruptio optimi est pessima*: the *best* things being spoiled, do prove to be the very worst: and accordingly, nothing less is to be looked for, than that degenerate Christians should be the vilest of all persons. And it is also certain, that the best things, when abused, do ordinarily serve to the worst purposes; of which there may be given innumerable instances. And so it is, in this present case. St. Paul told the *Corinthians*, that he and the other apostles were *a savour of death unto death*, as well as *of life unto life* (b). And our Saviour gave the *Pharisees* to understand, That *for judgment he was come into the world; that those that see not, might see; and that those that see, might be made blind* (c); that is, That it would be a certain consequent of his coming, not only that poor ignorant creatures should be turned from darkness to light, but also that those which have the light, and shut their eyes against it, should be judicially blinded. And the forementioned Apostle, in the first Chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans*, saith of those that *held the truth in unrighteousness*, that would not suffer it to have any good effect upon them through their close adhering to their filthy lusts, that *God gave them up* to the most unnatural villainies, permitted them to commit them by with-holding all restraints from them; and likewise *gave them over* αὐτὸν ἀδόκιμον, *to a reprobate mind*. So that, from the just judgment of God it is, I say, to be expected, that depraved Christians should be the most wicked of all people: and therefore it is so far from being matter of wonder, that those that will not be converted by the Gospel, should be so many of them very horribly prophane; that that it is rather so, that all those which, having for any considerable time lived under the preaching of it, continue disobedient to it, should not be such. In the purest ages of the church, were degenerated Christians made in this kind most fearful examples of the divine vengeance: And so utterly forsaken of God, that they became, (if we may believe *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, and others of the ancient Fathers) not one whit better than incarnate devils. Nor were there to be found in the whole world in those days, and but rarely since, such abominable and most execrable wretches as they were. I have sometimes admired that humane nature should be capable of such a monstrous depravation, as several stories recorded of them do speak them to have contracted: But,

3. Thirdly, If we must needs judge of the efficacy of the Gospel for the making men holy, by its success herein; let us cast our eyes back upon the *first ages of Christianity*, and then we shall find it an easie mat-

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(b) 2 Cor. ii. 16.

(c) John ix. 39.

ter to satisfy our selves concerning it, though we should understand no more of Christianity, than the effects it produced in those days.

For though there were then a sort of people that sometimes called themselves *Christians*, that were (as was now said) the most desperately wicked creatures that ever the earth bare; yet these were esteemed by all others that were known by *that name* as no whit more of *their number*, than the *Pagans* and *Jews* that defied Christ. And their religion was a motly thing that consisted of *Christianity*, *Judaism* and *Paganism* all blended together; and therefore in regard of their mere profession they could be no more truly called *Christians* than *Jews* or *Pagans*. Or rather (to speak properly) they were of no religion at all, but would sometimes comply with the *Jews*, and at other times with the *Heathens*, and joyned readily with both in persecuting the *Christians*; And, in short, the *Samaritans* might with less impropriety be called *Jews*, than these *Gnosticks*, *Christians*.

'Tis also confessed that the orthodox Christians were calumniated by the heathens as flat *Atheists*, but their only pretence for so doing was their refusing to worship *their Gods*. And they likewise accused them of the beastliest and most horrid practices; but it is sufficiently evident that they were beholden to the *Gnosticks* for those accusations; who, being accounted Christians, did by their being notoriously guilty of them give occasion to the enemies of Christianity to reproach all the professors of it, as most filthy and impure creatures. I know it is commonly said that those calumnies proceeded purely from the malicious invention of their enemies, but it is apparent that those vile hereticks gave occasion to them, but that the Christians were so far from being guilty of such monstrous crimes, that they did lead most inoffensive and good lives, doth abundantly appear by the apologies that diverse of the Fathers made to the heathen emperors, and people in their behalf. *Iustin Martyr* in his apology to *Antoninus Pius* hath this saying, *ἡμετέρον ἔν ἑργον*, &c. *It is our interest that all persons should make a narrow inquiry into our lives and doctrine, and to expose them to the view of every one.* And he afterwards tells that emperor, *That his people had nothing to lay to their charge truly, but their bare name, Christians.* And again, *that they which in times past took pleasure in unclean practices, do live now (that they are become converts to Christianity) pure and chaste lives: they which used magical arts, do now consecrate and devote themselves to the eternal and good God: They which preferred their money and possessions before all things else, do now cast them into the common stock; and communicate them to any that stand in need; They which once hated each other, and mutually engaged in bloody battles, and (according to the custom) would not keep a common fire, πρὸς τὰς ἀκοινωσίας, with those that were not of the same tribe, now live lovingly and familiarly together; that now they pray for their very enemies: and those which persecute them with unjust hatred they endeavour to win to them by persuasions, that they also, living according to the honest precepts of Christ, may have the same hope, and gain the same reward with themselves from the great governour and lord of the world.*

Athenagoras in his apology, saith thus to the Emperors *Aurelius Antoninus*, and *Aurelius Commodus*; *As very gracious and benign as you are to all other; you have no care of us who are called Christians; for you suffer*

us who commit no evil, nay, who (as shall hereafter appear) do behave our selves of all men most piously and justly both towards God and your government, to be vexed, to be put to flight from place to place, and to be violently dealt with. And then he adds some lines after; *If any of you can convict us of any great or small crime, we are ready to bear the most severe punishment, that can be inflicted upon us.* And speaking of the calumnies that some had fastened upon them, he saith, *If you can find that these things are true, spare no age, no sex; but utterly root us up and destroy us, with our wives and children, if you can prove that any of us live like to beasts, &c.*

And there is very much to the same purpose in Tertullian's apology: Where he tells the Roman governours, *that they dealt otherwise with the Christians, than with any other whom they accounted malefactors; for whereas they tortured others to make them confess the faults they were accused of, they tortured these to make them deny themselves to be Christians: and that having no crime besides to lay to their charge which carried the least shew of truth, their professing themselves to be no Christians would at any time procure for them their absolution.* And to this objection, that there are some Christians that do *excedere à regula disciplinæ*, depart from the rules of their religion, and live disorderly; he returneth this answer, *Desinunt tamen Christiani haberi penes nos: but those that do so, are no longer by us accounted Christians.* And, by the way, let me recite Rigaltius his short note upon this passage, *At perseverant hodie in nomine & numero Christianorum, qui vitam omnem vivunt anticristi: but those now adays do retain the name and society of Christians, which live altogether Anti-christian lives.* And (proceeds he) *Tolle publicanos, &c.* Take away publicans and a wretched rabble which he musters together, & *frigeunt hodiernorum Ecclesiæ Christianorum; and our present Christian Churches will be lamentably weak, small and insignificant things.*

From these few citations out of the apologies of the forementioned Fathers, to which may be added abundance more of the same nature both out of them, and others, we may judge what rare success the Gospel had in the *first ages*, and what a vast difference there is between the Christians of *those*, and of *these* days; that is, between the Christians that were under persecution, and those that since have lived in ease and prosperity. When the Christian Religion came to be the religion of nations, and to be owned and encouraged by emperors and rulers, then was the whole vast *Roman* empire quickly perswaded to march under its banner; and the very worst of men for *fashions-sake*, and in expectation of *temporal* advantages, came flocking into the Church of Christ. Nay, the *worse* men were, and the less of conscience they had, the more forward might they *then* be so to do, the more haste they might make to renounce their former religion, and take upon them the profession of Christianity. And no sooner was the Church set in the warm sunshine of worldly riches and honours, but it is apparent she was insensibly over run with those noisom vermine, which have bred and multiplied ever since, even for many centuries of years.

If any shall doubt whether the forementioned Fathers might not give too good a character of the Christians whose cause they pleaded; I desire them to consider whether this be imaginable, seeing their enemies, to whom they wrote their defences of them could easily, they living
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among them, have discovered the falsity of their commendations. And we find them frequently appealing to the heathens own consciences, whether they themselves did not believe that true which they said of them : and moreover we have them ever and anon triumphing over them, and provoking them to shew such effects of their *philosophy* and *way of religion*, as they themselves could witness were produced by the Gospel of Christ.

Nay, and we have their adversaries themselves giving them a very high character. *Tertullian* in his forementioned apology saith, that *Pliny the second* (who was a persecutor of Christians) wrote thus to the emperor *Trajan* from the province where he ruled under him, viz. * *That, besides their resolute refusing to offer sacrifice, he could learn nothing concerning their religion, but that they held meetings before day to sing praises to Christ and God, and to engage their sect in solemn leagues; forbidding murder, adultery, deceit, disloyalty, and all other wickednesses.*

And in a now extant Epistle of his to that emperor, we find him giving him this information, viz. † *That, some that had renounced Christianity, and now worshipped his image, and the statutes of their Gods, and cursed Christ, did affirm, ‡ That this was the greatest fault or error they were guilty of, that they were wont upon a set day to assemble together before it was light, and to sing a hymn to Christ as to a God; and to bind themselves by a Sacrament, not to any wickedness, but that they would not commit thefts, robberies, adulteries; that they would not be worse than their words, that they would not deny any thing intrusted in their hands when demanded of them: which done, it was their custom to depart, and to meet again, ad capiendum cibum promiscuum, tamen & innoxium, to eat a common but innocent and harmless meal, which was doubtless the Agape or feast of charity, which was in the primitive times in use among the Christians, after the celebration of the Lord's Supper. This was an excellent account of them, and much too good to be expected from apostates, such having been ordinarily observed to be of all others, the most deadly enemies of Christianity and the professors of it.*

But to return to our author, he a few lines after adds, that he put two maid-servants upon the rack, to extort from them as full a discovery, as he could of the Christians crimes; § *but he could not find any they were guilty of, except obstinate and excessive superstition:* So he called their constant perseverance, and diligence, in observing the precepts of their most excellent religion.

¶ And the emperor *Antoninus Pius*, as much an enemy of Christians

* *Præter obstinationem non sacrificandi, nihil aliud se de sacramentis eorum compèrissè, quàm cætus antelucanos ad canendum Christo & Deo, & ad consæderandam Disciplinam: homicidium, adulterium, fraudem, perfidiam, & cætera scelera prohibentes.*

† *Lib. 10. Epist. 97. Edit. ult.*

‡ *Affirmabant autem, hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ, vel erroris, quòd essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire; carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere se-cum invicem, seque, Sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent, &c.*

§ — *Sed nihil aliud inveni, quàm Superstitionem pravam & immodicam.*

¶ *Justin Martyr. Apolog. ad Antoninum Pium.*

tians as he was, writes thus in an Epistle to the people of *Asia*, (which is to be seen in *Justin Martyr*, and affixed to the apology he directed to him) viz. *That they could make no proof of the crimes they laid to the Christians charge, and they overcame them by chusing to lay down their lives rather than to do the things they required of them: And that he thought it fit to advertise them, that the Christians, when earthquakes happened, were not under such dreadful fears as they were; and that they were ἐν παρρησίᾳ σότερος πρὸς τὸ Θεόν, induced with a firmer confidence and trust in God. And there next followeth another Epistle of the emperor Antoninus Philosophus to the Senate and people of Rome; wherein he gave them an account of an imminent danger that he and his army were in, in the heart of Germany, by the sudden approach of nine hundred and seventy thousand Barbarians and enemies: And how that finding his strength to oppose them very small, he commanded all those to appear before him who were called Christians, (as suspecting, 'tis like, either their fidelity or courage) and perceiving there were a great number of them, very sharply inveighed against them: Which (saith he) I ought not to have done in regard of the virtue which I after found to be in them; whereby they began the fight not with darts and weapons and sound of trumpets, &c. Wherefore (proceeds he) it is meet that we should know, that those whom we suspect for Atheists, Θεὸν ἔχοντι αὐτόματον ἐν τῇ συνειδήσει τετελειωμένον, have God willingly inclosed, or of his own accord inhabiting, in their conscience: For laying themselves flat upon the earth, they prayed not only for me, but also for my whole army, which was then present, that they might be a means of solace and comfort us, in our present hunger and thirst, (for we could not come by any water for five days together:) But as soon as they were prostrate upon the ground, and prayed to a God whom I knew not, immediately there fell rain from heaven, upon us, very cool and refreshing, but upon our adversaries χαλαζα πυρώδης, a fiery hail-storm: And their prayer was instantly accompanied with the presence of God, as of one invincible and insuperable. Therefore let us permit these people to be Christians, lest they praying to have the like weapons employed against us, they should obtain their desire. And a few lines after, the emperor declared it his will and pleasure, that whosoever accuseth a Christian as such, for the time to come, he shall be burnt alive.*

What better satisfaction can we desire, concerning the truth of the forementioned Father's account of the Christians that lived in their days, than that which the pens of these their enemies have given to us?

There is one thing more I will add concerning the primitive Christians, viz. That the most calm, meek, peaceable, gentle and submissive temper recommended in the Gospel, did mightily discover it self in them: And thereby we may judge what kind of people they were as to the other parts of Christianity; it being impossible that such an excellent spirit should be alone, and unaccompanied with the other virtues. Though they were for the most part very sorely persecuted, yet, as *Tertullian* saith (in his book *ad Nations*, *Nunquam conjuratio erupit*, there was never any uproar or hurly-burly among them. And having, in his apology, ask'd the two emperors, and the rest, this question, *If we are commanded to love our enemies, whom have*

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we then to hate? He thus proceeds: *How often do you your selves rage against the Christians who are obedient unto you, and moreover suffer them to be stoned and burnt by the rout of common people; but yet what revenge did ye ever observe them repaying for the injuries done unto them, as stout-hearted as they are even to death it self?*

If it be objected, as it is by some, that this might be attributed not to their good temper, but to mere necessity, seeing they knew themselves too weak to succeed in any rebellious or violent attempt: let the same *Tertullian* give an answer; and he doth it in the very next words. *In one night, saith he, with a few firebrands, they could revenge themselves sufficiently upon you, if they thought it lawful to render evil for evil.* Nay, and not only so, but he tells them plainly, that they were in circumstances to manage the parts of *hostes exerciti*, open enemies against them, as well as of *vindices occulti*, sly and secret revengers; and that they could raise an army, if it pleased them, numerous and powerful enough to cope with them; and withal he thus proceeds: *Hesterni sumus, & vestra omnia implevimus, &c.* Though we are but as it were of yesterday, yet you have no place but is full of us; your cities, your islands, castles, towns, council-houses; your fortresses, tribes, bands of souldiers, palace, senate, court, Sola vobis relinquimus templa, Your temples only are empty of us. And he goes on, *Cui bello non idonei, &c.* What battles are not we able to wage with you, who are so willingly slain by you? but according to the laws of our religion we esteem it better to be killed than to kill. Nay, he next tells them, *Potuimus inermes nec rebelles, &c.* We need not take arms and rebel to revenge our selves upon you, for we are so great a part of the empire, that by but departing from you, we should utterly destroy it, and affright you with your own solitude, and leave you more enemies than loyal subjects. And so far were they from making use of the advantages they had to deliver themselves by the way of violence, That (as not long after he saith to them) they prayed for the emperors, and those in authority under them, for peace and a quiet state of affairs among them: and, as somewhere he adds, very ready also to give them assistance against their enemies.

* *Origen* also tells *Celsus*, that he or any of his party were able to shew *ἡδὲν σαφὲως ἔργον*, nothing of sedition, that the Christians were ever guilty of: and yet what *Tertullian* said of the Roman empire in general, this father elsewhere in the same book speaketh of Greece and *Barbary*, viz. That the Gospel had subdued all that country and the greater part of this, and had brought over to godliness souls innumerable.

Thus you see how far the primitive Christians were from the tumultuous, fiery, and boisterous spirit, that Christendom above all other parts of the world, hath been since infested with. And thus we have shewn that there was once a time (God grant that the like may be again) when the success of the Christian religion in conquering mens lusts, and rectifying their natures, was greatly answerable to the efficacy that it hath for this purpose. And so we pass to the second Inference.

C H A P. XVII.

The second Inference.

That we understand from what hath been said of the Design of Christianity, how fearfully it is abused by those that call themselves the Roman Catholics. That the Church of Rome hath by several of her Doctrines enervated all the Precepts and Motives to Holiness contained in the Gospel. That she hath rendred the Means therein prescribed, for the Attainment thereof, extremely ineffectual. That she hath also as greatly corrupted them. Divers Instances of the Papists Idolatry. Their Image Worship one Instance. Their praying to Saints departed another. Other Impieties accompanying it, mentioned. Some Account of their Blasphemies, particularly in their Prayers to the Blessed Virgin. Their worshipping the Host the third, and grossest Instance of their Idolatry. Some other of their Wicked und most Antichristian Doctrines.

SECONDL Y, by what hath been said concerning the *Design of the Christian religion*, we easily understand how fearfully it is abused by those that call themselves the *Roman Catholics*. Nor need we any other argument to prove *popery* to be nothing less than *Christianity* besides this, viz. That the grand design of *this*, is to make us holy; and also aimeth at the raising of us to the most *elevated* pitch of holiness, and is admirably contrived for that purpose: but the religion of the *Papists*, as such, doth most apparently tend to carry on a design most opposite thereunto: to serve a carnal and corrupt interest; to give men security in a way of sinning; and pretendeth to teach them a way to do, at one and the same time effectually, the most contrary and inconsistent things. That is, to *deprave their natures*, and *save their souls*; and even in gratifying their wicked inclinations to lay a firm foundation for eternal happiness. So that, if *this* (as they pretend it alone is) be the *Christian religion*, we must needs ingenuously acknowledge, that what we said in the introduction was by *Celsus* and *Julian* charged upon it, is no calumny, but an accusation most just and well deserved. For as the *Church of Rome* hath rendred diverse excellent *precepts* of holiness very ineffectual, by making them *counsels* only, not *commands*; and also not a few of its *prohibitions* unnecessary, by her distinction of sins into *mortal* and *venial*; understanding by *venial* sins such as for the sake of which no man can deserve to lose the divine favour; and therefore making them really no sins: so hath she enervated all the *evangelical commandments*, both *positive* and *negative*, and made them insignificant by a great many doctrines that are taught by her most darling-sons, and decreed or allowed by her self. That one *Popish doctrine* of the *non-necessity of repentance before the imminent point of death*; and that (though the Church requireth it upon holy-days, yet) no man is bound by the divine law to it until that time, is of it self, without the help of any other, sufficient to take away the force of all the holy *precepts* of our Saviour, and to make them utterly unsuccessful to the embraces of it: and this other goeth beyond *that* in aptness

ness for this purpose, *viz.* That mere *attrition*, or sorrow for sin for fear of damnation, if it be accompanied with confession to the priest, is sufficient for salvation. For, as the former maketh a *death-bed repentance* only necessary, so this latter makes that repentance alone so, which is far from deserving to be so called, and which wants the principal ingredients of that grace, *viz.* *Hatred of sin*, and *love to God and goodness*; and consequently works no *change* in the *nature* of the sinner, nor makes him partaker in the least measure of true holiness.

The *threats of hell* have they made a mere scare-crow by their doctrine of *purgatory*; and the fear of *this* too have they taken a notable course to secure men from by that of *penances*, and the *indulgences* granted by their Popes very ordinarily for doing certain odd trifles and idle things; but which by money can never fail to be procured. Nor are the most *horrid impieties* shut out from having their share in his holiness his *indulgences*; as more than sufficiently appears by the *tax of the Apostolical chancery*; whereto those that will pay the price, absolutions are to be had for the most *abominable* and not to be named villainies, nay, and *licences* also, for not a few wickednesses.

I may add to the forementioned, their doctrine of the meritorious *supererogations* of the saints, which, being applied to others, they teach to be available for their pardon; which besides its most impious making many co-favours with *Jesus Christ*, doth infinitely encourage to carelessness and loose living.

The religion of the *means* prescribed in the Gospel, have they done what lay in them to make both extremely ineffectual, and highly irreligious. I say,

First, *Most ineffectual*: for they will have the *bare saying of prayers* without the least minding of what is said, to be acceptable to, and prevalent with, Almighty God: and congruously to this fine doctrine, their church enjoins them to be said in a tongue that is unknown to the generality of her children. Though the *Papists* cannot, for shame, but acknowledge it a *good* thing to give attention to what is said in the worship of God, yet, I say, it is well known that they deny it to be *necessary* so to do; and make the mere *opus operatum*, the work done, sufficient; and that in all acts of devotion whatsoever. And besides their divine service is made by them an idle and vain piece of pageantry, by the abundance of popish ceremonies it is burthened with. Nay,

Secondly, it is made as *ineffectual*: it being accompanied with so great immoralities as *gross idolatries*, together with other very impious practices: whereof

First, *Their worshipping of images* is a notorious instance: they making pictures of Christ and his cross, and even of the holy Trinity, and giving (as they themselves profess to do) *latria* or divine honour to them. And as for what they have, by stretching their wits upon the tenters, invented to defend themselves from the guilt of *idolatry* in those actions, it will do the Heathens as much service as themselves, and no less successfully clear and acquit them from that foul imputation. *Celsus* in defence of their idol, saith, That they are not gods, but *θεῶν ἀναθήματα*, *gifts consecrated to them*. And the Heathens in *Laſtantiuſ* are brought in saying, *Non ipſa timemus ſimulacra*, &c. *We fear, or worship not the images*

images themselves, but those whose representatives they are, and to whose names they are consecrated. And several other citations might be produced to shew, that the divine honour that was by the Heathens bestowed on their images, was relative only (as the *Papists* say theirs is, and think they get a main matter by so saying) and not absolute. But as for their worship of the image of the cross, it is grosser idolatry than I believe can be shewn the wiser sort of Pagans were ever guilty of. For the cross it self is the ultimate term of their divine adoration, and the image is worshipp'd relatively, as it represents the cross. In short, their image-worship is as expressly forbidden by the second commandment as words can do it, and one may conclude that they themselves are not a little conscious of it, in that that commandment is left out of their offices of frequent use.

Secondly, another plain instance of their idolatry is their praying to saints departed. And whereas they pretend that they do not pay them any divine honour, and that they only pray to the saints to pray for them; this pretence is but a pitifully thin cob-web to hide the idolatry of that practice. For besides that their invocations of them, and of the same saints too in innumerable places at vast distances each from other, do imply an opinion of such an excellency in them, (*viz.* such a knowledge as can hardly be at all short of Omniscience) as we can no where find God Almighty hath vouchsafed to any creature; they likewise make their prayers to them with professions of confidence in them, and with all the rites of invocation, in sacred offices, and in places set apart for divine worship; and moreover they set particular saints over whole cities and countries (one single one over this, and another over that) and put up petitions to them for their help and succour. And the *Roman Catechism* made by the decree of the council of *Trent*, and published by the Pope's command, doth give them encouragement thus to do (as the late Bishop of *Down* sheweth in the former part of his *Dissuasive from Popery*) in these words; *the saints are therefore to be invocated, because they continually make prayers for the health of mankind, and God gives us many benefits by their merit and favour: and it is lawful to have recourse to the favour or grace of the saints, and to use their help; for they undertake the patronage of us.* And he adds that the council of *Trent* doth not only say, *It is good to fly to their prayers, but also to their aid, and to their help.* And he furthermore minds them of this distich in the church of *S. Laurence in Rome* (*d*).

*Continet hoc templum sanctorum corpora pura
A quibus auxilium suppleri, poscere cura.*

*Within this church saints holy bodies lie,
Pray them, that they with help would thee supply.*

So that over and above the great impiety of their praying to saints, discovered in making them in some kind equal with Christ, and in derogating from the sufficiency of his merits, satisfaction and intercession; God being prayed to with reliance on theirs as well as on his, and through them as well as him, (as may be farther and largely shewn in their prayers,

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ers, and chiefly in those to the blessed Virgin.) I say, besides this gross impiety of that practice, it can never be justified from the charge of idolatry. And by whatsoever arguments they endeavour therein to prove themselves no idolaters, it will be no difficult matter by the same to vindicate the Heathens from that crime in worshipping their *dæmons*, *heroes* and *deified* emperors. And for *Hierocles* his part, I cannot find that he alloweth of praying to any one but him whom he calls the *Supreme God*: for, speaking of the honour that is due to that order of spirits which is immediately subordinate to him, and above the *dæmons* and *heroes*, all he saith concerning it (*e*), is, that it consisteth in understanding the excellency of their natures, and in endeavouring after a likeness to them; whereas he hath afterward a very excellent discourse of the necessary obligation men are under of praying to God.

But I have not yet instanced in the worst part of the *Popish* prayers to departed saints, the blasphemies contained in those to the *Virgin Mary* are such, as I would not defile my pen with the recital of any of them, did I not know it to be too needful. She is stiled in their publick prayers, *the saviour of despairing souls*; *the bestower of spiritual grace*, and *dispenser of the most divine gifts*; *one higher than the heavens*, and *deeper than the earth*; and many such compellations as are proper only to some one person of the glorious Trinity, are given in them to her. In her anthem she is supplicated for *pardon of sin*, for *grace* and for *glory*. And the forementioned learned Bishop observeth, that in the mass-book penned *A. D.* 1538, and used in the *Polonian* churches, they call the blessed *Virgin viam ad vitam*, &c. *the way to life*, *the governess of all the world*, *the reconciler of sinners with God*, *the fountain of remission of sins*, *light of light*: and at last she is there saluted with an *ave universæ Trinitatis mater*, *hail thou mother of the holy Trinity*. And he adds that the council of *Constance* in the hymn they call a *Sequence*, did invoke the *Virgin* in the same manner as councils did use to invoke the *Holy Ghost*: that they call her *the mother of grace*, *the remedy of the miserable*, *the fountain of mercy*, and *the light of the church*. And lastly, his lordship alledgeth a *psalter of our Lady*, that hath been several times printed at *Venice*, at *Paris* and *Leipsick*, the title of which is, *The Psalter of the Blessed Virgin compiled by the seraphical Doctor S. Bonaventure*, &c. Which consisteth of the *Psalms of David*, one hundred and fifty in number: in which the name of *Lord* is left out, and that of *Lady* put in, and altered where it was necessary they should to make sence. Therein, whatsoever *David* said, whether prayers or praises of *God* and *Christ*, they say of the *Blessed Virgin*; and *whether* (saith he) *all that can be said without intolerable blasphemy*, we suppose needs not much disputation. Who would not readily conclude it altogether impossible for any men to invent, or approve, nay, or not to have indignation against, such daring and most execrable impieties, that are not utterly bereft of their senses, or are but one removed from perfect *Atheists*? There are diverse other most prodigious sayings concerning the *Virgin Mary* transcribed out of the approved books of great sons of the *Roman Church*, in the now cited *Disswasive from Popery*, to which I refer the reader. And to them I will add some, which may doubtless vie with the worst that we can well imagine were ever uttered, of one *Jo-*
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hannes Argentus, a prime Catholick youth, which he hath exposed to the view of the world in a right worthy piece, treating of the seven excellencies of the most Blessed Virgin. Saith he, *Christus servit atque assidue ministrat Matri suæ, Christ serveth and continually administred to his Mother*: and next thus vents himself in a great fit of devotion to her. *O si liceret, quàm libenter me illi socium adjungerem, &c.* If it might be lawful, Oh, how gladly would I joyn my self with him as his companion! How willingly would I learn of him the way of perfectly serving thy self, and God! (the reader will not anon judge his placing the Virgin before God himself, as proceeding from inadvertency,) How willingly would I ease my most sweet Jesus of this his labour! O Lord Jesus my most lovely Saviour, permit me to perform some service to thy Mother; but if thou wilt not grant me this, yet at least give me leave, that whilst thou serveest thy Mother, I may serve thee. And he tells us afterward, that, God is in other creatures after a threefold manner, by his essence, by his presence, and by his power; but in the most Blessed Virgin after a fourth manner, viz. by identity, or being one and the self same with her. Who could think that the worst should be yet behind? Let the reader judge whether it be or no. He farther saith, That her seventh degree of excellency consists in this, *quòd sit Domina Dei, that she is the Mistress of God.* And then a line or two after, as if he had thought he had not yet sufficiently performed the part of a most impudent blasphemer, he adds that *supra ipsum thronum Dei solium suum collocavit, she hath erected her seat above the very throne of God.* This was a fellow that had improved to purpose the prayers he had learn'd of his holy mother. Surely she could not find in her heart to deny so passionately devout a worshipper of the Holy Virgin, a very considerable share in the merits of her *supererogations*: or rather may we not think that she would judge him so great a saint, as to stand in no need of them; and to have of his *own* to spare, wherewith to add to the riches of her treasury, for the relief of those who being conscious to themselves of being too dry and cold devotionists, can be perswaded to go to the charge of them?

Have we not now great cause to wonder, that the *Papists* should take it so very heinously at our hands, that we fasten upon them the imputation of *idolatri*? This very wretch would have been sensible of an unsufferable abuse, should one have call'd him *idolater*, as blasphemous a one as he was, and notwithstanding his having even *more than deified* a mere creature, and advanced her throne *above* her Creator's. Lord! to what heights of impiety will superstition lead men! and how thick is that darkness she blindeth the eyes of her captives with, that it will not suffer them to discern that guilt which is no whit less evident than the fun at noon. But,

Thirdly, the grossest instance of the *Church of Rome's idolatri* we have yet omitted; and that is their *worshipping the consecrated bread*, not as God's representative, but (which is far worse) as God himself, in the *sacrament of the altar* (as they call it) and on other occasions. This is no where to be parallel'd for the sottishness of it, no not among the most barbarous and brutish nations; it being founded upon the most absurd, contradictory, portentous and monstrous conceit, that ever entered the head of any mortal; as they have had it, to the confusion of their faces, proved to them by a multitude of learned persons of the reformed reli-

gion: who have also so fully, and with such mighty and irresistible strength made good the forementioned charge of *idolatry*, and of other impious practices and principles against them, that it is unimaginable how it should be possible, that any who are not stark-blind, or resolved that they will not see, should not acknowledge them. And as for the elaborate tricks whereby they endeavour to justify themselves from those accusations, they may doubtless, whensoever they shall have a mind to it, devise others no less plausible with as little pains, to make forcing of virgins no rape, lying with other folks wives no adultery, cutting of purses no theft, robbing of churches no sacrilege; and, in one word, they may with as little exercise of their brains invent ways to do whatsoever is most flatly forbidden in the Ten Commandments, without being guilty of transgressing any one of them.

I might proceed to instance in very many other doctrines of the *Romish* Church, which by what we have said of the Christian religion we may be perfectly assured are *anti-christian*; but I will only add two or three more. As, their asserting the insufficiency of the holy Scriptures for men's salvation, and denying them to be the sole rule of faith, and joining with them their own paltry *traditions* as equally necessary to be believed; and this against the express words of *S. Paul to Timothy, 2 Epist. 3 Chap.* where he tells him, that *the holy Scriptures are able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.* And that *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thowly furnished unto all good works.* And their teaching that the Gospel is *obscure* and difficult to be understood even in things *necessary to be believed and practised.* Which, as it makes it greatly inefficacious for the purpose which we have proved it is designed for, so doth it open a gap for vile interpretations of any part of it, and exposeth it to the power of heriticks, and especially of the *Romish* ones, to make it a mere nose of wax: which none can doubt, that consider also therewith their doctrine of *implicit faith*; and that other upon which it is grounded, *viz. That of the infallibility of their Church:* which as the, *Jesuits* define, is seated in the Pope's chair. But whether it be asserted that the Popes have an unerring faculty, or they and their general councils together, this doctrine being received (without the least ground) as unquestionably true, doth greatly hazard, nay, and even *necessitate* the betraying of men to the very worst both of opinions and practices, whensoever this pretended infallible guide shall be pleas'd to propose them. And whosoever believes it, must (to use the words of *Mr. Chillingworth*) be prepared in mind to esteem virtue vice, and vice virtue, Christianity anti-christianism, and anti-christianism, Christianity, if the Pope shall so determine. And this doctrine, without doubt, is that which causeth those of the *Papists* to stick so fast in filthy mire, and to persist so obstinately in their foul errors, who are not detained therein by the love of gain (with which their Popes, and other ecclesiasticks by the means of diverse of them are mightily enriched) or by the dear effectation they bear to other lusts, which they are exactly fitted for the satisfaction of. Their doctrines being very many of them so ridiculously absurd, plainly false, and of such dangerous consequence; I say, nothing else, certainly, could hold the sincerer sort of *Papists* in the belief
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of them, but this consideration, that any one of them being let go, their great *Dagon* of the Churches *infallibility* must necessarily to the ground with it.

I might also instance in their doctrine of the *dispensableness* of the most solemn oaths, which is no less destructive to *humane society*, than it is to *piety*. And in that of the Pope's power to absolve subjects from their allegiance to their lawful sovereigns: and to them add a great number of maxims of the most famous order among them, the *Jesuits*, and resolutions of cases of conscience, which are as wicked and destructive of a holy life, as the devil himself can well devise. But to be employed with *Hercules* in emptying the *auguean* stable, would be as acceptable a work as stirring so far in this nasty sink. Whosoever shall peruse the *mystery of jesuitism*, may find more than enough to turn his stomach, though it should be none of the most squeamish and queazy, and to make him stand astonished, and bless himself, that ever such loathsome and abominable stuff should come from persons that derive their name from the holy *Jesus*.

But to hasten to the conclusion of this chapter, the most pure and holy religion of our Saviour hath the *Church of Rome* defiled with as impure and unholy opinions and practices; and hath taken the most effectual course not only to render it a feeble and insignificant thing for accomplishing the design for which it was intended by the blessed founder of it, but also to make it unhappily successful in serving the directly contrary. The *great mystery of godliness* hath she transformed into a grand *mystery of iniquity*: and by that means mightily confirmed its professed enemies, the *Jews* and *Mahometans*, in their enmity against it. And for my own part, I should not stick to say, as did *Averroes* (when he observed that the popish Christians adored that they ate) *Sit anima mea cum philosophis, Let my soul take its fate with the philosophers*, did I think Christianity to be such a religion as she makes it. As much as I admire it now, I should then prefer that of *Socrates*, *Plato* and *Cicero* far before it. Though I abhor so far to imitate the *Papists* in their devilish uncharitableness, as to pronounce them all in a state of damnation, yet I dare assert with the greatest confidence, that all that continue in communion with that degenerate and apostate Church, run infinite hazards: and moreover that it is impossible, any *sincere* persons should give an *explicit* and *understanding assent* to many of her doctrines; but whosoever can find in his heart to *practise* upon them, can be nothing better than a shamefully debauched, and a most immoral wretch. Nor is it conceivable what should induce any to exchange the *reformed* for the *popish* religion (as too many have of late done) that have but a competent understanding of both, besides the desire of serving some corrupt interest. And we plainly see, that the generality of those that turn apostates from the Church of *England* to that of *Rome*, are such people as were a scandal to her, while they continued in her: and that *Atheism* and *Popery* are the common sanctuaries to which the most vicious and profane of this age do betake themselves.

C H A P. XVIII.

The third Inference.

That these two Sorts of Persons are extremely sottish. 1. Such as expect to have their Share in the Salvation of the Gospel without true Holiness. 2. Such, much more, as encourage themselves by the Grace of the Gospel in Unholiness.

HIRDLY, there is nothing we are more assured of by what **T** hath been discoursed of the *Design of Christianity*, than that these two sorts of persons are guilty of extreme sottishness: namely, *Those that expect to have a share in the salvation of the Gospel without true holiness*: and much more, *Those that encourage themselves by the grace of the Gospel in their unholiness.*

First, *Those that expect to have their share in the salvation of the Gospel without true holiness.* I fear that such people are not confined within the limits of the *Romish church*; but that a great number of Protestants also may be deservedly accused upon this account. But by so much more sottish are *these* than the *Papists*, by how much *better* things *their* religion teacheth them than the *Papists* doth. Though I must likewise with sadness acknowledge, that too many opinions have been unhappily foisted into it, that give too great encouragement to a careless life. But that those which promise to themselves an interest in the salvation purchased by *Jesus Christ*, either from their baptism, and partaking of certain Christian privileges, or from their being of such or such a sect and mode of professors, or from their supposed orthodoxy and good belief, and zeal against erroneous doctrines, or from their imagining *Christ's* righteousness *theirs*, and applying the promises to themselves, or from their abstaining from the grosser and more scandalous sins, or from their doing some externally good actions, and have in the mean time no care to be intirely obedient, to mortifie every lust, and to be indued with an inward principle of holiness; that those, I say, which thus do, are guilty of most egregious and stupid folly, is manifest from what hath been discoursed of the *Design of Christianity*.

For we have shewn, not only that reformation of life from the *practice*, and purification of heart from the *liking* of sin, are as plainly as can be asserted in the Gospel to be absolutely necessary to give men a right to the promises thereof; but also that its *great salvation* doth even *consist* in it: that, *salvation from sin* is the grand design of the Christian religion, and that *from wrath* is the result of it. I will instance in two more Scriptures for the farther proof of this. The Apostle *S. Paul* saith, *Ephes. ii. 5, &c. Even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, hath he quickned us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. For by grace ye are saved, through faith, (or by the means of believing the Gospel) and that not of your selves, it is*

the gift of God. Where, by the *salvation* which the *Ephesian* Christians are said to have obtained, and in the bestowing of which the exceeding riches of God's grace appeared, is plainly to be understood their deliverance from their former heathenish impieties and sinful practices; and so is it interpreted by our best expositors. Again it is said, *Titus* iii. 5. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us* (how saved us? it follows) *by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*. Our Saviour giveth ease to our sin-sick souls by recovering them to health: and his salvation *first* consisteth in curing our wounds, and *secondarily* in freeing us from the smart occasioned by them. *S. Peter* tells the Christians, that *by his stripes they were healed*, *1 Pet.* ii. 24. It being a quotation out of *Isaiah* liii. 5. *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Stromat.* lib. ii. pag. 391. hath this saying to the same purpose, *ἡ συγγνώμη δὲ ἢ κατὰ ἄφεσιν ἢ κατὰ ἰασιν συνίσταται*, pardon doth not so much consist in remission, as in healing; that is, the pardon of the Gospel doth chiefly discover it self in curing men of their sins; in delivering sinners from the power of them, rather than from the mere punishment due to them. By which words that learned father declared that he looked upon the subduing of sin as a more eminent act of grace, than the bare forgiveness of it. Now, would that man be accounted better than an idiot, who being sorely hurt, should expect from his surgeon perfect ease, while he will not permit him to lay a plaister on his wound? Or that being deadly sick, would look that his physician should deliver him from his pain, when he will not take any of his medicines for the removal of the cause of it? But of far greater folly are all those guilty, who will not be persuaded to part with their sins, and yet hope for the salvation of their souls. He that looketh for this, expects that which implieth a most palpable contradiction, and is in its own nature impossible. It hath been fully enough shewn that mere deliverance from misery, cannot possibly be without deliverance from sin; and, much less eternal blessedness in the enjoyment of God.

Secondly, but how mad then are those, which turn the grace of God declared in the Gospel into wantonness, and take encouragement from the abundant kindness and good will therein expressed to sinners, with the more security and boldness to commit sin? We read of such in the epistle of *St. Jude*; and God knows there are too many such in these our days. But seeing it is so grossly foolish for men to hope to be saved, notwithstanding their living in the allowance of known sins, what desperate madness is it to be emboldened in ungodly practices, by the offers Christ makes of pardon and salvation to them. These declare that they look upon the *Design of Christianity* not only as different, from what it hath been demonstrated to be, but also as directly opposite, and perfectly contrary thereunto. These must not only think their Saviour to be no friend to holiness, but to be even its greatest enemy, and a minister of sin and wickedness. They make him the chief servant of the devil, instead of coming to destroy his works (a). They make the *Christian* religion more vile by far than that of *Mahomet*; and such a religion, as those who are not the very work of men, must needs abominate. *Shall we sin* (saith the Apostle) *that grace may abound?* God forbid! (b). Those that think

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(a) 1 John iii. 8.

(b) Rom. vi.

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they can magnifie the free-grace of God in Christ by thus doing, or that they may take encouragement from it to continue in sin, do make this grace unworthy of mens acceptance, and therefore no grace at all. Nay, they make Almighty God the greatest enemy to mankind in sending his Son Jesus and his Gospel among us. For *sin* being so evidently the *greatest of evils*, it can be no other than the most significant expression of hatred to us, to encourage us to the commission thereof. It is so far from being part of our *Christian liberty*, to be delivered from our obligation to *all* or *any* of the laws of righteousness, that such a deliverance would be the most unsupportable yoke of bondage. If any man can be so silly as to object that of the Apostle, *Rom. vi. 14. Ye are not under the law, but under grace*: let him give himself an answer by reading the whole verse, and then make ill use of that passage if he can tell how. The words foregoing it are these: *sin shall not have dominion over you*, and these words are a proof hereof, *for ye are not under the law, but under grace*: that is, as if he should say, It is the most inexcusable thing for you to continue under the dominion and power of sin, because ye are not under the weak and inefficacious pedagogy of the law of *Moses*, but a dispensation of grace, wherein there is not only *forgiveness* assured to truly repenting sinners, but *strength* afforded to enable to the subduing and mortification of all sin. Our Saviour hath told us expressly, that he came not to *destroy the law*, (that is, the *moral law*) but to *fulfill it* (c): and that *heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than that one jot or tittle thereof should fail*. And it is absolutely impossible, that our obligation thereunto should cease, while we continue *men*. All the duties therein contained being most necessary and natural results from the relation we stand in to God and to one another, and from the original *make* and *constitution* of humane souls.

But it is too great an honour to the doctrine of *libertinism* to spend two words in confuting it; it being so prodigious, so monstrous a doctrine, that it would be almost uncharitable to judge that a professor of Christianity not to have suffered the loss of his wits who can have the least favour for it; supposing him to have but the least smattering in the Christian religion. It is an amazing thing, that such a thought should be entertained by such a one, while he is not utterly forsaken of his intellectuals: our Saviour's Gospel being wholly levelled at the mark of rendering us obedient to the laws of God. Let me speak to such as so shamefully abuse our incomparable religion, as to take liberty from thence to be in any kind immoral, in the words of St. Paul, *Rom. ii. 4, 5. Despisest thou the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and long suffering, not knowing that his goodness leadeth thee* (or designeth the leading of thee) *to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thy self wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, &c.*

(c) Matt. v.

C H A P. XIX.

The fourth Inference.

That a right Understanding of the Design of Christianity will give us the true Notion, 1. Of justifying Faith, 2. Of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness.

FOURTHLY, from what hath been said of the *Design of Christianity* may be clearly inferred the *true Notion of justifying Faith*, and of the *Imputation of Christ's Righteousness*.

First, *Of justifying faith*. We thence learn, *That it is such a belief of the truth of the Gospel, as implies a sincere resolution of obedience unto all its precepts; or (which is the same thing) implies true holiness in the nature of it: and moreover that it justifieth as it doth so.* For surely the *faith* which intitles a sinner to so high a privilege as that of *justification*, must needs be such as complieth with *all* the purposes of Christ's coming into the world, and *especially* with his *grand purpose*; and it is no less necessary that it should justify *as* it doth this; that is, as it receives Christ for a *Lord*, as well as for a *Saviour*. But I need not now distinguish between these two, there being but a *notional* difference between them in this matter. For Christ (as was shewn) as he is a *Saviour*, designeth our *holiness*: his *salvation* being chiefly that from the worst of evils, *sin*; and principally consisting in deliverance from the *power* of it.

I have scarcely more admired at any thing, than that any *worthy* men especially should be so difficultly perswaded to embrace this account of *justifying faith*; and should perplex and make intricate so very plain a doctrine. If this be not to seek knots in a bulrush, I know not what is. I wish there were nothing throughout the Bible less easily intelligible than this is, and I should then pronounce it one of the plainest of all books that ever pen wrote. For seeing the great end of the Gospel is to make men good, what pretence can there be for thinking, that *faith* is the *condition* (or I'll use the word [*instrument*] as improper and obscure as it is) of *justification*, as it complieth with only the precept of *relying on Christ's merits* for the obtaining thereof, especially when nothing is more manifest than that obedience to the *other precepts* must go before obedience to *this*; and that a man may not rely on the merits of Christ for the forgiveness of his sins, (and he is most presumptuous in so doing, and puts an affront upon his Saviour too) till he be sincerely willing to be reformed. And besides such a *reliance* is ordinarily to be found among unregenerate, and even the very worst of men. And therefore how can it be otherwise, than that *that act of faith* must needs have a hand in *justifying*, and the *special* hand too, which distinguisheth it from that which is to be found in such persons. And I add, what good ground can men have for this fancy, when our Saviour hath merited the pardon of our sins for this end, that it might be an effectual motive to forsake them? And can any thing in the world be more indisputably clear, than, if the only *direct* scope that Christianity drives at be the subduing of sin in us, and

our freedom from its guilt or obligation to punishment be the consequent of this (as I think hath been demonstrated with abundant evidence ; that faith invests us with a title to this deliverance no otherwise than as *dying to sin*, and so consequently *living to God*, are the products and fruit of it ? And seeing that, one end, and the ultimate end too, of Christ's coming was to turn us from our iniquities, if the nature of *faith* considered as *justifying* must needs be made wholly to consist in *recumbence* and *reliance on him*, he shall be my *Apollo* that can give me a sufficient reason why it ought only to consist in *reliance on the merits of Christ* for the *pardon* of sin, and not also on his *power* for the *mortification* of it. In short, is it possible that faith in Christ's blood for the forgiveness of sin should be the only act which justifieth a sinner, when so many plain texts assure us, that he died also to make us *holy*, and that his death was designed to deliver us from dying in order to a farther end, namely to this, that we should *live unto him who died for us*.

I will never more trust any faculty at reasoning, I can pretend to, no not in the plainest and most undoubted cases, if I am mistaken here. And will take the boldness to tell those who are displeased with this account of *justifying faith*, that (in my opinion) it is impossible they should once think of any other, if they ever seriously weighed and well considered the *Design of Christianity*. I the more insist upon this, because those persons explication of this point hath been greatly liable to be used to ill purposes by insincere persons ; and hath given infinite advantage to the dangerous error of *Antinomianism*. And, for my part, I must confess that I would not willingly be he that should undertake to encounter one of the champions of that *foul* cause, with the admission of this principle, *That faith justifieth, only as it apprehendeth the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ* : I must certainly have great *luck*, or my adversary but little cunning, if I were not forced to repent me of such an engagement.

Secondly, and as for the other doctrine of the *imputation of Christ's righteousness* ; we learn from the *Design of Christianity* that this is the true explication of it : namely, That it consists in dealing with *sincerely* righteous persons, as if they were *perfectly* so, for the sake of Christ's righteousness. The *grand* intent of the Gospel being to make us partakers of an *inward* and *real* righteousness, and it being but a *secondary* one that we should be *accepted* and rewarded as if we were *completely* righteous ; it is not possible that any other notion of this doctrine should have any truth in it. For, as from thence it appeareth, that there can be no such imputation of Christ's righteousness offered in the Gospel, as serveth to make men remiss in their prosecution of an inward righteousness ; so it is manifest likewise, That that doctrine is designed for a motive to quicken and excite men in their endeavours after such a righteousness as this is. So far is it from tending to cause in us an undervaluing and slight esteem of it, that, as sure as that the ultimate design of Christianity is to endow us with it, it must be intended for no other purpose but to farther and promote that business : and it is effectual thereunto in that manner, that we shewed the exceeding great and precious *promises* of the Gospel are.

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But because both these points are discussed in the *free discourse*, I have said so little of the *former*, and will proceed no farther on *this*; but refer the reader thither, and to other much more elaborate discourses for his fuller satisfaction. And indeed it was enough for me in this place to shew, That the notion laid down in that book of each of these doctrines, doth evidently follow from the proposition which is the subject of this Treatise.



C H A P. XX.

The fifth Inference.

That we learn from the Design of Christianity the great Measure and Standard, whereby we are to judge of Doctrines. How we are to judge of the Truth of Doctrines.

IF THLY, we learn from what hath been said of the *design of Christianity*, what is the *great measure and standard whereby we are to judge of doctrines*; both whether they are true or false, and in what degree necessary to be received or rejected.

First, we understand how to judge of the *truth* of doctrines. We may be certain that, seeing the *design of Christianity is to make men holy*, whatsoever opinions do either *directly*, or in their *evident consequences*, obstruct the promoting thereof, are absolutely false; and with as great pre-emptoriness and confidence as they may be by some that call themselves Christians obtruded upon us, they are not of Christ, nor any part of his religion. And those which do *appear* to us to discourage from serious endeavours after piety and true goodness, we ought for that reason, while we have such an opinion of them, most vehemently to *suspect* them. For it being the business of our Saviour's coming into the world, or of his blessed Gospel, effectually to persuade us to use our utmost diligence in subduing our lusts, and qualifying our souls by purity and holiness for the enjoyment of God, and to make our endeavours *successful* for that purpose; we may be assured that he hath not either by himself immediately, or by his apostles, delivered any thing that opposeth this design. If (saith St. Paul) *I build again the things that I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor* (d): and no man that hath in him the least of a Christian, will once suspect, that the perfectly *wise* as well as *holy* Jesus should so manage the business he hath undertaken, as what he builds with one hand, to pull down with the other; and frustrate that design by *some* doctrines which he promoteth by *others*.

Those doctrines, on the other hand, which in their own nature do evidently tend to the serving of this design of Christianity, we may conclude are most true and genuine: and for those which, upon our serious considering of them, we are persuaded do so, we ought upon that ac-

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count to have a kindness, and to believe them of an higher than *humane* original. And therefore those which give the most honourable accounts of God, his nature, and dealing with the sons of men; that most magnifie his grace, and best vindicate his holiness, justice, and goodness, do commend themselves to our belief with infinite advantage: because the *most worthy* conceptions of the deity are exceedingly *helpful*, and also *necessary* to the loving of God, and serving him as becometh us, and have a mighty influence into the ordering and regulation of our whole man; as might be largely shewn.

Those doctrines, again, that most discountenance all sins both against the first and second table, and best enable to answer all pleas and pretences for security and carelessness; that are most agreeable to the innate dictates of our minds, and least gratifie and please our carnal part; we may from the consideration of the *design of Christianity* be greatly persuaded of the *truth* of them.

And, on the contrary, those which are apt to instil into men's minds any unlovely notions of the divine nature, that disparage his holiness, or lessen his kindness and good will to his creation, and the obligations of the generality of the world to him and his Son *Jesus*, and so make his grace a narrow and scanty thing, or that naturally cast any dishonourable reflections on any person of the most Holy Trinity, must needs be *false*. As also those that make religion to be a mere *passive* thing, wholly *God's work*, and not at all *ours*; or that cramp men, and persuade them that they are utterly void of the least ability to co-operate with the grace of God, or to do any thing towards their own salvation; or any way whatsoever discourage them from the diligent prosecution of holiness; or deprive us of any help afforded us towards our gaining, and growth in grace, either by putting a slur upon the written word, in advancing above it the *light within men*, and in *enthusiastical* pretences to immediate revelations, &c. or else by teaching men to slight any one ordinance of the Gospel, &c. or such doctrines as tend to introduce confusion into the Church of Christ, and to deprive it of all government and order, or in short, that give countenance to any immorality whatsoever: I say, as sure as the Christian religion is true, and that what we have proved to be the design thereof, is so, such doctrines as these must needs be *false*.

What our Saviour saith of false prophets, is as true of most doctrines, *by their fruits you shall know them*: we may understand whether they have any relation to Christianity or no, by the design they drive at, and their evident consequences.

And I may add, that we may make a shrewd guess what those *particular ways and modes of religion* are (which the various sects we are canonized into have espoused to themselves, and are so fond of) by the proper and most distinguishing effects of them. If we perceive that they make the great sticklers for them, to differ from others chiefly in unconcernedness about the most important and substantial duties of *morality*, and in laying the greatest weight upon certain little trifles, and placing their religion in mere *externals*; or that the things whereby they are most peculiarly discriminated from other folk are spiritual pride, and fond conceitedness of themselves, and a fierce or scornful behaviour towards those that approve not of their way; uncharitableness, morosity, and peevishness,

nests; a seditious, ungovernable and untameable spirit, &c. I say, if we observe such as these to be the most distinguishing effects of their several modes and forms, we have sufficient reason from thence alone greatly to presume, that they have not the stamp of *jus Christianum* upon them, that they are not of Christ, but of their own invention. The wisdom that is from above is quite another thing, and begets perfectly other kind of fruits; as shall be shewn hereafter.

But to return, *the design of the Gospel* is (as was said) the great standard by which we are to judge of the *truth* of opinions: those that *seem* to us to oppose this design, we are bound to *suspect*, because they do so; but those which *apparently do this*, we must with heartiest indignation reject. And though we should meet with some places of Scripture that at first sight may seem to favour them, we may not be stumbled upon that account, but be confident that whatsoever is their true meaning, as sure as they have God for their author, they cannot possibly patronize any such doctrines.

And, lastly, in examining which of two opinions is true, that oppose each other, and do seem to be much alike befriended by the holy Scriptures, it is doubtless a very safe course to consider as impartially as we can, which doth tend most to serve the great end of Christianity, and to prefer that which we are persuaded doth so.



C H A P. XXI.

How we are to judge of the Necessity of Doctrines, either to be embraced or rejected. A brief Discourse of the Nature of Points Fundamental. How we may know whether we embrace all such, and whether we hold not any destructive and damnable Errors.

SECONDLY, *the design of Christianity is the great measure* whereby we are to judge, as of the *truth*, so also of the *necessity* of doctrines, either to be embraced or rejected.

First, we may thereby understand, in what degree we ought to esteem those *necessary to be by all received*, which we our selves are convinc'd of the *truth* of; or, which of such are *fundamental points* of the Christian faith, and which not.

First, it is plain, That in the general those and those only are *primarily* and in their own nature *fundamentals*, which are absolutely necessary to accomplish in us that design. Such, as without the knowledge and belief of which, it is impossible to acquire that inward righteousness and true holiness which the Christian religion aimeth at the introduction of. It is in it self absolutely necessary, not to be ignorant of, or disbelieve, any of those points, upon which the effecting of the great business of the Gospel in us doth necessarily depend. The particulars of these I shall not stand to enumerate, because (as will appear from what will be said anon) it is not needful to have a just table of them: and, besides, any one

one that understands wherein the nature of *true holiness* lieth, may be able sufficiently to inform himself what they are.

Secondly, it is as evident, That those points of faith are *secondarily fundamental*, the disbelief of which cannot consist with true holiness, in those to whom the Gospel is sufficiently made known; although they are not in their own nature such, as that holiness is not in some degree or other attainable without the belief of them. And in the number of these are all such points as are exprest with indisputable clearness. Now the belief of these, though it is not in it self any more than in higher or lower degrees profitable, yet it is absolutely necessary from an external cause, *viz.* in regard of their being delivered with such perspicuity, as that nothing can cause a man to refuse to admit them, but that which argueth him to be stark nought, and to have some unworthy and base end in so doing. But we must take notice here, that nothing worded at all doubtfully, can be of equal necessity to be received by all Christians; because that in regard of the diversity of men's capacities, educations, and other means and advantages, some things may be plainly perceived by one to be delivered in the Scriptures, which cannot be so by another.

And in the second place, what hath been said of *fundamental truths*, is applicable by the rule of contraries to the opposite *errors*, as I need not shew.

Now then, would we know whether we embrace *all the fundamentals* of Christianity, and are guilty of no damnable and destructive errors; among the great diversity and contrariety of opinions that this kingdom abounds with (I think I may say) above all other parts of Christendom; our only way is to examine our selves impartially after this manner.

Am I sincerely willing to obey my Creator and Redeemer in all things commanded by them? Do I entertain and harbour no lust in my breast? Do I heartily endeavour to have a right understanding of the holy Scriptures, and chiefly of the Gospel, and to know what doctrines are delivered there in order to the bettering of my soul by them, and the direction of my life and actions according to them?

If we can answer these questions in the affirmative; whatsoever *mistakes* we may labour under, they can be none of them such as will undo us; because we may conclude from thence, that the *Design of Christianity* is in some good measure accomplish'd in us. And whatsoever tenets may be accompanied and consist with the true love of God, and a solicitous care to keep a conscience void of offence towards him and men, we may be certain from the past discourse of the *design of the Gospel*, that they belong not to the catalogue of *fundamental errors*. This obedient temper is the most infallible mark (of any I know) of an *orthodox* man; he that is endowed with it, though he may *err*, cannot be an *Heretick*.

But there will be an occasion of speaking more anon to this argument.

C H A P. XXII.

The sixth Inference.

That the Design of Christianity teacheth us what Doctrines and Practices we ought, as Christians, to be most zealous for or against.

NINTHLY, we consequently learn *what doctrines and practices we ought, as Christians, to be most zealous for or against.* Those, surely, that are most available to the begetting and encrease of true holiness, it is our duty to concern our selves most for the defence of : and those which have the greatest tendency towards the endangering of it, to set our selves with the greatest industry and vigour against. The reason is plain, because the *former* do most promote the design of the Gospel, and the *latter* do it most disservice. St. Jude exhorts in the third verse of his epistle, *to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints* ; that holy doctrine which was first delivered by our Saviour, and unanimously by his apostles after him ; which is perfectly contrary to the wicked and abominable doctrines taught by the prophane crew he speaks of in the next verse (and were more than probably the *Gnosticks*) *which were crept in unawares, who were before ordained to this condemnation,* (or whose *impostures* first, and then the *vengeance* which should be taken of them, were *formerly written of or foretold* both by Christ and his apostles) *ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* And we ought to contend against whatsoever is designed to overthrow and make ineffectual that most blessed doctrine, more or less, according as it more or less tends so to do. Our zeal should be altogether employed for the promoting of *personal and real holiness*, and mostly for the *essential* parts of it, and the *necessary* means and helps to it. But doubtless it cannot be worth our while to lay out any considerable matter of our heat, either for or against *doubtful opinions, alterable modes, rites and circumstances of religion* : they are not things on which much weight may be warrantably laid ; for they are too weak to bear it, in regard of their being so little serviceable or disserviceable to the *Design of Christianity*. I say, eager defending or opposing of such kind of things, is (to use the similitude of an excellent person) like the apes blowing at a gloc-worm, which affords neither light nor warmth. Nay, it is no less *injurious* to the *Design of Christianity*, than unserviceable and useles, as we have been effectually taught by very woful experience. And nothing doth more harden Atheistically-disposed persons, than their observing the contention of Christians about matters of that nature ; for thereby do they take a measure of our whole religion. And besides an eager concernedness about them is too ordinarily accompanied with a luke-warm, or rather frozen indifference, concerning the most *important* points of Christianity. It is too visibly apparent to be denied, That those which have such a *scalding hot zeal* either for or against things of *no certainty and no necessity*, are many of them (as their predecessors the *Pharisees* were) in the very *other* extreme as to not a few of the *weightiest* matters of religion.

C H A P. XXIII.

The seventh Inference.

That the Design of Christianity well considered, will give us great Light into the just Bounds and Extent of Christian Liberty. Of complying with the Customs of our Country, and the Will of our Governours. The great Difference between the Mosaical Law and the Gospel, as to its preceptive Part.

SEVENTHLY, we may be greatly satisfied, by considering the *Design of Christianity*, concerning the *just bounds and extent of our Christian liberty*. For that being to make men *holy*, it may safely be presumed, that such things as have neither directly, nor consequentially, any tendency to the depraving of our souls, are left free to us by our Saviour, either to do them or not to do them, as we shall see cause. Whatsoever doth neither promote nor hinder *this design*, we have reason to believe is neither enjoyn'd upon us Christians, nor forbidden to us.

Whatever things are any way *necessary* to the furtherance of it, must needs be matter of strict duty; and what are so profitable thereunto, that the omission of them doth make the effecting of this design more difficult, cannot but be *ordinarily* so also. Whatsoever is *in its own nature*, or by reason of some *circumstance*, inseparably adhering to it, a *necessary* occasion of gratifying some one or other corrupt affection, and *that*, by the doing of which we shall *certainly* defile our own souls, or the souls of others, either by drawing them thereby *to*, or hardening and encouraging them in any sin (which is that our Saviour means by *offending* or *scandalizing little ones*, and is so severely forbidden by him, and also by the Apostle in the eighth chapter of the first epistle to the *Corinthians*) can be no other than absolutely unlawful: and whatsoever is foreseen to be a *probable* occasion of any one of these mischiefs, must also be carefully avoided by us. But those things which are none of all these, cannot be otherwise than perfectly *indifferent* under the Gospel.

And therefore whatsoever of such are commended by the custom of the places we live in, or commanded by superiors, or made by any circumstance convenient to be done; our Christian liberty consists in this, that we have leave to do them. And, indeed, it is so far from being a sin to comply with our country-men and neighbours in their plainly innocent usages and harmless customs, or with the will of our governors when they command us such things; that it would be so, to refuse so to do. For our refusing to comply with either of these can hardly proceed from any thing better than a proud affectation of singularity, or at best from superstitious scrupulosity; which, in calling it *superstitious*, I intimate to be evil, as much of conscience as there may be in it. For *superstition* implieth a frightful or over-timorous apprehension of the Deity, and consequently an unworthy conception thereof, as the Greek word *δεισιδαιμονία* signifieth. That which makes men *superstitious*, is such an opinion

opinion of God as represents him a very angry and captious Being, but yet such a one too as may be atoned and pacified by a great care and exactness in certain little matters, in performances and abstinences of an insignificant and very trivial nature.

Now the ancient author of the epistle to *Diognetus* acquaints him, that the *primitive Christians* were no such squeamish or conceited people, as to live in a different way from those among whom they inhabited; and faith that they distinguish'd themselves from their neighbours and other folk, ἔτε φωνῇ, ἔτε ἔθελαι, *neither by civil customs, nor a certain language, (or phrases or tone) proper to themselves, ἔτε βίον παράσχητον ἀσκήσιν, &c. nor that they affected to make themselves notified by any peculiarities (that is, in harmless matters) as a foolish sect among our selves, and some other fanciful people, now a-days do.*

I design not here so tedious a work, as that of examining particulars by the rule we have given, but only to shew in the general that we may be satisfied concerning the *extent of our Christian liberty* by well weighing the *Design of Christianity*, and may understand what kind of things must needs be free to us under the Gospel-dispensation, and what not; leaving it to the reader to make application, and consider the nature of particulars by comparing them with this rule. But I presume I need not mind him, that I suppose all this while that whatsoever is plainly commanded and forbidden in the Gospel, must be done and forborn by him, though he should not be sagacious enough to discern how every thing there commanded is serviceable, or forbidden is injurious, to the design of holiness: for surely none can doubt, but that they ought to understand me, in what I have asserted, to have this meaning only, *viz.* That, as to those things which the Gospel speaketh nothing in particular and clearly, concerning the best course we can take in order to our knowing to what heads to refer them (whether to that of things *commanded*, or to that of *forbidden*, or to that of *indifferent* things) is to examine them by this general rule, *viz.* *The Design of Christianity.*

But to conclude this, the great difference between the *Mosaical law*, and the *Gospel*, as to its preceptive part, is this, That by the *former* a vast multitude of perfectly *indifferent* things were imposed, and many such also prohibited: but by the *latter*, only those things are enjoined that are in their own nature of indispensable necessity, or such as are means and helps towards them: and there is nothing thereby forbidden, but it is so, because it is evil; and is not therefore evil only because forbidden. There is nothing either commanded or forbidden in our Saviour's religion, but, as it is in order to our good, so is it in order to *such* a good too as consists in the reformation and renovation of our lives and natures.

So that, I say, our past discourse concerning *the Design of Christianity* may give us great light as to the knowledge of what kind of things, we that are under the Gospel-dispensation, *must do*, and are matter of *necessary duty*; *must not do*, and are matter of *sin*; and *may do or leave undone* without sin.

C H A P. XXIV.

The eighth Inference.

That it is the most unaccountable thing to do that which is essentially Evil, in defence of the Christian Religion, or of any Opinions presumed to be Doctrines relating thereunto. The Pope and Church of Rome most highly Guilty in this Particular. And not a Few of those that profess Enmity against Popery too liable also to the same Charge.

RIGHTLY, it may be plainly inferred from what hath been said of the *Design of Christianity*, That it is the most strangely unaccountable thing for men in defence or favour of that way of religion, which they take to be most truly the Christian, or of any opinions that are presumed by them to be doctrines thereunto belonging, to do that which is essentially and in its own nature evil. For these act quite contrary to the *Design of the Christian religion*, and so consequently, do what lyeth in them to spoil it, and render it a vain and insignificant thing by the course they take for the advancement thereof. The *Pope and Church of Rome* are horribly guilty of this madness; they doing the most plainly vicious and immoral actions imaginable, to promote the interest (as they pretend) of that which they call the *Catholick faith*. For, their imposing of their own senses upon the word of God, and then persecuting, burning and damning men for not subscribing to *theirs* as to God's words, can be no better than an act of devilish pride and barbarous cruelty. It is so of the former, in that it is a compelling men to acknowledge their wisdom to be such as may not be suspected in the least measure, no not in the determination of points that are the most doubtful and disputable: nay, neither in such opinions and practices of theirs, as most plainly contradict abundance of texts of holy Scripture.

And moreover in endeavouring to force all men to act and think as they do in matters of religion, they with *Luciferian* arrogance usurp the empire of Almighty God, and sway that scepter over mens consciences which is his peculiarly.

And I need not say, that they are therein no whit less cruel than proud. For what greater cruelty can there be, than to inflict upon people the saddest of calamities and the horridest tortures (whereof the instances are innumerable) for such things as they have no cause to think they are able to help; and which they have also the greatest reason to conclude they are not at all blame-worthy for? I say, what can be greater cruelty than this? except their designing thereby to terrifie men to the owning of doctrines and doing actions perfectly against the clearest sense of their minds, and expressest dictates of their consciences; which is an exercise of no less cruelty towards their *souls*, than the other is towards their *bodies*.

And what villanies have the Pope and his party stuck at for the propagation of their religion? Such as exciting subjects to take arms against their lawful sovereigns; poisoning and stabbing of princes: the most

most barbarous massacres that any history can give account of. In short, what frauds and perfidiousness, what treachery, what impostures, what perjuries, what cruelties and horrid out-rages, have they thought too wicked to be undertaken and persisted in, for the sake of HOLY CHURCH?

But I would I could say, that of all that are called Christians, the *Papists* only are liable to this charge; but, alas, it is too manifest to be denied, or dissembled, that not a few of those that profess enmity to popery are sadly guilty, though not *equally* with the *Papists*, in this particular. But there is nothing more self-evident than that to be of a persecuting spirit, to be wrathful and furious, to backbite and slander, to be false and perfidious, to be ungovernable, to be uncharitable, or in any kind whatsoever unjust, upon any account whatsoever, is most inexcusable and intolerable. For if upon any account such things could be lawful, religion would be the most useless thing in the world; and if they were lawful upon the account of religion only, it would not be a more useless and unprofitable than a mischievous thing. And therefore it would be too little a thing to say, that the *Christian* religion it self would be unworthy of our esteem, as great things as have been said of it, if it gave us leave to allow our selves in any immorality.

But there are none, it more absolutely or with greater severity forbiddeth than such as the fore-mentioned. *Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? (saith S. James). Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom; but if ye have bitter envyings and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth, (that is, do not boast of your Christian wisdom, nor play the hypocrites in pretending to be spiritual) this wisdom descendeth not from above (is not zeal kindled from heaven) but is earthly, sensual, devilish: for where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisie: and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace, James iii. 13.* to the end.

And S. Paul tells the *Galatians*, chap. iv. 22, 23. That the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. And he reckoneth among the works of the flesh, *verse 19, 20, 21.* not only adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, heresies, murders, drunkenness, revelling: but also, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings: and saith, that they which do such things (such as these as well as the former) shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And adds, *verse 24.* That they which are *Christ's*, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts, that is, the foregoing, and all other.

And it appeareth from what hath been said of the *Design of Christianity*, that the gratification of any of these affections is so far from becoming lawful, or more warrantable, by being yielded to for the sake thereof, that it is rendred the more wretchedly foolish and unaccountable by this means. For thus to do, is to be *irreligious* to promote religion; to be *un-christian* to do service to *Christianity*; and therefore to go the directest way to *destroy it*, by the means we use for its *preservation*. And

we do our particular opinions and forms of religion more mischief, in alienating the minds of others from them, by such wild expressions of zeal, than their adversaries will be able to do, by all their attempts against them. And lastly, thus to do is to oppose the interest of our religion to that of our souls, and to cast *these* away in the defence of *that*: as appears from our discourse in the second Section. But what madness is like to this?

C H A P. XXV.

The Ninth Inference.

That it is a most unwarrantable Thing for the Ministers of Christ to prefer any other Design before that of making Men really righteous and holy. That this ought to be the whole Design of their preaching. That it is of as great Concernment that they promote the same Business by their Conversations, as that they do it by their Doctrine. Infinite Mischiefs occasioned by the loose Lives of Ministers. Several Instances of Practices extremely blame-worthy in Preachers of the Gospel. That they ought to have a Regard to the Weaknesses of Persons so far as lawfully they may. That the Promoting of Holiness ought to be the only Design of ecclesiastical Discipline.

 NINTHLY, seeing our Saviour's grand design was to make men really righteous and holy, it must needs be a most unwarrantable thing for those that are his ministers to prefer any other before this; for those that are intrusted with the care of souls to concern themselves about any thing so much as this.

It is plainly their duty to subordinate every thing they do, by virtue of their sacred function, hereunto; and to imitate their great Master, all they can, in the discharge of it; to promote holiness, as much as lyeth in them, both by their doctrine and conversations: with all perspicuity and plainness to instruct their people in the indisputable doctrines of Christianity above any other; and to have a special care to shew them the aptness that is in them, to the furtherance of holiness of heart and life: and most to inculcate those upon them which have the greatest and most manifest and immediate tendency thereunto: to inform them of their whole duty relating to God, their neighbour and themselves impartially; to press them to the performance of them with the greatest affection and fervency; and to back on their exhortations with the most prevalent and enforcing motives; the most rational and convincing arguments; courageously, but with a discovery of tenderest compassion to sinners, to reprove all sins without exception; and faithfully to shew the danger of living in any one whatsoever. And to do thus, not only in publick, but, as there is occasion, in private also, and readily to embrace all opportunities for that purpose.

Thus (as hath been shewn) did our blessed Saviour spend his time,
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and that it is the duty of his ministers to come as near as they can, in their practice, to him, is out of question: and thus also did his immediate successors, the apostles, employ themselves; as might be largely made to appear. They preach'd the word, were *instant both in season and out of season, they reprov'd, rebuked and exhort'd with all long-suffering and doctrine*; according as S. Paul charged Timothy to do, in the most solemn and severe manner: even *before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom*. And that charge, by parity of reason, must concern the whole Clergy as well as that Bishop.

And as Christ and his apostles taught men by their *lives*, as well as *doctrine*, and encouraged them to the performance of whatsoever duties they injoyned them, by their own example; so it cannot but be of infinite concernment that all that have the conduct of souls committed to them should do the like. S. Paul exhorted Timothy first *to take heed to himself*, and then *to the doctrine* (e); and the former advice was of no whit less necessity and importance than was the latter. For (as woeful experience assureth us) a minister of a careless and loose life, let his parts and ability in preaching be never so great, nay, though he should behave himself never so faithfully in the pulpit, and be zealous against the very vices he himself is guilty of (which would be very strange if he should) must needs do more *hurt* incomparably, than he can do *good*. And tho' (as some of them will tell them) it is the peoples duty to do as they *say*, and not as they *do*; yet is there nothing more impossible than to teach them effectually that lesson. Mankind (as we had before occasion to shew) is mightily addicted to imitation, and *examples* (especially those of governours and teachers) have a greater force upon people ordinarily than have *instructions*; but chiefly *bad examples* (in regard of their natural proneness to vice) than *good instructions*. Had not the apostles expressed as great a care of what they *did*, as of what they *said*, how they *lived* as how they *preached*, Christianity would (without doubt) have been so far from prevailing and getting ground as it hath done; that it could not have long survived its blessed Author, if it had not bid *adieu* to the world with him. Most men, do what we can, will judge of our sermons by our conversations, and if they see *these* bad, they will not think *those* good; nor the doctrines contained in them practicable, seeing they have no better effect upon those that preach them. And besides no man will be thought to be serious and in good earnest in pressing those duties upon others, which he makes no conscience of performing himself.

Nay, every man's judgment in divine things may warrantably be suspected, that is, of a wicked and vicious life. And those that are conscious to themselves that they are not able to pass a judgment upon doctrines, may not be blamed if they question their minister's orthodoxy, while they observe in him any kind of immorality, and see that he lives to the satisfaction of any one lust. For, the promise of *knowing the truth* is made only to such as *continue in Christ's words*, that is, that are obedient to his precepts.

And I add, that such a one's talk of heaven and hell are like to pre-
vail

vail very little upon his auditors, or to be at all heeded by the greatest part of them, while they consider that the preacher hath a soul to save as well as they. And therefore the love that they bear to their lusts, with the devil's help, will easily persuade them, that either these things are but mere fictions, or else that the one may be obtained, and the other escaped, upon far easier terms than he talks of. But as for those few in whom the fence of true virtue and piety have made so deep an impression, as that they have never the slightest opinion of the necessity thereof, in regard of their minister's wicked example; the prejudice that they cannot but conceive against him, renders his discourses insipid and unaffecting to them, and so they ordinarily take all opportunities to turn their backs upon him, and at length quite forsake him. And then, if they are not as *understanding as well-meaning* people, are too easily drawn away from all other churches, when they have left their own, and become a prey to some demure and fairly pretending sectary. And I am very certain from my own observation, that no one thing hath so conducted to the prejudice of *our* church, and done the separating parties so much service as the scandalous lives of some that exercise the ministerial function in her. The late excellent Bishop of *Down and Connor* hath this memorable passage in a sermon he preached to the university at *Dublin*: *If ye become burning and shining lights, if ye do not detain the truth in unrighteousness, if ye walk in light and live in the spirit, your doctrine will be true, and that truth will prevail: but if you live wickedly and scandalously, every little schismatick will put you to shame, and draw disciples after him, and abuse your flocks, and feed them with colocynths and hemlock, and place heresie in the chair appointed for your religion.* But to hasten to the dispatch of this unpleasant topic: wicked ministers are of all other ill-livers the most scandalous, for they lay the greatest stumbling block, of any whatsoever, before men's souls; and what our Saviour said of the Scribes and Pharisees, may in an especial manner be applied to them, *viz.* that they will neither enter into heaven themselves, nor yet suffer them that are entering to go in: so far are they from saving themselves and those that hear them. But I would to God, such would well lay to heart those sad words of our Saviour, *Luke xvii. 1, 2.* *It is impossible but that offences will come; but woe unto him through whom they come: it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, &c.* And those words are not more effectual to scare them, than are these following of a Heathen, *viz.* *Tully*, concerning vicious philosophers to shame them, into a better life: saith he in his *Tusculan questions*, the second book, *Quotusquisque philosophorum invenitur, qui sit ita moratus, &c.* *What one of many philosophers is there, who so behaves himself, and is of such a mind and life, as reason requireth; which accounteth his doctrine not a boast of science but a law of life; which obeyeth himself, and is governed by his own precepts? We may see some so light and vain, that it would have been better for them to be wholly ignorant, and never to have learned any thing: others so covetous of money, thirsty of praise and honour, and many such slaves to their lusts, ut cum eorum vitâ mirabiliter pugnet oratio, That their lives do marvellously contradict their doctrine. Quod quidem mihi videtur esse turpissimum, &c.* *Which to me seems the most filthy and abominable thing.* For as he which professing himself a grammarian speaks barbarously, and who being desirous to be

accounted a musician sings scurvily, is so much the more shame-worthy for his being defective in that the knowledge and skill of which he arrogates to himself; so a philosopher in ratione peccans, miscarrying in his manners, is in this respect the baser and more wretched creature, that in the office of which he will needs be a master, he doth amiss; artemq; vitæ professus delinquit in vitâ, and professing the art of well-living, or of teaching others to live well, is faulty and miscarryeth in his own life. Could this excellent Heathen thus inveigh against wicked philosophers, what satyr can be tart and severe enough for ungodly ministers of the glorious and most holy Gospel of the blessed Jesus? I will add one more saying of our Saviour's which he spake to his disciples, whom he was training up for the ministry, *Matt. v. 13. Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt hath lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

Well, I say that the design of our Saviour and his Gospel being to make men holy, those behave themselves infinitely disbecoming his ministers and the preachers of the Gospel, that live unholily; and so do all such also (as was at first intimated) as do not above all things endeavour the promoting and furtherance of that design. And of that number are those that are ever affecting to make people stare at their high-flown and bombast language, or to please their phancies with foolish jingles and pedantick and boyish wit, or to be admired for their ability in dividing a hair, their *metaphysical* acuteness and scholastick subtilty; or for their doughty dexterity in controversial squabble. And among such may those also, and those chiefly, be reckoned, that seek to approve themselves to their auditors to be men of mysteries, and endeavour to make the plain and easie doctrines of the Gospel as intricate and obscure as ever they are able; these are so far from endeavouring above all things to advance the *Design of the Gospel*, that it hath not any greater enemies in the whole world than they are. And to them I may add such as preach up free-grace and Christian privileges otherwise than as motives to excite to obedience, and never scarcely insist upon any *duties* except those of believing, laying hold on Christ's righteousness, applying the promises (which are really the same with *them*) and renouncing our own righteousness, which those that have none at all to renounce have a mighty kindness for. All which rightly understood, may, I grant, and ought to be preached; but to make the Christians duty to consist either wholly or mostly in those particulars, and especially as they are explained by not a few, is the way, effectually to harden hypocrites, and encrease their number, but to make no sincere converts.

Those again do nothing less than chiefly promote *the business of holiness*, that are never in their element, but when they are talking of the irrespectiveness of God's decrees, the absoluteness of his promises, the utter disability and perfect impotence of natural men to do any thing towards their own conversion, &c. and insist with great emphasis and vehemence upon such like false and dangerous opinions. And those may well accompany and be joyned with the foregoing, that are of such *narrow*, and therefore *unchristian* spirits, as to make it their great business to advance the petty interest of any party whatsoever, and concern themselves more about doing this, than about promoting and carrying on that wherein

consists the chief good of all mankind ; and are more zealous to make profelytes to their particular sects than converts to a holy life ; and press more exact and rigid conformity to their modes, than to the laws of God, and the essential duties of the Christian religion.

Such as all the forementioned have, doubtless, little cause to expect a *well done good and faithful servant*, from the mouth of their Saviour at the last day ; their practice being so very contrary to that of his (whose ministers they profess themselves to be) when he was in the world ; and they making Christianity so perfectly different a thing from what he made it.

And furthermore, it is unquestionably the duty of all the stewards of the mysteries of God to take special heed that they do not by over-severe insisting on any little matters, and unnecessary things, give their people a temptation to conclude that they lay the greatest weight upon them ; but so to behave themselves towards them, as to give them assurance that there is no interest so dear to them as is that of the salvation of their souls. And lastly, to be so self denying as to have a regard to the weaknesses of persons, so far as lawfully, and without disobeying authority they may, to prevent their departure from communion with the church they belong to ; and to use all fair and prudent ways to persuade those back again thereunto, which there is any the least reason to hope are not irrecoverably gone away. It being very much the interest of their souls not to continue in separation : and not of *theirs* only but of *others* too, in that strifes and contentions, envyings and animosities are like to be kept alive, and greatly to increase, while men keep at a distance from one another ; and where these are (as it was said S. *James* hath told us) there must needs be *confusion and every evil work*.

And this is no other than what the great S. *Paul* thought it no disparagement to him to be exemplary to us in. For, saith he, *1 Cor. ix. 19, &c. Though I be free from all men, yet have I made my self a servant to all, that I might gain the more : and unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews ; to them that are under the law as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law ; to them that are without law (or observe not the law of Moses,) as without law, that I might gain them that are without law : to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak ; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* The sum of which words amounts to this, That he denied himself in the use of his liberty to gain those who were not acquainted with the extent of it, and dealt with all sorts of men in that way which he thought most probable to convert them to Christianity, and keep them in the profession of it. Not that he sneaked and dissembled, and made weak people think he was of their mind, and so confirmed them in their mistakes and follies ; or had any regard to the humours of unreasonable merely captious people that will be finding faults upon no ground at all : this must needs be unworthy of an Apostle ; for it is so of all inferiour ministers, and of every private Christian too.

And our past discourse assures us also, that the promoting of holiness in men's hearts and lives ought to be the only design of ecclesiastical discipline and church censures : and 'tis easie to shew, that if the laws of all Christian churches were framed and the execution of them directed

only or above any other, to the service of this design; or that no interest did sway so much with their chief governours, as that which was (and still is) most dear to the great Founder and King of the church whom they represent; and if they were willing to lose in their little and petty concerns, that they might gain in this grand one, we should quickly see Christendom in most lovely and blessed circumstances. All people that have any thing of sincerity, would quickly unite and agree together, and as for factious hypocrites, they would be with ease suppressed, and put out of all capacity of doing mischief. This, I say, might be easily shewn, and plainly demonstrated; but it needs not, there being nothing in the world more undeniably evident.



C H A P. XXVI.

The tenth Inference.

That an obedient Temper of Mind is an excellent and necessary Qualification to prepare Men for a firm Belief and right Understanding of the Gospel. That it is so by Virtue of Christ's Promise. That it is so in its own Nature. This shewed in three Particulars, viz. in that, 1. It will help us to judge without Prejudice concerning the Doctrines contained in the Gospel. 2. It will give Satisfaction concerning the main Doctrines of Christianity far exceeding any that can arise from mere Speculation. 3. It will secure from the Causes of Error in those Points that are of weightiest Importance. Six Causes of such Errors laid down; and an obedient Disposition of Mind shewed to secure from each of them.

ENTHLY, *We learn what is the best temper and disposition of mind to bring to the study of Christ's Gospel, in order to our firm belief and right understanding of it. Seeing its design is to make men entirely obedient, and truly holy, it is evident that a desire so to be is the most excellent and necessary qualification for that purpose. Our Saviour saith, John vii. 17. Δεῖν οὐκ εἶναι if any man will do his will (or is willing to do it) he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self; that is, in the first place, he shall be thoroughly satisfied concerning the truth of the Gospel, shall be abundantly convinced that the Christian religion is no imposture, that the author of it came from heaven, as he declared he did, and was sent by God to reveal his will. Such a one, when it comes to be sufficiently proposed to him, shall heartily embrace the Gospel as containing the true, the only true religion. And therefore observe what he saith, John viii. 47. He that is of God, heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God: That is, as if he should say, He that is of an obedient temper, and ambitious of doing the will of God, shall receive the doctrine which in his name I preach to him; and the reason why you Jews, for your parts, refuse so to do, is, because you are insincere and hypocritical.*

It is said, *Acts* xiii. 48. That as many of the Gentiles as were *τεταγμένοι*, (which is doubtless in this place to be rendred) *disposed*, or *in a ready preparedness for eternal life, believed*; that is, those which were *proselytes of the gate*, who were admitted by the *Jews* to the hope of eternal life, and to have their portion in the age to come, without submitting to their whole law, or any more than owning the God of *Israel*, and observing the *seven precepts of Noah* (as master *Mede* hath learnedly shewn,) these being desirous to live godlily, and not prejudiced against the Christian religion as the *Jews* generally were, did then at *Antioch* receive the Gospel upon its first being made known to them. And of this sort was *Cornelius*, whose conversion to Christianity we read of before in the tenth chapter.

Secondly, and consequently, this sence is also implied in the first cited words of our Saviour, *viz.* That, as he which is willing to do God's will, shall know that Christ's doctrine came from him, so he shall rightly understand that doctrine too. For it would be to no purpose for him to believe the Gospel to be true, if his faith be not accompanied with an ability to pass a right judgment on the sence of it. And therefore he must needs be able to distinguish between the doctrine of Christ, and that which is falsely imposed at any time upon the world, as his, and fathered upon him by ungodly hereticks; as well as satisfied that what he delivered in the general is the will of God. *S. John* to this same purpose expresseth himself, *1 Epistle* iv. 6. *He that knoweth God* (that is, practically, or is obedient) *heareth us*; *he that is not of God* (or is not willing to obey him) *heareth not us*; *hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error*: that is, by this obedient temper we are capable of distinguishing betwixt these two spirits. And, I say, from the *design of the Gospel*, that being to make men *holy*, it may be presumed, that whosoever considereth it with a desire of being so, must needs both believe it to have come from God, and also be enlightned in the true knowledge of, at least, all the necessary points of it; and be enabled to give a particular, explicate and understanding assent to them: so that it shall not lie in the power of any subtile seducer to rob him of his faith, or to infect him with any principles that are directly destructive to it, or are so plainly in their consequences so, as that he shall see it, and make that ill use of them as to be perswaded by them to let go his hold of any fundamental article of the Christian religion.

For our Saviour having so concerned himself for the destroying of sin in us, and to make us partakers of his holiness, as to aim at this above all things. in all he did and suffered in the world, and to make it the whole business of his Gospel; we may be certain that those *honest* souls that come to the study of it, with a desire of reaping *this* advantage by it, cannot be left destitute of Christ's grace and blessing to make it successful to them for that purpose; which it is impossible it should be without a thorow-belief of it, and a right understanding of, at least, all its absolutely necessary and essential parts. This we might be assured of from that consideration, though there were no promise extant of that his grace to such well disposed people, as there are divers others besides that which we have produced.

But besides this, a sincere desire of being obedient and holy, must needs

needs of it self very greatly dispose us for the belief and sufficient understanding of the Gospel, and be very necessary in order thereunto also. For,

First, it will help us to judge without prejudice concerning it, and the particular doctrines therein contained. He whose hearty desire it is to please God in doing his will, will be unbiassed in his judgment in enquiries after it. He knows that he cannot make that to be truth by thinking one way or other, which was not *before* so; and that truth will be truth whatsoever he thinks of it: and therefore doth not wish that this or that may be so, and then endeavour to persuade himself that it is so; but will only examine what is so, that he may not entertain an erroneous persuasion. He will bring his mind to the Gospel, and not wrest the Gospel to his mind. But vice and sin, being allowed and predominant in the soul, must needs warp the judgment, and clap a heavy bias on it, that will draw it to favour, as much as may be, their interest in all matters it is concerned in. And therefore a man of wicked and depraved affections, cannot but be exceeding unapt to study a book whose design is such as the Gospel's is. But the obediently-disposed will bring free ingenuous and candid spirits to this work, and therefore are very fitly prepared to do it with good success.

Secondly, this honest and sincere temper of mind will help a man to evidence for his satisfaction concerning the main doctrines of the Gospel, far excelling any that can arise from mere speculation; namely, that of *sence* and *experience*. The man that is indued with it, shall *know of the doctrine, that it is of God*, he shall not only *believe* it according to the strict notion of that phrase. There is an inward sweetness in holy truths that a good soul will relish, and savour, but the vitiated palats of those that are in love with any lust cannot taste it. *How sweet* (said David) *are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth.* Now *naked demonstrations* give but very poor and slight satisfaction in comparison of that knowledge that ariseth from *sence* and *experience*; and this latter alone will remove from us all doubt and uncertainty. Therefore that was so far from being a *weak* and *foolish*, that it was a most *worthy* and *laudable* speech of the honest martyr, *Though I cannot dispute, I can dye for Christ.* No one that hath tasted honey, can at all doubt of its sweetness, though he may want cunning enough to answer the arguments whereby a sophister may attempt to prove it bitter. We say, *Seeing is believing.* And the great evidence that our Saviour proved himself to be the *Messias* by, was that of *sence*. But this was *Thomas* his incredulity, as very strong as it was, immediately overcome. And the *bodily* fences are not more infallible than is the *purified* sence of the *soul*.

Thirdly, The aforesaid temper of mind will secure, from the causes of error, in those points that are of weightiest importance. It is certain that mistakes about these cannot possibly arise from the obscurity of that book, it being as plain as heart can wish in all matters of absolute necessity; as hath been shewn in the *free discourse*. Therefore errors that are of a damnable nature must necessarily proceed from *vicious* causes, such as,

1. Gross ignorance; but 'tis not possible to find this in any soul that is sincerely desirous to obey God.

2. A too high opinion of our parts and reason: by which is often occasioned

sioned a rejection of whatsoever they are not able to comprehend. But the honest soul can have no such conceits of *his* reason; he knows nothing more undoubtedly than that he is a weak and shallow creature. He knows that the most contemptible insect, and common weed, are able to pose and put him to a *non plus*; and that it would therefore be the highest of arrogances in him to believe nothing revealed to him, but what is an adequate object of his understanding. This man will submit his reason to divine revelation, and not divine revelation to his reason. 'Tis true he cannot, though he would never so fain believe that which doth manifestly *contradict* the reason of his mind, and the innate sense of his soul; but therefore it is certain that no such things are to be found in the Gospel, nor can be a matter of divine revelation.

3. Proud affectation of being thought wiser than other folk. This was a great thing which made the first heriticks that the Church of Christ ever knew, as appeareth by the arrogant title they assumed to themselves, and distinguished the sect by, *viz. Gnosticks*. But that temper of mind that makes men unfeignedly desirous of piety and virtue, is inconsistent with all such ambitious and aspiring thoughts.

4. Licentious curiosity and wantonness of spirit. When people are glutted with those wholesom truths which they have for many years been entertained with, and will be hunting after novelties; when they grow weary of their honest teachers, and will be following every upstart that sets himself in opposition to them; it can hardly otherwise be but that they must fall into dangerous errors. The Apostle saith, *2 Tim. iv. 3.* that, *The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts will they heap to themselves Teachers:* (But how comes it to pass that they will do thus? It followeth) *having itching ears*. But the obediently-inclined soul will be careful to keep in that good way, which by experience he hath found to be so, and to avoid all by-paths. Nor will he be running after seducers, but shun them all he can, as being conscious of his own weakness, and his aptness without the grace of God to be misled.

5. The love of, and being wedded to any one lust whatsoever, will certainly endanger men's falling into the worst of heresies. When men have some beloved sins or sin, which they are resolved they will not part with, and are as a *right eye (i)* or *right hand* to them, they are easily persuaded to entertain such principles as will allow them to live in them, and to abandon those that will not; and therefore to *wrest the Scriptures* (as those the Apostle speaks of, *2 Pet. iii. 16.*) *to their own destruction*, and put them upon the rack to make them speak such things as may consist with the interest of their corrupt appetites. *Quod volumus, facile credimus*, that which we would have to be true, we easily believe is so; and what we desire should be false, we are with little difficulty persuaded to disbelieve. This, therefore, hath had so fearful an influence on not a few, as to cause them at length to throw away their BIBLES, to deny the immortality of their souls, and disbelieve as much as they can even the being of a deity, because they are sensible that while they continue in their sins, it is infinitely their interest that the holy Scriptures should be false, that there

there should be no other life, and no God. But I need not say, that the honest, obedient person is one that is not devoted to any lust.

6. The just judgement of God upon these and the like accounts, is the last cause I shall mention of men's disbelieving the Gospel, and renouncing any of the essentials of Christianity. *Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, (that is, to acknowledge him in their practice) God gave them up to a reprobate (or an adulterate, corrupted) mind, Rom. i. 28. Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; God shall send them ἐνέργειαν πλάνης, strength of delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, 2 Thess. ii. 10.* The forementioned particulars do of themselves lead to the most dangerous errors, how much more then must they needs do so, when they are backed with the divine vengeance? But if *honestly* and an *obedient* temper of soul will secure from the other causes of error and seduction, it will, in so doing, secure from *this last*.

So that it is manifest that a sincere desire of righteousness and true holiness, will not fail to help men to a thorow-belief, and sufficient understanding of that book which is only designed to indue them with it: and that nothing can occasion the contrary, but a wilful adhering to some one or other immorality; and that this hath a very great aptness so to do. So that it is not the least matter of wonder, to see men of excellent wits, and brave accomplishments, either fall into gross errors, or even into a flat disbelief of the Christian religion. As strange as this may seem to some, it appears from our past discourse, that there is not any real cause of administration in it. For other endowments, of as excellent use as they may be when accompanied with that of an obedient temper, must needs do more hurt than good to the souls that are adorned with them, when separated from it, and occasion those vices that may well make way for heresies. And it is certain that an acute wit, when it hath not a purified sense going along with it, is so far from being a sufficient prerequisite to the right understanding of evangelical truths, that it is as notable an engine as the grand deceiver can desire to make use of, in order to the bringing about his mischievous designs upon the person that is master of it. So that indeed, it is, on the contrary, rather matter of wonder, that any man that hath a naughty *will*, should have a good judgement in evangelical truths, though both his natural and acquired parts should be never so great. And again, we may without the least breach of charity presume, that whosoever, to whom Christianity is sufficiently made known, doth either disbelieve it, or any of the fundamentals of it, his *heart* is much more in fault than his *head*, and that he hath darkened his discerning faculty, and greatly dimmed the eye of his soul, by entertaining some filthy lust that sends up a thick fog and midst of vapours to it. *If any man teach otherwise (saith S. Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 3.) and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine that is according to godliness; he is proud, &c. not he is weak and cannot, but he is wicked and will not understand the truth.* And, by the way, this discourse may conduce to the no small encouragement of the weaker sort: let such be but heartily solicitous about doing God's will, and having the design of the Gospel effected in them, and they need not fear that their weakness will betray them into the wrong way to blessedness.

C H A P. XXVII.

The last Inference.

That we are taught by the Design of Christianity, wherein the Essence, Power and Life of it consisteth. Instances of what Kind of Things it doth not consist in. For what Ends the several Exercises of Piety and Devotion are enjoined. How God is glorified by men, and by what means. Whom it is our duty to esteem, and carry our selves towards, as true Christians. That by following the Example of Christ, and making his Life our Pattern, we shall assure our selves that the Design of Christianity is effected in us, and that we are indued with the Power thereof.

✠✠✠✠ASTLY, We learn from the doctrine of the *Design of Christianity*, wherein the *Essence, Power and Life of it consisteth*, viz. In a good state and habit of mind, in a holy frame and temper of soul; whereby it esteemeth God as the chiefest good, preferreth him and his Son *Jesus* before all the world, and prizeth above all things an interest in the divine perfections; such as *justice and righteousness, universal charity, goodness mercy and patience, and all kinds of purity*. From whence doth naturally proceed a hearty compliance with all the holy precepts of the Gospel; and sincere endeavours to perform all those actions which are agreeable to them, are necessary expressions of those and the like virtues, and means for the obtaining and encrease of them and to avoid the contrary.

The kingdom of God (or Christianity) is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; as *S. Paul* tells us, *Rom. xiv. 17*. That is, it doth not consist in any merely external matters, or bodily exercises, which (elsewhere he saith) *do profit but little (k)*. And, not in such as he there meaneth, viz. things of an indifferent nature, and neither good nor evil; so neither in such as are very good and laudable for the matter of them. It is only their flowing from an inward principle of holiness, that denominateth any whatsoever *Christian* actions. But such as are only occasioned by certain external inducements and motives, and proceed not from any good temper and disposition of mind, be they never so commendable in themselves, speak not him that performeth them a true and sincere Christian. *He is not a Jew*, saith the same Apostle, *that is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision that is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, that is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God, Rom. ii. 28, 29*. That is, he only is a true child of *Abraham*, who in the purity of the heart obeyeth those substantial laws which are imposed by God upon him. And if no one that doth not thus, might properly be called a *Jew* or child of *Abraham*, much less can the name of a *Christian* and a *Disciple of the holy Jesus* be due to him. He (it is evident) is only so, in whom the *Design of Christianity* is in some measure accomplished. And it appears from what hath been said, that its design is pri-

marily

marily and immediately upon the *nature*; which, being rectified and renewed, will certainly discover it self so to be throughout the *whole life*. *For a good tree will not bring forth corrupt fruit, nor a corrupt tree good fruit (1)*, as our Saviour hath said. Were it possible (as it is not) that we should forbear all outward acts of sin, and yet our *souls* cleave to it, we could not but be destitute of the life and power of Christianity. And should we abound never so much in the exercise of good duties, if our design in so doing be to gratify any lust, and serve some carnal interest, they will be so far from *Christian* actions, that they may be most truly and properly called *sins*. There is no one duty more affectionately recommended in the Gospel than is alms giving; but to give alms to be seen and praised by men, is no better than base hypocrisie (as Christ hath told us) so far is it from an expression of *Christian* charity. And whatsoever *materially* virtuous actions proceed not from the principle of love to virtue, though I cannot say that all such are hateful to God, yet they want that degree of perfection that is requisite to make them *truly Christian*. And it is a plain case, that he is not the Christian, that is much employed in the duties, hearing God's word, reading the bible and other good books, &c. but he that discovereth a good mind in them, in whom the end of them is effected, and who is the better for them. This is the business for the sake of which *prayer* is enjoined. We are therein to acknowledge God's infinite perfections, and our obligations to him, that we may express our hearty sense of them, and in order to our being the more affected with *those*, and our having the more grateful resentments of *these*. We are in that duty to address our selves to the divine Majesty, in the name of Christ, for what we want; that we may by this means both express and increase our dependance on him, and trust in him for the obtaining thereof. And to confess and bewail our sins, to exercise godly sorrow and contrition of soul; and that by so doing we may be so much the more deeply humbled for them and have the greater averfeness in our wills against them. The communion which we are to enjoy with God in prayer, is such as consisteth in being enamoured with the excellencies that are in him, and in receiving communications of his nature and spirit from him.

Therefore also are we commanded to hear and read God's word, that we may come thereby to understand, and be put in mind of the several duties he requires of us, and be powerfully moved to the doing of them.

And the like may be said concerning all the other exercises of piety and devotion, the end of them is more and more to dispose our hearts to the love, and our wills to the obedience of our blessed Creator and Redeemer. And busying our selves in any of them without this design, may well be counted in the number of the fruitless and unaccountable actions of our lives. Thus to do is prodigally to waste and mispend our time; as the Jews were upbraided by one of their adversaries, with doing, upon the account of their *Sabbath*, saying, *That they lost one day in seven*. And those that are most constant in their addresses to the Majesty of heaven, both in the publick and private worship of him, if they go into his presence with the entertainment and allowance of any sinful affection, they have never the more of the divine approbation upon that account. *If I regard saith David, Iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*. God esteemeth no better

better of such as do so, than as hypocritical fawners upon him, and falsehearted complimenters of him; and hath declared that their sacrifices are an *abomination* to him. The generality of the Jews were such a people: God by his prophet *Isaiah* speaks thus concerning them. *They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God. They ask of me the ordinances of Justice, they take delight in approaching to God. They were a people that loved to fast and pray, and afflict their souls, and to make their voice to be heard on high: but giving liberty to themselves in plain immoralities, God declared that all this was even hateful to him: as may be seen in the fifty eighth of Isaiah.* And he there likewise telleth them, that the *fast which he took pleasure in, consisteth in loosing the bands of wickedness, in undoing the heavy burdens; and letting the oppressed go free; in breaking every yoke; in dealing their bread to the hungry; and bringing the poor that are cast out, to their houses; in covering the naked; and the exercise of strict justice, mercy and kindness.* And in the first chapter, he asks them, *To what purpose the multitude of their sacrifices were* (though they were no other than he himself by the law of *Moses* required) and charged them to bring no more vain oblations to him; told them that their incense was an *abomination* to him, their new-moons and sabbaths, and calling of assemblies he could not away with, that their solemn assembly was iniquity, that their new-moons and appointed feasts his soul hated, and that he was weary to bear them. And all this because these were the only or main things they recommended themselves to him by; their religion chiefly consisted in them; and they gave themselves leave to be unrighteous, cruel and unmerciful, as may there be seen.

God abhors to see men come cringing and crouching before him, bestowing a great heap of the best words up him, and the worst upon themselves, and with dejected countenances bemoaning themselves, and making lamentable complaints of their wickedness to him, imploring mercy and favour from him, &c. when they resolutely persist in disobedience. So far are such things as these from being able to make amends for any of their sins, that God accounts them no better than additions to their most heinous impieties; as by the sixty sixth of *Isaiah*, it further appeareth: it is said there, *He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dogs neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swines blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol.* And how came this to pass? it follows: *they have have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.* So that if he had such an opinion of the goodliest and most acceptable sacrifices, when offered by disobedient and immoral persons, under the *Law*; it is impossible that he should have one jot a better of the most affectionate devotions of those that take no care to be really and inwardly righteous, under the *Gospel*. And in being so, consists (as was said) the soul and life of Christianity.

Not that a *true Christian* can have undervaluing and slight thoughts of the external worship and service of God; nor that he can contemn or neglect praying to him, singing his praises, hearing or reading his word, &c. Nothing less: for by the serious and diligent performance of these and the like duties, he comes to acquire and encrease that good temper of soul that gives him the denomination of such a one, through the assistance

ance of the divine Grace. He is one, to speak in the words of *Hierocles*, as *σπυδάζει ἃ εὐχεται, καὶ εὐχεται ἃ σπυδάζει*, *joyns endeavours to prayers, and prayers also* (with the other parts of divine worship) *to his other endeavours*.

And besides, the solemn acknowledgments of God, both in publick and private, are expressions of natural justice. *Quid aliud est pietas* (saith *Tully*) *quam justitia adversus deos? What is piety or devotion but justice towards God?* And each of the significations of it, whether natural or positive, they are *payments of a due to him*; so that men cannot be so much as *honest*, and omit the honouring of the divine Majesty by them. But it is certain that these performances do him no honour at all, any otherwise then as they proceed from a good and sincere soul. And to this purpose our often cited philosopher hath this other excellent saying, *viz. The greatest abundance and profusest costliness of oblations bring no honour to God, except they are offered with a divine Mind: for the gifts and sacrifices of fools are but food for the fire**. Sacrifices in ancient times were called the *food* of Almighty God, as being provision made for his house; but (saith the philosopher) when they proceed from fools (or wicked men) they are at best but the *fire's meat*: they signify nothing to God, and are merely thrown away.

And indeed the best intelligible and most significant honour that our devoutest services bring to God, is by their being a means of making us more like to him. And as I shewed, out of the learned master *Smith's* treatise, *how God most glorifieth himself*, so I think it not amiss to transcribe more lines of that worthy person, wherein he excellently sheweth *how we must glorifie God*; and they immediately follow the former. Saith he, pag. 409. *As God's seeking his own glory in respect of us is most properly the flowing forth of his goodness upon us; so our seeking the glory of God is most properly our endeavouring a participation of his goodness, and an earnest uncessant pursuing after divine perfection. When God becomes so great in our eyes, and all created things so little, that we reckon upon nothing as worthy of our aims or ambitions but a serious participation of the divine nature, and the exercise of divine virtues, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, and the like: when the soul beholding the infinite beauty and loveliness of the divinity, and then looking down and beholding all created perfection mantled over with darkness, is ravished into love and admiration of never-setting brightness, and endeavours after the greatest resemblance of God in justice, love, and goodness, when conversing with him ἐν ἡσυχῇ ἐπαφῇ, by a secret feeling of the virtue, sweetness and power of his goodness, we endeavour to assimilate our selves to him: then we may be said to glorifie him indeed. God seeks no glory but his own, and we have none of our own to give him. God in all things seeks himself and his own glory, as finding nothing better than himself; and when we love him above all things, and endeavour to be most like him, we declare plainly that we count nothing better than he is.*

See more to the same purpose, pag. 141, 142, 143. And this same excellent notion the *Pythagoreans* (however they came by it) did also teach. It was one of their sayings, *Thou wilt best glorifie God, by assimilating and making thy mind like to God*†.

And

* Ἡ τῶν προσφερομένων πολυτέλεια τιμὴ εἰς Θεὸν δὲ γίνεται, εἰ μετὰ τῆ ἐνδείας φρονιματος προσάγοιτο. Δῶρα γὰρ καὶ θυηπολίας ἀφρόνων πρὸς τροφή. pag. 25.

† Τιμήσεις τὸν Θεὸν ἄριστα, ἰὰν τῷ Θεῷ τῇ διανοίᾳ ὁμοιώσης.

And I will trouble the reader with one more of our philosopher's sayings, which is no less worthy of his observation than any of the past recited ones, *viz.* *Thou canst not honour God in giving ought to him, but by becoming a meet and worthy person to receive from him*.*

And the great oracle of truth, our blessed Saviour, hath assured us, that, *herein is his Father glorified, that we bear much fruit (k);* that we are fruitful in all holiness. And we learn from St. Paul, *Phil. i. 11.* That they are the *fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ* (or the effects of his grace and Holy Spirit) which redound to the praise and glory of God. And then do we praise him most significantly and effectually, when we are filled (as there he prays the *Philippians* may be) with these fruits: when righteousness takes possession of our souls, grows and encreases in them, and exerts it self in our lives (as it must needs do wheresoever it is) and our whole conversation shine with it.

In short; *circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing,* (neither any opinions, nor performances, nor forbearances, that have no influence upon the soul and spirit, are any thing;) *but the keeping the commandments of God:* this is all in all. In *Christ Jesus* nothing at all availeth but such a faith as works by love (*δι' ἀγάπης εὐεργυμίων*, or is perfected by charity) and a new creature. And if any man be in *Christ*, he is a new creature: and whosoever is a new creature, is in *Christ* or a true Christian. All which St. Paul hath plainly taught us, in *1 Cor. vii. 19. Gal. v. 6. 2 Cor. v. 17.* Those in whom the design of the Gospel hath taken good effect, are indeed *Christians*, and none but such; in the success of that must needs lie the power of Christianity, and in nothing else. And therefore whosoever they are in whom the genuine effects of righteousness and true holiness are conspicuous, we ought to look upon them as living members of that body whereof Christ is the head. Whoever are ready to profess their faith in God and Christ and the Holy Spirit in all Scripture phrases (without perverting their manifest and apparent sense) and lead a life answerable (for ought we can discern) to the clear intimations of our Saviour's will, and all the rules plainly laid down in his holy Gospel, (though it should not be their fortune to concur with us in all our sentiments) it is our duty to judge them to be indued with all the essentials, and integral parts of Christianity, and accordingly to carry our selves towards them: or we shall offer them too great a temptation to suspect, that we our selves are ignorant wherein they consist, and for all our great profession are void of them.

There is one thing more which I cannot forbear to add concerning the weighty and most important point we are now discoursing, and which contains the sum of all that need to be said about it, *viz.* That it is impossible we should not have the *Design of Christianity* accomplished in us, and therefore that we should be destitute of the power thereof, if we make *our Saviour's most excellent life* (a short account of which we have been in this tractate presented with) the pattern of our lives; if we write after that fair copy he hath therein set us, if we tread in his blessed steps, and
be

* Οὐ γὰρ τιμώμενος τὸν Θεὸν διδόντι αὐτῷ, ἀλλ' ἄξις τῷ λαβεῖν τὰ παρ' ἐκείνου γινόμενος. Comment, in Aur. Carm. pag. 22.

(k) John v. 18.

be such, according to our measure and capacity, as we have understood he was in this world. Those that sincerely and industriously endeavour to imitate the holy Jesus in his spirit and actions, can never be ignorant what it is to be truly Christians; nor can they fail to be so. And if the history of his life were more perused and minded, and that he designed to be therein our example (as both he and his apostles have often enough assured us he did) were more seriously considered, it could not possibly be that the design of his Gospel, and that wherein consists the power of godliness and soul of Christianity, should be by so many so miserably mistaken, as we see it is.



The Conclusion.

WHAT remaineth now, but that we sedulously, and with the greatest concern, betake our selves to find that, which hath been proved to be the *design of Christianity*, accomplish'd in our hearts and lives.

That we endeavour above all things, *to walk worthy of the vocation* wherewith we are called; and that *our conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ*: and by that means make it appear to our selves and others, that we are not in the number of those wretched souls, on whom the knowledge of the most incomparable religion is thrown away, and bestowed to very ill, or to no purpose.

That we place the *kingdom of God* not in word, but in power; and our Christianity not in letting our tongues loose, but in bridling both them and our exorbitant affections.

That we make less noise, be less *disputations*, and more *obedient*; That we *talk* and *cavil* less, and *be* and *live* better: as well knowing, that an objecting, quarrelsome and wrangling humour, serves to no better end, than eating out the heart and life of all true religion.

Let us exercise our selves unto real and substantial godliness, and in keeping our consciences void of offence both towards God and towards men; and in studying the Gospel to inable us not to *discourse*, or only to *believe*; but also and above all things to *do well*.

Let us esteem Christianity a principle of such vigour, sprightliness and activity, as to be assured of nothing more, than that it cannot possibly be where it doth not *act*; and that the lives of those that are indued with it cannot but bear witness to the force of it.

Let us do what lyeth in us to convince our *infidels*, that the religion of the blessed Jesus is no trick or device; and our *wanton and loose Christians*, that it is no *notional* business, or *speculative* science, by letting them see what it hath produced in our selves: by shewing them how sober and temperate, how chaste, how severely just, how meek and peaceable, how humble, how patient and submissive to the will of God, how loving and charitable, what contempters of this world, and considers in God, we are enabled to be by the power of it.

Let us declare that we are not mere professors of faith in Christ Jesus, by doing acts worthy of such a faith: that we are not barely relyers on Christ's righteousness, by being imitators of it, *by being righteous as he was righteous*: that we do truly believe the Christian doctrine, by cheerfully complying with the Christian precepts. (1) Hereby let us know that we do *indeed* know him, that we keep his commandments.

By our care thus to do shall our minds (as hath been shewn) be enlightened in all necessary truth*. It was by their care to *do the will of God*, that the primitive Christians obtained the right *knowledge* of it. And there is no such method for the acquiring of all useful knowledge as this is.

By this means shall we also be kept constant in the true profession of the faith. The *obedient* are the only Christians that are out of danger even of a total apostasy; nor can there be any sure hold of any one that is not obedient. He whose great design is to keep the commandments of God, and his Son Jesus, is the only solid, stable and settled man. Our Saviour hath likened him unto a *wise man which built his house upon a rock*, which, notwithstanding that the rain descended, and floods came, and the winds blew, and all beat upon it, fell not, *because it was founded upon a rock (m)*. And on the contrary he hath compared those that *hear, but do not* his sayings, to a *foolish man which built his house upon the sands (n)*; which, when assaulted by a tempest, fell; *and great was the fall of it*. 'Tis no strange thing to see a very highly *professing*, if he be not as conscientiously *living* a Christian, tossed up and down like a wave of the sea, and carried away with every wind of doctrine: but so will not the *obedient* person be. He may ('tis confessed) alter his opinion in the *less weighty* and *more obscurely delivered* points, but those which belong to the main *body* and *substance* of Christianity, and are *plainly* revealed, as all such are, he will inseparably adhere to.

By this means will our knowledge be sanctified and made useful, but without the care of obedience it will be utterly unprofitable, nay, of very hurtful and mischievous consequence. Whatsoever Christian knowledge is not impregnated with answerable goodness, but is unaccompanied with Christian practice, is not only an *insipid* and *jejune*, but also a *flatulent* thing, that in stead of *nourishing* is apt to swell and *puff up* the souls of men; I mean, to make them proud and highly opinionated of their own worth, censorious and contemnors of other people, and of a conceited and pragmatical, a contentious and unpeaceable behaviour. And there is no man but may observe too too many of our great pretenders to Christianity unhappily exemplifying, and demonstrating by their practices, this sad truth.

By this means, shall we convince gainsayers more than by any arguments: but they are never like to be persuaded that our *judgements* are *orthodox*, while they perceive our *conversations* to be *heretical*. Wicked men are a great discredit to any party they side with, and do it mighty disservice.

(1) John ii. 3.

* Ποιῶντες τὸ δόγμα τῷ Θεῷ τὸ δόγμα γινώσκουσιν. Clem. Alexandrin. Stromat. Lib. i. pag. 288.

(m) Matt. vii. 24.

(n) Verse 26.

differvice. I wish we of the Church of *England* did not know this by very woeful experience. And on the other hand, a good life cannot but be of exceeding great force to draw dissenters to the embracing of our religion. We see that mere pretences to great sanctity do strangely make proselytes to several forms, that have nothing besides to set them off. And as for obstinate persons, who are peremptorily resolved that they will by no means be prevailed with to come over to us, they will, however, be greatly disabled from reproaching our religion, when they are convinc'd that it hath excellent effects on the professors of it: or at least, neither their reproaches, nor any attempts whatsoever against it, could then ever have success, or be able to do any thing to its considerable prejudice. Nor would that idle and senseless talk, whereby some hot people endeavour to prove us an *Anti-Christian Church*, be by many, if by any, listened to, could they discern among us more *Christian lives*: could they be once satisfied that we esteem it our principal interest and concernment, to make our selves and others really and *substantially* good. *So is the will of God* (saith S. Peter,) *that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men* (o).

By this means shall we pass cheerfully through this sad world; and in the midst of our thoughts within us, will solid comforts delight our souls. Little do those think what happiness they deprive themselves of, even in *this* life, that place their religion in any thing more than an universal respect to their Saviour's precepts. There is no true Christian that needs to be told, that the more careful he is to *obey God*, the more sweetly he enjoys himself: nor, that a virtuous and holy life doth several ways bring in a constant revenue of peace and pleasure; even such as no earthly thing can afford any that deserves to be nam'd with it. Every good man feels that Christ's yoke is not less *pleasant* than *easy*, nor his burthen more *light* than *delightful*: and that *all his ways* are, upon many accounts, *ways of pleasantness*, and *all his paths peace*. So that, were there no other reward to be hoped for, but what daily attends them, it would be most unquestionably our interest to walk in them, and to forsake all other for them: and there is no one of Christ's disciples that by *experience* understands what his blessed Master's injunctions are, that would be content to be eased, though he might, of them: or that would accept of a *Quietus* from performing the duties required by him, though he should have it offered him, even with the *broad seal* of heaven (which is impossible to be supposed) affixed to it.

But, lastly, by this means shall we obtain, when we depart hence, *the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls*, and arrive at a most happy and glorious immortality. By the pursuance of real and universal righteousness shall we certainly obtain the *crown of righteousness*, which our righteous Redeemer hath purchased for us, and *God the Righteous Judge* (p) will give unto us. An *exceeding and eternal weight of glory* we shall assuredly reap, if we faint not, and be not weary of well-doing.

Glory, honour and peace (q) are the undoubted portion of every soul that worketh good. And *blessed are they that do his commandments, for they have right to the tree of life, and shall enter through the gates into the city* (r).

But.

(a) 1 Pet. ii. 15.

(p) 2 Tim. 4.

(q) Rom. ii. 10.

(r) Rev. xxii. 14.

But if on the contrary, we foolishly satisfy our selves with an *ineffectual* faith in Christ, a *notional* knowledge and *empty* profession of his religion, or a merely *external* and *partial* righteousness; these will be so far from intitling us to the *exceeding great and precious promises* of the Gospel, that they (at least the three former) will much heighten our misery in the world to come, and excessively aggravate our condemnation.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : fear God, and keep his commandments (from a principle of love to him and them) for this is the whole of (the Christian) Man.



A P P E N D I X.

L *I*PENIUS in his *Bibliotheca realis Theologica*; *Cave* in his *Historia Literaria*; *Du Pin* in his *Nouvelle Bibliotheque*; *Bray* in his *Bibliotheca Parochialis*; *Calmet* in his *Bibliotheca Sacra*; *Fabricius*, *De Bure*, *Walchius*, and a great many others, have published accounts of the principal writers on Theological Subjects; I have no intention to emulate the labours of these learned Men; but as some of the Clergy have ability to purchase, and many of them inclination to use a Theological Library, I thought it might be of advantage to the younger part of them, if I put down a few of the most approved Books in Divinity, which have come to my knowledge. My chief difficulty in forming this Catalogue, has been to make it a short one; for the number of books explanatory of Scripture, which any person, who has a taste for this kind of learning, would wish to be possessed of, not so much for the sake of perusing, as of consulting them, is very great. Our English writers alone on Scripture Subjects, are exceeding numerous; the reader who wishes to see what the number was, above a century ago, may consult a book published at London, 1668, 2d Ed. intitled,—The Catalogue of our English Writers on the old and new Testament, either in whole or in part, whether Commentators, Elucidators, Annotators, Expositors at large or in single Sermons.—It might have been expected that I should have given a more scientific form to this Catalogue, and if I had been making a complete *Bibliotheca Sacra*, I would have done it; but in the few books which are here enumerated, I thought it as useful to arrange them according to their size, as to their subject.

I am sensible that I have omitted in this Catalogue the mention of many books, which other men would have introduced into it; but so I should have done, though I had made it twice as long as it is; and yet it is so copious, that, I believe, there are few subjects in divinity, on which the Student may not find sufficient Information, by consulting some or other of the Authors here enumerated. It is probable too, that some may find fault with me for having introduced books which they would have omitted; I mean those books, especially, which maintain Doctrines opposite to the Articles of the Church of England. But I intreat them to consider, whether we were not Members of the *Church of Christ*, before we were Members of the *Church of England*; and again and again to reflect, whether we can promote the interests of the Church of Christ, by stifling the Arguments of those who think, that as the Church of *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, *Antioch* and *Rome* have erred, so also the Church of *England* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies,

but also in matters of faith. If in this point they think amiss, their arguments will be overthrown and produce no effect; but if they think rightly, God grant that they may produce their proper effect — the prevalence of Gospel Truth,—And whether they think rightly or amiss, can never be so clearly known, as by encouraging them, on the most liberal principles, to publish to the world the result of their critical inquiries into the meaning of Scripture Language.



A

CATALOGUE OF BOOKS IN DIVINITY.

F O L I O S.

VETUS Testamentum Hebraicum cum variis Lectionibus. Edit Benj. Kennicot S.T.P. Oxonii, 1776-80, 2 vol.—The Author of this Work certainly possessed the φιλοπονίαν of the distinguished writers of the last century: the great utility of this Collation of Hebrew MSS. will best be known, when the present English Translation of the old Testament shall be amended by Authority; an event which many good men anxiously expect.

Biblia Hebraica cum Notis criticis et Versione Latina ad Notas criticas facta; accedunt Libri Græci qui Deutero-Canonici vocantur in tres Classes distributi. Auctore Car. Fran. Houbigant, Lutetiæ Parisiorum, 1753. 4 vol.—The opinion of the *Integrity* of the common printed Hebrew Text is shewn, in this Edition of the Bible, to be erroneous; Houbigant having, in this point, anticipated, in some measure, the labours of Kennicot. The Latin Version, from its conformity to the Idiom of the Hebrew Language, is esteemed inelegant; but it may not on that account be less useful.

The Hebrew Concordance adapted to the English Bible, disposed after the Manner of Buxtorf, by John Taylor of Norwich, Lond. 1754, 2 vol.—The first Concordances of the Holy Scriptures were composed in the 13th Century, and were of the Latin Vulgate. Concordances gave rise to Lexicons and Dictionaries; and the learned Author of this Concordance recommends it, as not merely serving to find places of Scripture, but as the best Hebrew Lexicon which is extant. Other Hebrew Concordances are, That by Marius de Calasio, Rome, 1621, 4 vol. A new edition of which was published by W. Romaine, Lond. 1747.—That by W. Robertson, intitled, *Thesaurus Linguae Sanctæ sive Concordantiale Lexicon Hebræo-Latinum-Biblicum*, Lond. 1680.—And that by Buxtorf, which Taylor made the Ground-work of his own, and of which bishop Barlow says, though it be less, yet whether it be not better than Calasio's, *Docti judicent*.

Vetus Testamentum Græcum ex versione LXX Interpretum, ex Antiquissimo

quiffimo MS. *Alexandrino*, et Ope aliorum Exemplarium, ac prifcorum Scriptorum, præfertim vero Hexaplaris Editionis Origenianæ emendatum atque fuppletum; fuma cura edidit Joan. Erneftus Grabe S.T.P. Oxonii, 1707, &c. 2 vol. An improved Edition of this Work was published by *Breiteringer* Tiguri Helvetiorum, 1730, 4 vol. 4to. A Collation of the MSS. of the Septuagint, as recommended by Dr. *Owen*, would certainly be very acceptable to the learned World; and I have no doubt in thinking, that the Syndics of the Univerfity Preſs in Cambridge, would lend a very liberal Affiſtance to any one, who would undertake to publiſh a properly collated Edition of this ancient Verſion.

Daniel ſecundum Septuaginta ex Tetraplis Origenis, nunc primum editus e ſingulari Chiſiano Codice annorum ſupra 800, Romæ, 1772. The portion of the *Chriſtianus Codex*, which is here publiſhed, is diſtinguiſhed in the MS. itſelf by this note, *Daniel ſecundum LXX deſcriptus eſt ab Exemplari ejusmodi Notationem habente* “depromptus eſt Tetraplis cum quibus eſt recognitus.” In all the Editions of the Septuagint, the Book of Daniel is thought to be printed from the Tranſlation of *Theodotion*, or at leaſt not from the *pure* Verſion of the LXX, (ſee Dr. Owen’s learned Inquiry into the preſent State of the Septuagint Verſion), but the *Tetrapla* of Origen contained the real pure Verſion of the LXX; and it is this Verſion of the Book of Daniel which the learned Author has publiſhed, after it had been neglected for above 1500 years. A literal Engliſh Tranſlation of this real Septuagint Verſion of Daniel, accompanied with proper Notes, would be a Work of Credit; and I throw out the hint in hopes that ſome one amongſt ourſelves may have inclination to purſue it.

Abrahami Trommii Concordantiæ Græcæ Verſionis vulgo dictæ Septuaginta Interpretum. Amſtel. 1718, 2 vol. Taylor, in ſpeaking of his Hebrew Concordance, commends this Greek one as a very exact and judicious Work, and points out the manner of uſing it to great advantage in conjunction with his own.

Biblia Sacra Polyglotta completentia Textus Originales Hebraicum cum Pentateucho Samaritano, Chaldaicum, Græcum; verſionumque antiquarum Samaritanæ, Græcæ LXXII Interpretum, Chaldaicæ, Syriacæ, Arabicæ, Æthiopicæ, Perſicæ, Vulg. Lat. quicquid comparari poterat. Edidit Brianus Waltonus S.T.P. Lond. 1657, 6 vol. Other Polyglots of repute are, That publiſhed under the Auſpices of Cardinal Ximenes at Alcala or Complutum in 1514, &c. 6 vol. That by Arias Montanus at Antwerp, 1569, &c. 8 vol. That which goes under the name of *Vetabluſ*, at Heidelberg, 1568, 2 vol. and that by Mich. le Jay at Paris, 1645, 10 vol. of which *De Bure*, in his *Bibliographie Inſtructive*, ſays, that Walton’s was but a re-impreſſion. The truth is, that every ſubſequent Polyglot was an improvement upon the preceding; and Walton’s, as being the laſt, comprehends, together with various Additions, every Thing of Value that is contained in any of the reſt. The *Prolegomena* prefixed to this Polyglot will give much information to the Reader, concerning ſacred Chronology from the Creation of the World to the Deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Romans; concerning the Monies, Weights, and Meaſures of the Hebrews,

Greeks, and Romans; concerning the Geography of the Holy Land; the Description of the City and Temple of Jerusalem; the Origin of Languages; the Versions and Editions of the Bible, &c.

Lexicon Heptaglotton Hebraicum, Chaldaicum, Syriacum, Samaritanum, Æthiopicum, Arabicum, et Persicum, digestum et evulgatum, ab Edvardo Castello, Lond. 1686, 2 vol. — Castell assisted Walton in the publication of his Polyglot; he soon afterwards composed this Lexicon as a necessary Supplement to that Work. He says of himself, *Dies ille tanquam filius et otiosus vijus est, in quo tam Bibliis Polyglottis quam Lexicis hīcē provehendis sexdecim aut octodecim horas dictum non infudavi*: and that for near twenty years together!

Humfredi Hodii de Bibliorum Textibus Originalibus, Versionibus Græcis, et Latina Vulgata, Libri IV. viz. I. Contra Historiam LXX Interpretum Aristæ nomine inscriptam Dissertatio, &c. II. De Versione (quam vocant) LXX Interpretum auctoribus veris, eamque Conficiendi Tempore, Modo, et Ratione. III. Historia Scholastica Textuum Originalium, Versionisque Græcæ LXX dictæ, et Latinæ Vulgatæ, &c. IV. De cæteris Græcis Versionibus, *Origenis Hexaplis*, &c. præmittitur Aristæ Historia Græcè et Latinè. Oxon. 1705.

Novum Testamentum Græcum, cum Lectionibus variantibus MSS. Exemplarium, Versionum, Editionum, SS. Patrum et Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum; et in easdem notis. Accedunt Loca Scripturæ Parallela, aliaque exegetica. Præmittitur Dissertatio de Libris N. T. et Canonis Constitutione, et S. Textus N. Fœderis ad nostra usque Tempora Historia. Studio et Labore Joan. Millii S. T. P. Collectionem Millianam recensuit, meliori ordine disposuit novisque accessionibus locupletavit Ludolphus Kusterus. Roterodami, 1710. The Edition of this Testament, published at Oxford in 1707, is preferable to this for the largeness of the Type; another Edition, with Kuster's Additions, was published at Leipzig, 1723.

Novum Testamentum Græcum Editionis receptæ, cum Lectionibus variantibus Codicum MSS. Editionum aliarum, Versionum, et Patrum, nec-non Commentario pleniori ex Scriptoribus veteribus Hebræis, Græcis et Latinis Historiam et vim Verborum illustrante. Opera et Studio Joan. Jacob. Wettsteinii, Amstel. 1751-2, 2 vol. The Author, in the *Prolegomena* to this Work, treats of the Manuscripts, Versions, and most of the noted Editions of the Greek Testament which were published before his own, which he reckons to have been 19 or 20, beginning with that published at Complutum in 1514. "Sunt autem Editiones principes N. T. (neglectis iis editionibus, quæ priorem aliquam *κατα πωδα* exprimunt) in universum viginti aut novendecim." The *Prolegomena* were published separately in 1730, and again by Semler, Hæle Magdebriæ, 1764; with some Additions and an Appendix concerning the ancient Latin Versions.

Novi Testamenti Jesu Christi Græci, hoc est Originalis Linguae Tameion, aliis Concordantiæ, Opera Eras. Schmidii, Lipsiæ, 1717. This Book was first published at Wittemberg in 1638, and it is looked upon as a great Improvement of the Concordance of Henry Stephens, published in 1595. This Concordance may be of great service in assisting the reader to find out the true meaning of any word, which has been

used more than once by the Writers of the new Testament; for, by a comparison of the senses in which it has been used in different places, he will be able to investigate the sense it bears in the place in question.

Harmonia Evangelica, cui subjecta est Historia Christi ex quatuor Evangeliiis concinnata. Accesserunt tres Dissertationes de annis Christi, de que Concordia et Auctoritate Evangeliorum, auctore Joan. Clerico. Amstel. 1699. and in English in 4to. Lond. 1701.

An Harmony of the Gospels, in which the Original Text is disposed after Le Clerc's general Manner, with such various Readings at the Foot of the Page, as have received Wetstein's Sanction in his folio Edition of the Greek Testament. Observations are subjoined tending to settle the Time and Place of every Transaction, to establish the Series of Facts, and to reconcile seeming Inconsistencies. By W. Newcome, D. D. Bishop of Ossory. Dublin, 1778. Many other Harmonies of the Gospels have been published, but none preferable to this.

Critici Sacri, five doctissimorum Virorum in SS. Biblia Annotationes et Tractatus. Lond. 1660, et Amstel. 1698. *Cornelius Bæ*, the Printer of this great Work, and who had a Patent for the Sale of it, thus intimates its Value to the Reader. "Hic enim circiter libri nonaginta, iique integri, in novem coierunt, et libræ plus minus *quinquagenæ* (nuper vix aut ne vix minoris hæc omnia coemisses) jam ad *quindenas* rediguntur." The present Price of this Work is not above *two or three* pounds. Amongst the 90 Authors whose Annotations on the whole or on different parts of the Bible are here printed intire, we meet with the names of Munster, Fagius, Vatablus, Castalio, Clarius, Drusius, Grotius, Erasmus, Scaliger, Casaubon, Capellus, Scultetus, Pricæus, &c.

Synopsis Criticorum aliorumque S. Scripturæ Interpretum. Opera Mat. Poli. Lond. 1669-74, 5 vol. — This Work is a kind of an Abridgment of the preceding, enriched however with many additions. It certainly may be of great use to those who have not the command of many Books; and it is now sold for five and twenty or thirty shillings. It was reprinted at Utrecht in 1684; and since that time two other Editions of it have been published in Germany: which shews, that, into whatever degree of neglect this Synopsis may have fallen amongst ourselves, it is much esteemed abroad.

Hugonis Grotii Opera omnia Theologica in tres Tomos (usually bound in four Volumes) divisa, ante quidem per partes nunc autem conjunctim et accuratius Edita. Amstel. 1679, 4 vol. Another Edition at Basil, 1732. — Grotius was of the same age with Episcopius, whose Theological Institutes he so greatly admired, that he is said to have always carried them about with him. Calmet affirms, that Grotius' Opinions are very ambiguous as to the Article of Christ's Divinity, and the Doctrine of Original Sin; that his Preface and Explanation of the Canticles are scandalous; that he weakens or reduces almost to nothing the Prophecies relating to Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding this censure, Grotius is deservedly esteemed one of the best general Commentators on Scripture. Vitringa says of him, *Hugo Grotius εν τοις μεν δογμασιν η λιαν ακριβης, sed eruditionis et limati cætera judicii respectu haud*

dubie post Erasinum et totis Belgarum ætibus censendus. And with respect to his *dogmata*, it ought not, surely, to be concluded, that an Interpreter denies a doctrine, because he does not admit the usual exposition of texts weakly adduced in its support. Grotius' notions concerning the Pope's not being Antichrist, and concerning Paul's expectation of living till the General Judgment; are, in the Opinion of many sensible Protestants, far more erroneous than any thing he has said about the Canticles.

Mosis Prophetæ Libri quinque ex Translatione Joannis Clerici, cum ejusdem Paraphrasi perpetua, Commentario Philologico, Dissertationibus criticis Tabulisque Chronologicis et Geographicis. Ed. 2da. auctior et emendatior. Amstel. 1710.

Veteris Testamenti Libri Historici ex Translatione Joan. Clerici, cum ejusdem Commentario Philologico, Dissertationibus Criticis et Tabulis Chronologicis. Amstel. 1708.

Veteris Testamenti Libri Hagiographi ex Translatione Joan. Clerici, cum ejusdem Commentario Philologico in omnes memoratos Libros et Paraphrasi in Jobum ac Psalmos. Amstel. 1731.

Veteris Testamenti Prophetæ ab Esaia ad Malachiam usque ex Translatione J. Clerici, cum ejusdem Commentario Philologico et Paraphrasi in Esaïam, Jeremiam, ejus Lamentationes et Abdiam. Amstel. 1731. Thus we have the Translation of all the Books of the old Testament, and a Paraphrase and Notes on the greatest part of them, by one of the most learned and judicious Critics of this Century. The Dissertations contained in this work are, 1. De Lingua Hebraica. 2. De optimo genere Interpretum S. Scripturæ. 3. De Scriptore Pentateuchi Mose, ejusque in scribendo consilio. 4. De Sodomæ finitimarumque Urbium subversione. 5. De Statua Salina. 6. De Maris Idumæi trajectione. 7. A Translation into Latin of the three first Chapters of Selden's History of Tythes. 8. De Scriptoribus Librorum Historicorum veteris Testamenti. 9. De LXXII virorum in Republica Populi Hebræi Synedrio. 10. De Lepra Mosaica. 11. A Translation into Latin of Smith's Discourse on Prophecy. 12. De Poesi Hebræorum.

Novum Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ex Versione Vulgata, cum Paraphrasi et Adnotationibus Henrici Hammondi ex Anglica Lingua in Latinam transtulit, suisque Animadversionibus illustravit, castigavit, auxit Joan. Clericus. Ed. 2da. Francofort. 1714, 2 vol. All these Works of Le Clerc may be met with uniformly bound under the Title of, Clericus in vetus et novum Testamentum, 6 vol.

A Commentary on all the Books of the old Testament, excepting the Prophets, by Bishop Patrick, in 3 vol. 1679-94, 4th. Ed. Lond. 1732.

A Commentary upon the larger and lesser Prophets, being a Continuation of Bishop Patrick, by W. Lowth, D. D. 3d. Ed. Lond. 1730.

A critical Commentary upon the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, upon Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, Judith, Baruch, the History of Susannah, and Bel and the Dragon; to which are added, two Dissertations on the Books of the Maccabees and Esdras, being a Continuation of Bp. Patrick and Mr. Lowth, by R. Arnald, B. D. Lond. 1744-52. These
five

five Volumes contain the best Commentary on the old Testament and the Apocrypha, which we have in the English Language.

The Theological Works of the learned Dr. Pocock, sometime Professor of the Hebrew and Arabic Tongues in the University of Oxford, and Canon of Christ Church, containing his *Porta Mosis* and English Commentary on Hosea, Joel, Micah, and Malachi. To which is prefixed, an Account of his Life and Writings, never before printed, with the Addition of a new general Index to the Commentary, by Leo. Twells. Lond. 1740, 2 vol.

The Works of the reverend and learned John Lightfoot, D. D. late Master of Catharine Hall in Cambridge and Prebend of Ely. Revised and corrected by George Bright, D. D. Lond. 1684, 2 vol. Another Edition of this Work with a Latin Translation of what Dr. Lightfoot had written in English and some Additions, was published at Rotterdam in 1686.

A Collection of Polemical Discourses, by Jeremy Taylor, D. D. late Lord Bishop of Down and Connor. 3d. Ed. Lond. 1674. The Tract intitled, *The Liberty of Propheying*; in which the Author contends, that none ought to be excluded from Christian Communion who believe the Apostles' Creed, is esteemed the most valuable in the Collection. It was published in 4to. 1647.

Commentarius in Librum Prophetiarum Jesaïæ, quo sensus Orationis ejus sedulo investigatur; in veras visorum interpretandorum Hypotheses inquiritur et ex iisdem facta interpretatio antiquæ Historiæ monumentis confirmatur atque illustratur, cum Prolegomenis, cura et studio Campegii Vitringa. Ed. nova Leovardiæ 1724, 2 vol.

A Paraphrase and Commentary on the new Testament, by Dan. Whitby. 5th. Ed. Lond. 1727, 2 vol.—Whitby says in his Preface, that he found so many things said by Le Clerc, in his *Animadversions* on Hammond, in favour of the Arians, that he protracted the publication of his Work till he had prepared an Antidote for them. It is but Justice to him to observe, that he lived to change his Sentiments upon this subject, as may be seen in a Tract, called *Whitby's last Thoughts*. Henry's Exposition of the old and new Testament, in 6 vol. fol. 1st. Ed. 1706. last in 1772; and Burkit's Exposition of the new Testament, last Ed. in 1779, are works of great merit; but if I was to mention any other Commentator on the whole Bible, it should be *Calmet*, whose work, intitled, *La Sainte Bible en Latin et en François, avec un Commentaire littéral et critique*; which was published at Paris in 9 vol. fol. 1724, and before that in 26 vol. 4to. This is a very excellent Work, containing, besides the Commentary, many learned Dissertations on various Subjects. A Collection of the Dissertations with many Corrections and Additions was published in 1720, in 3 vol. 4to.

Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum quos Unitarios vocant, instructa omnibus Operibus Fausti Socini Senensis, Nobilissimi Itali; Joan. Crellii, Franci; Jonæ Slichtingii a Bucowietz Equitis Poloni, exegeticis; et Joan. Ludovici Wolzogenii Baronis Austriaci, quæ omnia simul juncta totius novi Testamenti explicationem complectuntur. Irenopoli post annum Domini 1656, 8 vol. and with the works of Przicovius

and Brennius, 9 vol. Piget quidem horum Commentarios Christianorum inter adnumerare, multo magis in Bibliothecam Christianam reponere; quos utinam in æternis sepultos tenebris manere concederetur, says Dr. Bray: On the other hand, There is, says Dr. Harwood in his Essay on the Socinian Scheme, "hardly a good Criticism in all our modern Expositors Mr. Locke, Dr. Clarke, Dr. Benson, Dr. Taylor, Messrs. Pearce and Hallet, Dr. Sykes, but what is to be found in the Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum." Dr. Harwood is not singular in this opinion, and if it be a true one, these books may be consulted with advantage, by those who do not adopt the particular Tenets of Socinus and the Unitarians, as well as by those who do. It does not become us as Protestants to proscribe the use of any book, merely because it questions the validity of doctrines which we think true; that is the narrow and illiberal policy of those, who are busied in buttressing up rotten fabrics of hypocrisy and superstition, by *Imprimatus* and expurgatory Indexes. The reader will meet with a list of various authors who opposed the doctrines of Socinus, in Bishop Barlow's Directions for the Choice of Books in the Study of Divinity.

Thesaurus Theologico-Philologicus, five Sylloge Dissertationum elegantiorum ad selectiora et illustriora veteris et novi Testamenti loca a Theologis Protestantibus in Germania separatim diversis temporibus conscriptarum. Amstel. 1701, 2 vol.

Thesaurus Novus Theologico-Philologicus, five Sylloge Dissertationum exegeticarum, ad selectiora atque insigniora veteris et novi Testamenti loca a Theologis Protestantibus maximam partem in Germania diversis temporibus separatim editarum. Lugduni Batavorum. 1732, 2 vol. These four volumes may be easily met with; I have a suspicion that two other volumes have been published since 1732, but I have never seen them. In most of these dissertations which I have read, there is more ostentation of learning than instructive criticism. They are useful however to be consulted.

Dictionaire Historique, Critique, Chronologique, Geographique et Literal de la Bible, par Augustin Calmet. a Paris, 1730, 4 vol. A translation of this truly valuable work, with occasional remarks, was published in 3 vol. in Lond. 1732. At the end of this work there is a *Bibliotheca Sacra*, or an account of the most celebrated writers on the Scriptures. I wish that some Person, who has leisure and ability for the undertaking, would publish this Bibliotheca, with the Addition, under the proper heads, of such books of Merit on Theological Subjects, as have appeared since the year 1730. Our *English Reviews*, the *Journal des Sçavans*, the *Acta Eruditorum*, and other periodical works, would greatly assist him, not only in finding out the books which have been published, but in forming, in most cases, a tolerable judgment of their merit.

A new History of the Holy Bible, from the Beginning of the World to the Establishment of Christianity, with Answers to most of the controverted Questions, Dissertations upon the most remarkable Passages, and a Connection of profane History all along. To which are added, Notes explaining difficult Texts, rectifying Mis-translations, and reconciling seeming Contradictions. The whole illustrated with one hundred

hundred and four useful and ornamental Maps and Sculptures, engraved by the best Hands, from original Paintings, by the Rev. Tho. Stackhouse, A. M. Lond. 1752. The first Edition of this Book was published in 1742. It is still esteemed a very useful work and sold at a good price. The Author published a Body of Divinity and other Works.

An Historical Dictionary of all Religions, from the Creation of the World to the present Time, by J. Broughton, A. M. Lond. 1756, 2 vol. The Germans have thought so well of this Work as to translate it into their own Language.

The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the several Nations of the known World; represented in an hundred Copper-plates, designed by the famous Picart, together with historical Explanations and several curious Dissertations, written originally in French, and now published in English, with very considerable Amendments and Additions, in 6 vol. Lond. 1731. If ever another Edition of this curious Work should be attempted, the Religion of the Inhabitants of the newly discovered Parts of the Globe, will make an important Article in it. Some future *Bochart* or *Bryant* will then add another Argument in Favour of revealed Religion, by tracing the Origin of the Inhabitants of *New Zealand* and *Otaheite* to the common Stock *Noah*.

Thesaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum complectens selectissima Clarissimorum virorum Opuscula, in quibus veterum Hebræorum Mores, Leges, Instituta, Ritus sacri et civiles, illustrantur: Opus ad illustrationem utriusque Testamenti, et ad Philologiam sacram et profanam utilissimum maximeque necessarium, auctore Blasio Ugolino. Venetiis, 1744-69, 34 vol. Many other Books treating of Jewish Antiquities have been published; but those who have a taste for such sort of reading will find this collection far more useful to them, than any other of the kind.

Samuelis Bocharti Opera omnia; hoc est Phaleg, Chanaan, seu Geographia Sacra; et Hierozoicon, sive de Animalibus Sacræ Scripturæ, et Dissertationes variæ. Edit. nova, auctoris cura Joan. Leusden et Petri Villemandz. Lugd. Bat. 1712, 3 vol. *Physica Sacra*, or the Natural History of the Bible, adorned with 750 Plates, was published at Aufburg in Germany in 1731, 4 vol. fol. by T. T. Scheuchzer, and it was translated into French in 1732, 8 vol. fol. This is a magnificent work, in which the author has made much use of Bochart's *Hierozoicon*.

Discours Historiques, Critiques, Theologiques, et Moraux, sur les Evenemens les plus memorables du vieux et du nouveaux Testament, par Mr. Saurin, &c. avec des Figures sur les Dessains de Hoet, Houbraeken, Picart. A la Haye, 1735-9, 6 vol. Mr. Vander Marck formed a design of representing on copper plates, the most memorable events of sacred History, and he engaged Mr. Saurin to write an explanation of the plates; this gave rise to the discourses here published.

De legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus et earum rationibus Libri quatuor, auctore Joan. Spencero S. T. D. Edidit L. Chappelow, Cant. 1727, 2 vol. In this work the learned author contends, that God introduced into

into the Jewish Ceremonial a great many Egyptian Rites, and accommodated them to the Prejudices of the Israelites, who had lived many years in Egypt. This Notion has been opposed and defended by various authors; the reader will find it shortly and ably refuted, in a Treatise by Dr. Woodward, intitled, a Discourse on the Worship of the ancient Egyptians, communicated to the Society of Antiquaries by Dr. Lort in 1775.

Flavii Josephi Opera omnia, Gr. et Lat. cum Notis Hudsoni, Præfatione et Commentariis Havercampi. Amstel. 1716, 2 vol. This work has been translated into English by different Authors, particularly by Whiston in 1737.

Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ Scriptores Græci nempe Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Teodoretus, &c. Gr. et Lat. cum Notis variorum. Cantab. 1720, 3 vol.

SS. Patrum qui temporibus Apostolicis floruerunt Barnabæ, Clementis, Hermæ, Ignatii, Polycarpi opera edita et inedita vera et supposititia, una cum Clementis, Ignatii, Polycarpi Actis atque Martyriis Opera Cotelerii; accesserunt in hac nova editione notæ integræ aliorum virorum doctorum qui in singulos Patres memoratos scripserunt, et quorum nomina in præfatione habentur; item Gulielmi Beveregii Codex Canonum Primitivæ Ecclesiæ vindicatus; Jacobi Usserii Dissertationes Ignatianæ, et Joan. Pearsonii vindiciæ Epistolarum S. Ignatii, recensuit et notulas aliquot adpersit Joan. Clericus. Antwerpæ, 1698, 2 vol. Another Ed. at Amster. 1724. There is a celebrated work, intitled, Bibliotheca maxima veterum Patrum; 27 volumes of which were published at Lyons, 1677; an Index to the work at Genoa in 1707; and an Apparatus to it at Paris, 1715, 2 vol. making in the whole 30 volumes in folio. The Church of Rome maintains many doctrines for which there is no foundation, except in the writings of the Fathers; the Reformed Churches acknowledge the Bible to be the sole rule of their faith; and hence, amongst them, the Fathers are not so highly esteemed as by the Church of Rome; especially since the publication of *Daillé's* Book *De usu Patrum*, and of *Whitby's* and *Middleton's* Sentiments on that Subject. And, indeed, the Members of the Church of Rome itself, when not engaged in dispute with *Hereticks*, speak slightly enough of the Fathers; for one of them, as quoted by Bp. Barlow, tells us, "that if every thing was left out of the Fathers which we now believe not, *bona pars Scriptorum et Patrum periret.*" As Interpreters of Scripture they are far inferior to the Moderns, but they may be useful examples to us in Piety and Zeal. Very good editions of the works of Clement of Alexandria, of Irenæus, Cyprian, Justin, Jerome, Chrysostom, &c. &c. may be frequently purchased at a low price. He who can afford the expence will purchase the best editions of all books; but those who cannot do that, should not neglect the opportunity of furnishing themselves with inferior editions: very useful libraries, in all sciences, may by this kind of attention be easily procured.

Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus ex Patribus Græcis, ordine Alphabetico exhibens quæcunque Phrases, Ritus, Dogmata, Hæreses, et hujusmodi alia spectant,

- spectant, opera J. Casp. Suiceri. Amstel. 1612, 2 vol. Another Ed. at Amsterdam in 1728.
- The Works of the learned Jos. Bingham, A. M. containing the Origines Ecclesiasticæ, or Antiquities of the Christian Church. A Scholastical History of Lay Baptism. The French Churches' Apology for the Church of England. A Discourse concerning the Mercy of God to penitent Sinners. Lond. 1726, 2 vol.
- A new History of Ecclesiastical Writers: containing a Catalogue and an Abridgment of their Works, and a Judgment of their Style and Doctrine; also a compendious History of the Councils and all Affairs transacted in the Church, from the Birth of Christ to the Year 1550, written in French by L. E. du Pin. Lond. 1696-1703, 6 vol. Du Pin was a laborious, and, for a Catholic, a liberal Writer; this work is full of erudition, and may be bought for a trifle.
- Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Historia Literaria a Christo Nato, usque ad Sæculum XIV facili methodo digesta, qua de Vita eorum et rebus gestis, de Secta, Dogmatibus, Elogio, Stylo; de Scriptis Genuinis, Dubiis, Suppositiis, Ineditis, Deperditis, Fragmentis, de variis operum Editionibus agitur. Accedunt Scriptores Gentiles Christianæ Religionis oppugnatores, et cujusvis Sæculi Breviarium. Inferuntur suis locis veterum aliquot Opuscula et Fragmenta tum Græca tum Latina hæctenus inedita. Præmissa denique Prolegomena, quibus plurima ad Antiquitatis Ecclesiasticæ studium spectantia traduntur opus Indicibus necessariis instructum. Auctore Guiljelmo Cave S.T.P. accedit ab alia manu Appendix ab ineunte Sæculo XIV ad annum 1517. Lond. 1688, et pars altera 1698. This work is so well described in the title, that the reader will fully apprehend its use, and of great use I conceive it to be; for it has been wisely said, *Scire ubi aliquid posses invenire magna pars eruditionis est*. It opens with an account of the Letter to *Agbarus*, which Cave supposes our Saviour to have written; and it ends with an account of the Writings of *Martin Luther*. A new edition was published at Geneva, 1720, and another at Oxford, 1740. A kind of Supplement to this and other works of the same kind, was published at Leipzig in 1722, under the following title, *Casimiri Oudini Commentarius de Scriptoribus Ecclesiæ antiquis illorumque Scriptis, tam impressis quam Manuscriptis adhuc extantibus in celebrioribus Europæ Bibliothecis, a Bellarmino Possevano, Philippo Labbeo, Gulielmo Caveo, Ludovico Ellia de Pin, et aliis omiſſis ad annum 1460, vel ad artem Typographicam inventam; cum multis Dissertationibus in quibus insignium Ecclesiæ auctorum Opuscula atque alia Argumenta notabilia accurate et prolixè examinantur, tribus Voluminibus cum Indicibus necessariis*.
- M. Simonis Episcopi SS. Theologiæ in Academia Leydensi quondam Professoris opera Theologica. Ed. 2da. Lond. 1678. Le Clerc has observed, that Hammond in his Annotations on the new Testament borrowed largely from Grotius and Episcopius, and Tillotson has been called a Disciple of the latter. Episcopius acknowledges (Institut. Theol. l. iv. cap. 34.) that Jesus Christ is called in Scripture the Son of God, not merely on the account either of his *miraculous Conception*, or of his *Mediation*, or of his *Resurrection*, or of his *Ascension*, but

on a *fifth* account, which, in his opinion, clearly implies his *Pre-existence*; yet he contends, that it is not *necessary to Salvation*, either to know or believe this fifth mode of Filiation; *because* it is not any where said in Scripture to be necessary to be either known or believed; *because* we may have faith in and pay obedience to Christ without knowing or believing it; *because* for the three first centuries the Christian Church did not esteem a profession of belief in this mode to be necessary to Salvation. Bp. Bull attacked with great learning this third reason of Episcopius; Le Clerc defended him as to a particular point (in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, p. 636.), and has himself been animadverted on, with respect to this point, by Thirlby in his *Notes on Justin's Dialogue with Trypho*; to say nothing of those, on either side, who have been recently engaged in a similar Controversy.

Stephani Curcellæi Opera Theologica, quorum pars præcipua Institutio Religionis Christianæ. Amstel. 1675. Curcellæus was a liberal and acute Divine; we are indebted to him for the edition of the works of Episcopius; his own were published after his death by Limborch.

Philippi a Limborch Theologia Christiana; accedit Relatio Historica de origine et progressu Controversiarum in Fœderato Belgio. Amstel. 1715, and at the Hague in 1736. This is an excellent System of Theology, yet the Author of it ingenuously preferred Mr. Locke's little Tract of the Reasonableness of Christianity, to this and all other Systems. *Systema Theologiæ me scripsisse nosti: non tamen eo in pretio apud me sunt Systemata, ut non hunc exiguum tractatum* (Reasonableness of Christianity) *multis Systematibus præferam; imo plus veræ Theologiæ ex illo quam ex operosis multorum Systematibus hausisse me ingenuè profitear.* Limb. Let. to Locke. After the works of these three foreigners, (to which, but for fear of swelling the Catalogue, I would have added those of Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Zuinglius, &c.) I will mention a few of the most eminent of our English Divines; and he who will take the trouble of comparing their sentiments, with those of the three foreign ones just mentioned, on any intricate point of Divinity, will certainly (whether they agree or disagree in sentiment) be qualified to form a rational judgment on the subject.

The Works of the pious and profoundly learned Joseph Mede. Lond. 1664. and again in 1677. Modern expositors of the prophecies, contained in the Revelation and in the book of Daniel, have very properly availed themselves of the lights held out to them by this great divine: what he has said in this work concerning Gospel Demoniacs being Lunatics, properly excited the attention of the learned to that question, which has been very ably argued, on both sides, since his time.

The Works of W. Chillingworth, M. A. of the University of Oxford, containing his Book, entitled, The Religion of Protestants a safe Way to Salvation; together with his nine Sermons, preached before the King or upon eminent Occasions, his Letter to Mr. Lewgar concerning the Church of Rome's being the Guide of Faith and Judge of Controversies, his nine additional Discourses, and his Answer to some Passages in Rushworth's Dialogues concerning Tradition. Lond. 1704. The 10th. Ed. with his Life by Birch in 1742.

An Exposition of the Creed by Bp. Pearson. 12th. Ed. Lond. 1741.

The

The Works of the learned Isaac Barrow, D. D. (being all his English Works) in three Volumes, published by his Grace Dr. John Tillotson, late Archbishop of Canterbury. Lond. 1741.

The Works of the most reverend D. John Tillotson, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, with the Life of the Author, by Tho. Birch, A. M. 3 vol. Lond. 1752.

The Works of that eminent and most learned Prelate Dr. Ed. Stillingfleet, late Bp. of Worcester, together with his Life and Character, 6 vol. Lond. 1710. When I was a young man, I had formed a mean opinion of the reasoning faculties of Bp. Stillingfleet, from reading Mr. Locke's Letter and two Replies to him; but a better acquaintance with the Bishop's works has convinced me that my opinion was ill-founded; though no match for Mr. Locke in strength and acuteness of argument, yet his *Origines Sacrae*, and other works, shew him to have been not merely a searcher into Ecclesiastical Antiquities, but a sound Divine and a good Reasoner.

Georgii Bulli Opera omnia quibus duo præcipui Catholicæ fidei Articuli de Trinitate et Justificatione orthodoxe, perspicue, ac solide explanantur, illustrantur, confirmantur, nunc demum in unum volumen collecta, ac multo correctius quam ante una cum generalibus indicibus edita. Quibus jam accessit ejusdem Tractatus, hæcenus ineditus, de Primitiva et Apostolica Traditione Dogmatis de Jesu Christi Divinitate, contra Danielem Zuicherum ejusque nuperos in Anglia Sectatores. Subnexa insuper pluribus singulorum librorum Capitibus prolixa quandoque Annotata Joannis Ernesti Grabe, cujus etiam præfatio huic volumini est præmissa. Lond. 1703. This work of Bp. Bull is esteemed by the learned, as one of the main pillars of what is called Orthodoxy: it was translated into English, though I have never seen the translation, by Fran. Holland, A. M.

The Works of John Locke, Esq; 3 vol. Lond. 1759. A later Ed. in 4 vol. 4to. in 1777.

The Works of Sam. Clarke, D. D. late Rector of St. James, with his Life, by Bp. Hoadley. Lond. 1738, 4 vol.

The Works of Benjamin Hoadley, Bp. of Winchester. Lond. 1773, 3 vol. One knows not where to stop in this enumeration of great Divines; Hall, Jackson, Beveridge, Scott, Fleetwood, Blackhall, Fiddes, Leslie, &c. &c. all claim attention, and their works ought to find a place in every complete Theological Library.

A Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion, being a Collection of the Sermons preached at the Lecture founded by the Hon. Robert Boyle (from the year 1691 to the year 1732), with the Additions and Amendments of the several Authors and general Indexes, in 3 vol. Lond. 1739. Many of these Sermons have been published in separate volumes, and there is an Abridgment of the whole. If all other Defences of Religion were lost, there is solid Reasoning enough (if properly weighed) in these three volumes to remove the Scruples of most Unbelievers.

A Preservative against Popery, in several select Discourses upon the principal Heads of Controversy between Protestants and Papists, written and published by the most eminent Divines of the Church of England, chiefly in the Reign of King James the II. Lond. 1738, 2 vol. A third vol.

vol. was published soon after. We are indebted to Bp. Gibson for this Collection, if not for that also of the Sermons at Boyle's Lectures; both these works may be very useful to young divines, in suggesting to them much solid matter for their compositions for the pulpit.

Theses Theologicæ variis temporibus in Academia Sedanensi editæ et ad disputandum propositæ, auctore Ludovico Le Blanc. Lond. 1683. This work may very properly accompany the preceding, as it is written with great learning and candour, upon the principal subjects of Controversy, between the Roman and the Reformed Churches.

Petri Danielis Huetii Demonstratio Evangelica. Ed. 3tia. Paris. 1690. This is a methodical work, replete with erudition. A valuable part of it is that in which the author endeavours to prove, *Mythologiam Ethnicarum omnem ex codicibus Sacris, sacrisque historiis mutatis, dissimulatis, interpolatis, prodidisse*; for, though he may carry his hypothesis too far, of Moses representing, under different names, most of the Gods of the Heathens, yet the deduction of Heathen Mythology from Sacred History, is a strong proof of the truth of the latter.

Ecclesiastical Polity by Rich. Hooker. Lond. 1705.

An Exposition of the 39 Articles, by Bp. Burnet.

A Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer, by W. Nichols, D.D. 2d. Ed. Lond. 1712.

The History of the Reformation of the Church of England, by Gilbert Burnet, 3 vol. Lond. 1679-81. and again in 1715. The author published an Abridgment of this work in one vol. 8vo. in 1682. The work itself was so well esteemed that, after the publication of the first part, both houses of Parliament voted thanks to the author and expressed their wishes that he would continue it.

An Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain, chiefly of England, from the first Planting of Christianity to the End of the Reign of King Charles the Second, with a brief Account of the Affairs of Religion in Ireland, collected from the best ancient Historians, Councils, and Records, by Jeremy Collier, M. A. Lond. 1708-14.

Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion, and other various Occurrences in the Church of England, by John Strype, M. A. in 4 vol. Lond. 1725-31. There is prefixed to the second volume, a kind of testimonial of Mr. Strype's ability for writing an Ecclesiastical History of the Church of England, at and after the first Reformation, and a recommendation of his work, signed by above twenty Bishops.

The Church History of England, from the year 1500 to the year 1688, chiefly with Respect to the Catholics, being a complete Account of the Divorce, Supremacy, Dissolution of Monasteries, and first Attempts for a Reformation under King Henry VIII. the unsettled State of the Reformation under Ed. VI. the Interruption it met with from Queen Mary; with the last Hand put to it by Queen Elizabeth. Together with the various Fortunes of the Catholic Cause during the Reigns of King James I. King Charles I. King Charles II. King James II. Particularly the Lives of the most eminent Catholicks, Cardinals, Bishops, inferior Clergy, Regulars, and Laymen, who have distinguished themselves by their Piety, Learning, or Military Abilities: also a distinct

- finct and critical Account of the Works of the Learned: the Trials of those that suffered either on the Score of Religion, or the real or fictitious Plots against the Government; with the Foundations of all the English Colleges and Monasteries abroad. The Whole supported by original Papers and Letters, many whereof were never before made publick. To which is prefixed, a general History of Ecclesiastical Affairs under the British, Saxon, and Norman Periods. 3 vol. Brusefs, 1737. The Author's name is not mentioned.
- The Ecclesiastical History of England to the eighteenth Century, by Ferd. Warner, D. D. Lond. 1756. Other Ecclesiastical Historians of our own Country are Bede, Fox, Fuller, Usher, Parker, &c. &c.
- Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani, or the Statutes, Constitutions, Canons, Rubricks and Articles of the Church of England, methodically digested under their proper Heads, with a Commentary historical and judicial. Before it is an introductory Discourse concerning the present State of the Power and Discipline and Laws of the Church of England, and after it an Appendix of Instruments ancient and modern, by Ed. Gibson, Bishop of London, 2d. Ed. revised and corrected with large Additions by the Author. Oxford, 1761, 2 vol. This is by much the most valuable work we have on this subject; it may be proper, however, to read along with it a pamphlet, said to have been written by Judge Foster, intitled, An Examination of the Scheme of Church Power, laid down in the Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani. Lond. 1736, 3d. Ed.
- Συνόδικον five Pandectæ Canonum SS. Apostolorum et Conciliorum ab Ecclesia Græca receptorum, &c. per Gul. Beveregium. Oxon. 1672, 2 vol. Bp. Barlow says, that this work is of great use for a comprehensive Knowledge of Ecclesiastical Antiquity. If any one should wish to have a collection of *Councils* in his library, he will find an enumeration of the principal writers on that subject in Bp. Barlow's Directions, &c. in Fabricus B. G. and in Bray's Bibl. Par. I have added the three following works, for though they do not treat solely of Divinity, yet they will be very serviceable to a student in that science.
- Oeuvres diverses de Mr. Bayle, Professeur en Philosophie et en Histoire a Rotterdam. Contenant tout ce que cet Auteur a publié sur des Matieres de Theologie, de Philosophie, de Critique, d' Histoire, et de Literature excepté son Dictionnaire Historique et Critique. A la Haye. 1727, 4 vol.
- A general Dictionary, Historical and Critical, in which a new and accurate Translation of that of the celebrated Bayle is included; the Whole containing the History of the most illustrious Persons of all Ages and Nations, particularly those of Great Britain and Ireland, distinguished by their Rank, Actions, Learning, and other Accounts: with Reflexions on those Passages of Mr. Bayle, which seem to favour Scepticism and the Manichee System. By the Rev. John Peter Bernard, the Rev. J. Birch, Mr. John Lockman, and other Hands. With the Life of Mr. Bayle by Mr. Des Maizeaux F. R. S. Lond. 1734-41, 10 vol. Those who cannot meet with an opportunity of purchasing this Dictionary, may content themselves with Mr. Bayle's in 4 vol. or with those of Moreri and Collier.

Biographia Britannica, or the Lives of the most eminent Persons who have flourished in Great Britain and Ireland, from the earliest Ages to the present Times: collected from the best Authorities, printed and manuscript, and digested in the Manner of Mr. Bayle's Historical and Critical Dictionary. The second Ed. with Corrections and Enlargements, and the Addition of new Lives, by And. Kippis, D. D. and F. S. A. with the Assistance of other Gentlemen. Lond. 1778. Three volumes of this work are published; when it is finished it will be one of the most complete works of the kind that ever appeared in any Language.

Q U A R T O S.

Biblia Hebraica sine Punctis. Accurante Nath. Forster S. T. B. Oxon. 1750.

Biblia Hebraica ad optimas quasque Editiones expressa, cum Notis Masorethicis, et numeris distinctionum in Paraschas, et Capita, et Versus, necnon singulorum Capitulorum summariis Latinis. Accurante M. Christiano Reineccio. Lipsi. 1739.

Biblia Hebraica secundum Editionem Belgicam Everar. Vander Hooght, collatis aliis bonæ notæ Codicibus, una cum Versione Latina Sebastiani Schmidii. Lipsi. 1740.

Vetus Testamentum ex Versione Septuaginta Interpretum, secundum exemplar Vaticanum Romæ editum, accuratissime denuo recognitum una cum Scholiis ejusdem Editionis variis MSS. &c. lectionibus, summa cum cura edidit Lamb. Bos. Franequeræ. 1709, 2 vol.

Jacobi Gussæti Lexicon Linguae Hebraicæ, in quo præcipua opera impenditur primario significatui vocum phrasumque accurata investigatione definiendo, &c. Lipsiæ. 1743. Ed. 2da.

An Hebrew and English Lexicon, without Points; to which is added, a methodical Hebrew Grammar, &c. by John Parkhurst, M. A.

Clavis Hebraica Veteris Testamenti in qua Themata difficiliora V. T. referantur, &c. auctore J. Leusden. Ultrajecti. 1683.

Lyra Prophetica sive Analysis Critico-Præctica Psalmorum. Studio Victorini Bythneri Poloni. Lond. 1664. Bythner observes, that all the Hebrew Radicals in the Bible amount to 1867; and that 564 Verses, of which he makes mention, in the Psalms, contain 1184 Radicals. But whether it is most proper to begin learning Hebrew by perusing the poetical or historical books, let others judge; Leusden's *Clavis* may be as useful for those who begin with Genesis, as Bythner's *Lyra* is for those who begin with the Psalms.

Edvardi Leigh Critica Sacra, id est, Observationes Philologico-Theologicæ in omnes radices et voces Hebræas V. T. et in omnes voces Græcas N. T. Gothæ, 1735, 2 vol. Ed. 6a.

Joh. Fran. Buddei Historia veteris Testamenti ab orbe condito usque ad Christum Natum, variis Observationibus illustrata. Halæ Magdeburgicæ, 1726, 3 vol. Ed. 3tia.

The Hebrew Text, or the parallel Prophecies of Jacob and Moses relating to the twelve Tribes; with a Translation and Notes; and the various Lectiōns of near forty MSS. To which are added, 1. The Sama-

- Samaritan-Arabic Version of those Passages, and Part of another Arabic Version made from the Samaritan Text; neither of which have been before printed: 2. A Map of the Land of Promise: 3. An Appendix containing four Dissertations on Points connected with the Subjects of these Prophecies. By D. Durell, B. D. Oxford, 1763.
- Isaiah. A new Translation with a preliminary Dissertation and Notes critical, philological, and explanatory. By Rob. Lowth, D. D. Lord Bishop of London. Lond. 1778.
- Jeremiah and Lamentations. A new Translation with Notes critical, philological, and explanatory. By Benj. Blaney, B. D. Oxf. 1784.
- A Commentary on the Book of Job, in which is inserted the Hebrew Text and English Translation: with a Paraphrase, &c. By Leonard Chappelow, B. D. Camb. 1752, 2 vol.
- A critical Dissertation on the Book of Job: wherein the Account given of that Book by the Author of the Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated, &c., is particularly considered; the Antiquity of the Book vindicated; the great Text (Chap. xix. 25.) explained; and a future State shewn to have been the popular Belief of the ancient Jews or Hebrews. By C. Peters, A. M. Lond. 1751, 2d. Ed.
- Annotations on the Psalms, by James Merrick, M. A. Reading, 1768.
- A Commentary on the Book of Psalms: in which the literal or historical Sense, as they relate to King David and the People of Israel, is illustrated, and their Application to Messiah, to the Church, and to Individuals as Members thereof, is pointed out. By G. Horne, D. D. Oxf. 1776, 2 vol.
- Marci Marini Brixiani Annotationes literales in Psalmos nova Versione illustratos, &c. Bononiæ, 1748, 2 vol.
- Phil. D. Burkii Gnomon Psalmorum. Stutgardiæ, 1760, 2 vol.
- A philosophical and critical Essay on Ecclesiastes: wherein the Author's Design is stated; his Doctrine vindicated; his Method explained in an analytical Paraphrase annexed to a new Version of the Text from the Hebrew, &c. By A. V. Desvoeux. Lond. 1760.
- Phil. Dav. Burkii Gnomon in duodecim Prophetas minores, cum Præfatione Bengelii Heilbronnæ, 1753. A Commentary upon the twelve minor Prophets was published by John Markius in 4 vol. 4to, at Amsterdam, 1696, &c. This author (Markius) printed in several volumes many useful Dissertations upon various parts of the old and new Testament: he was cotemporary with Le Clerc, and differs from him in many of his works.
- Vaticinia Chabacuci et Nachumi, itemque nonnulla Jesaïæ, Micheæ, et Ezechielis oracula, Observationibus Historico-philologicis ex Historia Diodori Siculi circa res Sardanapali illustrata. Auctore R. T. Gotthieb Kalinsky, cum Præfatione Bürgii. Vratislaviæ, 1748.
- Critical Remarks on the Books of Job, Proverbs, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, by D. Durell, D. D. Oxf. 1772.
- Poetical Parts of the old Testament, newly translated from the Hebrew, with Notes critical and explanatory. By W. Green, M. A. Lond. 1781.
- De sacra Poesi Hebræorum Prælectiones Academicæ habitæ a Roberto Lowth, M. A. Collegii Novi nuper Socio et Poeticæ Publico Prælectore. Subjicitur Metricæ Harianæ brevis Confutatio, et Oratio Crewiana. Oxon. 1753. This learned work has been deservedly ad-

mired both at home and abroad. An edition was published at Göttingen, 1758, to which *Notas et Epimetra adjecit Michaelis*. This last edition has been printed in Ugolini Thesauro, vol. 31, where the reader will meet with many other tracts on Hebrew Poetry. The last ed. in 8vo. was printed in 1775.

Introductio ad Libros Canonicos veteris Testamenti omnes, præcognita critica et historica ac Auctoritatis vindicias exponens. Adornata studio D. J. Gottlob Carpzovii. Lip. 1731. Ed. 2da. 2 vol. The reader will here find very learned disquisitions upon every book of the old Testament, and a catalogue of the most approved writers on each of them.

Joh. Gottlob Carpzovii *Critica sacra veteris Testamenti, Parte 1. Circa Textum originalem; 2. Circa Versiones; 3. Circa Pseudo-criticam. Gul. Whistoni, sollicita. Lipsiæ, 1728.*

A critical History of the old Testament, in three Books, with a Supplement, being a Defence of the critical History in Answer to Mr. Spanheim's Treatise against it. By Father Simon. Englished by H. D. Lond. 1682.

D. Joan. Marshami Eq. Aur. et Bar. Chronicus Canon Egyptiacus Ebraicus, Græcus, et disquisitiones; liber non chronologiæ tantum sed et historiæ antiquitatis reconditissima complexus. Franequeræ, 1696. This learned work was first published in folio in Lond. 1672, and afterwards in 4to. at Leipzig, 1676, which edition is followed by the author of the following work, which was written in opposition to an opinion embraced by Sir J. Marsham and others, — That most of the Jewish Rites were borrowed from the Egyptians.

Hermanni Witsii *Ægyptiaca sive de Ægyptiacorum sacrorum cum Hebraicis collatione Libri tres. Et de decem Tribubus Israelis Liber singularis; accessit diatribe de Legione fulminatrice Christianorum sub Imperatore Mar. Aur. Antonino. Amstel. 1683.*

The Chronology of the ancient Kingdoms amended. To which is prefixed, a short Chronicle from the first Memory of Things in Europe to the Conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great. By Sir Isaac Newton. Lond. 1727.

The Chronology of the Hebrew Bible vindicated. The Facts compared with other ancient Histories, and the Difficulties explained from the Flood to the Death of Moses. By Robert Lord Bishop of Clogher. Lond. 1747. He who wishes to know more on this subject of Chronology, may consult Jackson's Scripture Chronology, in 3 vol. 4to. Bedford's Scrip. Chron. published in 1730, and an Essay of Dr. Brett's wherein he defends the Computation of the Septuagint, 1729, &c. &c.

Had. Relandi *Palæstina ex Monumentis veteribus illustrata. Trajecti ad Rhe. 1714, 2 vol.*

De Sacrificiis Libri duo; quorum altero explicantur omnia Judæorum; nonnulla Gentium profanarum Sacrificia; altero Sacrificium Christi. Utroque Ecclesiæ Catholicæ his de Rebus Sententia contra Faustum Socinum ejusque Sectatores defenditur. Auctore Gul. Ontramo S.T.P. Lond. 1677.

The peculiar Doctrines of Revelation relating to piacular Sacrifices, Redemption by Christ, Faith in him, &c. in two Essays; to which are subjoined, two Dissertations, 1. On the Office of Jesus Christ, as Mediator

- diator and Surety of the new Covenant. 2. On the Person of Jesus Christ. By J. Richie, M. D. Warrington, 1766, 2 vol.
- Antonii Van Dale Dissertationes de Origine et Progressu Idololatriæ et Superstitionum · de vera ac falsa Prophetia, uti et de Divinationibus Idololatricis Judæorum. Amstel. 1696.
- Antonii Van Dale de Oraculis veterum Ethnicorum Dissertationes duæ, &c. Ed. 2da. Amstel. 1700. Vossius published a learned work in folio, 1668, intitled, De Origine ac Progressu Idololatriæ. Selden's Treatise De Diis Syris, with the Additions of Beyer, was published in 8vo. at Amster. 1680: and another work with 88 copper plates illustrative of the Idolatry of the Ancients was published at Mentz in 1699, under the title — Theatrum-Ethnico-Idololatricum.
- Of Idolatry: a Discourse, in which is endeavoured a Declaration of its Distinction from Superstition; its Notion, Cause, Commencement, and Progress; its Practice charged on Gentiles, &c., as also of the Means which God has vouchsafed for the Cure of it by the Shechinah of his Son. By Tho. Tenison, B. D. Lond. 1678.
- The Court of the Gentiles, or a Discourse touching the Original of human Literature, both Philology and Philosophy, from the Jewish Church. By Theop. Gale. Oxf. 1672, 2 vol. 2d. Ed.
- A critical and chronological History of the Rise, Progress, Declension, and Revival of Knowledge, chiefly religious, in two Periods. 1. The Period of Tradition from Adam to Moses. 2. The Period of Letters from Moses to Christ. By Hen. Winder, D. D. Lond. 1745, 2 vol.
- Reflexions sur l' Origine, l' Histoire, et la Succession des Anciens Peuples Chaldeens, Hebreux, Pheniciens, Egyptiens, Grecs, &c. jusqués au Tems de Cyrus. Par M. Fourment, l' ainé. nov. Ed. a Paris, 1747, 2 vol. — The best Naturalists of the age find great difficulty in admitting, that the earth had no existence as a *terraqeous* globe before the æra assigned by Moses for its creation, or at least for its formation into water and dry land: and hence all arguments, tending to prove the origination of the human race to have been that which is mentioned in Scripture, are of great use; for, if the *antiquity* and the *civil history* of our species correspond with the accounts delivered in the Bible, we cannot reasonably (considering the imperfection of our knowledge) suffer our Faith to be shaken, by the difficulties attending the *natural history* of the earth. Viewed in this light, as well as in many others, the following work has the greatest merit.
- A new System, or an Analysis of ancient Mythology: wherein an Attempt is made to divest Tradition of Fable, and to reduce the Truth to its original Purity. In this work is given the history of the Babylonians, Chaldeans, Egyptians, Canaanites, Heiladians, Ionians, Leleges, Dorians, Pelasgi, also of the Scythæ, Indoscythæ, Ethiopians, Phœnicians. The whole contains an Account of the principal Events in the first Ages from the Deluge to the Dispersion: also of the various Migrations which ensued, and the Settlements made afterwards in different Parts: Circumstances of great Consequence which were subsequent to the Gentile History of Moses. By Jacob Bryant. Lond. 1774-6, 3 vol.
- Jac. Bruckeri Historia Critica Philosophiæ a Mundi incunabulis ad nostram usque ætatem deducta. Lip. 1742, 5 vol.

- Radulphi Cudworthi Systema Intellectuale hujus Universi, seu de variis Naturæ Rerum originibus Commentarii, quibus omnis eorum Philosophia qui Deum esse negant funditus evertitur. Accedunt reliqua ejus Opuscula. T. L. Moshemius omnia ex Anglico Latine vertit, recensuit, variisque Observationibus, Dissertationibus illustravit et auxit. Lug. Bat. 1773, Ed. 2da. emendatior et auctior, 2 vol.
- Jo. Dav. Michaelis Syntagma Commentationum. Goettingæ, 1759. The fourth Dissertation is intitled, Argumenta Immortalitatis Animorum humanorum ex Mose collecta (auctore Chris. Colberg).
- Novum Testamentum Græcum, ita adornatum ut Textus probatarum Editionum medullam, margo variantium Lectionum in suas Classes distributarum Locorumque parallelorum delectum; Apparatus subjunctus, Criseos sacre Millianæ præsertim, compendium, &c. exhibeat; inserviente Jo. Alberto Bengelio Tubingæ, 1734. A second edition of the Apparatus was printed at the same place in 1763: and an 8vo. edition of the Text, various Readings and parallel Places, with only one error of the press, and that a wrong accent, was published at Stutgard in 1734. Another 8vo. edition at Tubing, 1753.
- Novum Testamentum Græcum ad fidem Græcorum solum Codicum MSS. expressum, adstipulante Ja. Wetstenio: juxta Sectiones Jo. Alber. Bengelii divisum et nova Interpunctione sæpius illustratum. Typis et sumptibus Joh. Nichols. Lond. 1783, Ed. 2da.
- A Concordance to the Greek Testament: with the English Version to each Word; the principal Hebrew Roots corresponding to the Greek Words of the Septuagint; short critical Notes where necessary; and an Index for the Benefit of the English Reader. By John Williams, LL.D. Lond. 1767.
- A complete Concordance to the Holy Scriptures of the old and new Testament: in two Parts. By Alex. Cruden, M. A. Lond. 1758. And I believe there has been a later edition.
- Petri Mintert Lexicon Græco-Latinum in N. T., in quo cujuslibet vocis Etymon datur, Significationes variæ explicantur, eique Vox seu vocis Hebraicæ et Chaldaicæ, quando et pro quibus LXX Interpretes illis usi fuerint, apponuntur, et loca omnia N. T. in quibus leguntur, ordine annotantur, variantes etiam Lectiones adduntur. Francofurti ad Moenum, 1727. This, as its title indicates, is a learned work, it may supply the place of a Greek Concordance to the Septuagint and the new Testament.
- A Greek and English Lexicon to the new Testament, &c. by John Parkhurst, M. A. Lond. 1769.
- Theological Lectures at Westminster Abbey, with an Interpretation of the new Testament; to which are added, Select Discourses upon the principal Points of Revealed Religion. By John Heylin, D. D. Lond. 1749, Part I. and 1761, Part II.
- Introductory Lectures to the sacred Books of the new Testament, by J. D. Michaelis. Lond. 1761. A new edition in 1780.
- Sacrorum Evangeliorum Versio Syriaca Philoxeniana ex Cod. MSS. Rideianis in Bibl. Coll. Nov. Oxon. repositis nunc primum Edita: cum Interpretatione et Annotationibus Josephi White, A. M. Ling. Arab. Prof. Laudiani. Oxon. 1778.
- Le nouveau Testament de notre Seigneur Jesus Christ, traduit en François

- çois sur l'original Grec. Avec des Notes literales pour eclaircir le Texte. Par Mrs. De Beaufobre et Lenfant. Amster. 1718, 2 vol.
- The Family Expositor, or a Paraphrase and Version of the new Testament, with critical Notes and a practical Improvement of each Section. By P. Doddridge, D. D. Lond. 1761, 6 vol.
- An Exposition of the new Testament, both Doctrinal and Practical: in which is inserted, 1. A correct Copy of the sacred Text and the genuine Sense thereof given: 2. The Truths of the Christian Religion are set in a plain and clear Light: 3. Difficult Places explained: 4. Seeming Contradictions reconciled; and, 5. Whatever is material in the various Readings, and the several oriental Versions, is observed. The Whole illustrated and confirmed from the most ancient Jewish Writings. By J. Gill, D. D. A new edition corrected. Lond. 1774, 5 vol.
- Christiani Schoettgenii Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ in universum novum Testamentum. Quibus Horæ J. Lightfoot in Libris historicis suppleantur, Epistolæ et Apocalypsis eodem modo illustrantur. Accedunt Dissertationes quædam Philologico-sacræ. Dresdæ, 1733, 2 vol. The same author published in 1742 in 2 vol. Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ in Theologiam Judæorum dogmaticam antiquam et orthodoxam de Messia.
- Novum Testamentum ex Talmude et antiquitatibus Hebræorum illustratum, curis clarif. vir. Balth. Scheidii, Jo. And. Danzii et Jac. Rhenfordi, editumque una cum suis propriis Dissertationibus de Nafi seu præside Synedrii M. et de directoribus Scholarum Hebræorum. A Joh. Ger. Meuschen. Lip. 1736.
- Remarques historiques, critiques, et philologiques sur le nouveau Testament, par feu M. De Beaufobre. A la Haye, 1742, 2 vol.
- A Commentary and Notes on the four Evangelists and the Acts of the Apostles; together with a new Translation of the Epistle to the Corinthians, with a Paraphrase and Notes; to which are added other Theological Pieces, by Zach. Pearce, D. D. late Lord Bishop of Rochester; to which is prefixed, some Account of his Lordship's Life and Character, written by himself. Lond. 1777, 2 vol.
- A Harmony of the four Gospels, in which the natural Order of each is preserved, with a Paraphrase and Notes, by James Macknight, D. D. Lond. 1763, 2 vol. 3d. Ed. There are prefixed to this edition various preliminary observations; six chronological dissertations; nine discourses on Jewish antiquities; and an essay on the demoniacs, all of which have great merit. A Latin translation of this work came out at Bremen, 1772.
- A Harmony of the Evangelists in English, with critical Dissertations, an occasional Paraphrase, and Notes for the Use of the unlearned. By J. Priestley, LL. D. F. R. S. Lond. 1780. The reader may also consult a new Harmony of the Gospels, by John Jebb, M. A. Camb. 1772, 2d. Ed.
- Discourses on the four Gospels, chiefly with Regard to the peculiar Design of each, and the Order and Places in which they were written. To which is added, an Inquiry concerning the Hours of St. John, of the Romans, and of some other Nations of Antiquity. By J. Townson, B. D. Oxf. 1778.

- The History of the Life of Jesus Christ, taken from the new Testament, with Observations and Reflections proper to illustrate the Excellence of his Character and the Divinity of his Mission and Religion. By the late Rev. G. Benson, D. D. To which is added, Memoirs of the Life, Character, and Writings of the Author. Lond. 1764.
- Observations on our Lord's Conduct as a Divine Instructor, and on the Excellence of his moral Character, by W. Newcome, D. D. Bishop of Waterford. Lond. 1782.
- The History of the first Planting of the Christian Religion, taken from the Acts of the Apostles and their Epistles, together with the remarkable Facts of the Jewish and Roman History, which affected the Christians within this Period. By G. Benson, D. D. Lond. 1756, 2d. Ed. 3 vol.
- A new Version of St. Matthew's Gospel, with select Notes, wherein the Version is vindicated, and the Sense and Purity of several Words and Expressions in the original Greek are settled and illustrated; to which is added, a Review of Dr. Mill's Notes on this Gospel. By D. Scott, J. U. D. Lond. 1741.
- A new Translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew: with Notes critical, philological, and explanatory. By Gilbert Wakefield, B. A. Lond. 1782.
- Commentarius Analytico-Exegeticus tam literalis quam realis Evangelii secundum Joannem. Authore Fred. Adol. Lampe. Amstel. 1724-6, 3 vol. This is the most valuable work on St. John's Gospel that was ever published.
- A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Colossians, Philippians, and Hebrews, after the Manner of Mr. Locke. To which are annexed, several critical Dissertations on particular Parts of Scripture. The second Ed. By the late reverend and learned Mr. James Peirce, of Exon. With a Paraphrase and Notes on the three last Chapters of the Hebrews left unfinished by Mr. Peirce; and an Essay to discover the Author of the Epistle, and the Language in which it was originally written. By J. Hallet, Jun. Lond. 1733.
- A Paraphrase and Notes on six of the Epistles of St. Paul, viz. I. Thess. II. Thess. I. Timothy, Philemon, Titus, II. Tim. attempted in Imitation of Mr. Locke's Manner. To which are annexed, critical Dissertations, by G. Benson, D. D. Lond. 1752, 2d. Ed.
- A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistle to the Romans; to which is prefixed, a Key to the Apostolic Writings, or an Essay to explain the Gospel Scheme, and the principal Words and Phrases the Apostles have used in describing it. By J. Taylor, Minister of the Gospel in Norwich. Lond. 1754, 3d. Ed.
- A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians, by S. Chandler, D. D. Published from the Author's MS. Lond. 1777.
- A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistle to the Hebrews. To which is prefixed, an Enquiry — into the Author of this Epistle: when it was wrote: the Manner of citing the old Testament; and the Method of reasoning in it: with some Remarks on the late Lord Bolingbroke's Treatment of St. Paul. By Arthur Ashley Sykes, D. D. Lond. 1755.

- A Paraphrase and Notes on the seven (commonly called) Catholic Epistles, by George Benson, D.D. Lond. 1756, 2d. Ed.
- Anacrisis Apocalypsis Joannis Apostoli, qua in veras interpretandæ ejus Hypotheses diligenter inquiritur, et ex iisdem interpretatio facta, certis historiarum monumentis confirmatur atque illustratur: tum quoque quæ Meldenis Præsul Bossuetus hujus libri commentario supposuit, et exegetico Protestantium Systemati in visis de Bestia ac Babylone Mystica objecit, sedulo examinantur. Auctore Camp. Vitringa. Ed. altera. Amstel. 1719.—Heidegger in 1687, published two volumes in 4to. upon the prophecy in the Revelation, De Babylone magna, and endeavoured by a variety of arguments to establish this conclusion,—*Hierarchiam seu Clerum Ecclesiæ Romanæ dominantem Babylonem magnam esse.*
- A perpetual Commentary on the Revelation of St. John, with a preliminary Discourse concerning the Principles upon which the said Revelation is to be understood. By Charles Daubuz, M. A. late Vicar of Brotherton in Yorkshire. New modelled, abridged, and rendered plain to the meanest Capacity, by Peter Lancaster, A.M. Lond. 1730.
- Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John, in two Parts. By Sir Isaac Newton. Lond. 1733.
- A Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation of St. John. By Moses Lowman. Lon. 1745, 2d. Ed. A third Ed. in 8vo. 1773.
- Oeuvres de Messire Jacques-Benigne Bossuet Evêque de Meaux, &c. Nouvelle Ed. a Paris, 1772. In the preface to the third vol. there is this observation,—Le Commentaire sur l'Apocalypse qui occupe la plus grande Partie de ce Volume, a pour Object principe de découvrir l'abus énorme que les Ministres Protestans, et surtout le fameux Jurieu, faisoient de ce Livre divin, pour charger l'Eglise Catholique des plus horribles Imputations en la representant comme la Babylone dont il est parlé dans Saint Jean. Bishop Hurd has very properly remarked, “that the Bishop of Meaux knew what he did when he *affected* a contempt of *Joseph Mede*. He was then at liberty to turn himself from the ablest advocate of the protestant cause, to the *weakest* — *M. Jurieu*.”
- A critical History of the Text of the new Testament, wherein is firmly established the Truth of those Acts on which the Foundation of the Christian Religion is laid. By Father Simon. Lond. 1689-92, 2 vol.
- Fabricii Delectus Argumentorum et Syllabus Scriptorum, qui Veritatem Religionis Christianæ adversus Atheos, Epicureos, Deistas, seu Naturalistas, Idololatrias, Judæos et Muhammedanos Lucubrationibus suis asseruerunt. Hamburgi, 1725. The Title of this work sufficiently indicates its nature and utility. A Treatise of a nature somewhat similar to this was published by Walchius in 1752, in 8vo. intitled, *Introductio ad Theologiam Polemicam*; in which the points controverted by Atheists, Deists, Jews, &c. are discussed with great accuracy.
- La Religion Chrétien prouvée par les Faits. Par M. l'Abbe Houtteville. Nouvelle Ed. a Paris, 1740, 3 vol. This book is written with good judgment; the third volume is taken up in answering deistical objections.

The Truth of the Gospel History, by James Macknight, D. D. Lond.

1763.

A large Collection of ancient Jewish and Heathen Testimonies to the Truth of the Christian Religion, with Notes and Observations, by Nat. Lardner, D. D. Lond. 1767, 4 vol.

Philippi a Limborch de Veritate Religionis Christianæ amica collatio cum erudito Judæo. Gondæ, 1687.

Salomonis Glasfii Philologia Sacra, qua totius SS Veteris et novi Testamenti Scripturæ, tum Stylus et Literatura, tum Sensus et genuinæ Interpretationis ratio et doctrina libris quinque expenditur ac traditur. Lipsiæ, 1743. This work was first published in 1623, and it is still much esteemed. Buddeus, in a preface prefixed to this edition, and written in 1713, expresses the sentiments of the learned concerning it in the following terms, — Consentiant in eo omnes huncce ex eorum genere librum esse qui sacrarum literarum cultoribus non tantum utiles sed prorsus necessarii sint, et quo nemo carere queat, qui ad scripturæ sacræ lectionem et interpretationem solide et accurate instituendam animum adjungit. The last edition was published at Leipzig in 1776 by Professor Dathius under this title, Philologia Sacra his temporibus accommodata.

Commentatio critica ad Libros N. T. in genere. Cum Præfatione D. J. Gottlob Carpzovii. Accurante J. W. Rumpæo. Lip. 1757, Ed. 2da. Critical questions of great variety and importance relative to the new Testament are here solidly discussed by a reference to the writers of the greatest credit on each of them.

Camp. Vitringa Observationum Sacrarum Libri sex, in quibus de Rebus varii Argumenti et utilissimæ investigationis critice ac theologice disseritur, &c. Amster. 1727, 2 vol. 3d. Ed. and a 7th Book. Franequeræ, 1727.

Joan. F. Buddei Miscellanea Sacra. Jenæ, 1727, 3 vol. The last volume contains Dissertationes Theologicas sub ejus Moderamine publico Eruditorum examini expositas.

Samuelis Werenfelsii Opuscula Theol. Philos. et Philologica. Basilæ, 1718.

D. Salomonis Deylingi Observationes Sacræ. In quibus multa Scripturæ veteris ac novi Testamenti dubia vexata solvuntur, &c. Lipsiæ, 1739, 5 vol. Ed. 3tia.

Jo. Christophi Wolfii Curæ philologicæ et criticæ in omnes Libros N. T., quibus integritati contextus Græci consulitur, sensus verborum ex præditiis philologicis illustratur, diversæ Interpretum sententiæ summam enarrantur, et modesto examini subjunctæ vel approbantur vel refelluntur. Basilæ, 1741, 5 vol. This work has some resemblance, in the manner of its composition, to Poole's Synopsis, but is written with more judgment, and contains the opinions of many expositors who have lived since the publication of Poole's work. Wolfius, moreover, has not followed Poole in simply relating the sentiments of others, but has frequently animadverted on them with great critical discernment.

Jo. Chris. Koecheri Analecta Philologica et Exegetica in IV. S. Evangelia quibus Wolfii Curæ philologicæ suppleuntur atque augentur. Altenburgi, 1766.

- Critical Conjectures and Observations on the new Testament, collected from various Authors, as well in Regard to Words as Pointing, with the Reasons on which both are founded. By W. Bowyer. Lond. 1783, Ed. 3d. The reader will here meet with much sound criticism, and many instances of the importance of true Punctuation, which Mr. Bowyer thought of more moment than all the various readings put together.
- D. C. B. Michaelis Tractatio critica de variis Lectionibus novi Testamenti caute colligendis et dilucidandis. Halæ Magde. 1749.
- D. Jo. Alberti Bengelii Gnomon novi Testamenti, in quo ex nativa Verborum vi, simplicitas, profunditas, concinnitas, salubritas sensuum cœlestium indicatur. Tubingæ, 1759, Ed. 2da. The design of this work is properly declared by the learned Author, when he says, — Hoc denique agitur, ut quæ in sententiis verbisque Scripturæ N. T. fita vis sit, neque tamen primo ab omnibus observatur, ea breviter monstraretur.
- Dubia Evangelica in tres Partes distributa; quibus dubia partim εἰρηνικὰ partim ἐλεγκτικὰ discussa et vindicata a cavillis et corruptelis Atheorum, Paganorum, Judæorum, Samosatenianorum et Anabaptistarum, Pontificiorum et Sectariorum aliorum Opera Fred. Spanhemii. Genevæ, 1658, 2 vol.
- Historia Ecclesiastica duorum primorum a Christo nato Sæculorum e veteribus Monumentis deprompta a J. Clerico. Amstel. 1716.
- Joh. Lauren. Mosheim de Rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum magnum Commentarii. Helmstadii, 1753.
- Thomæ Ittigii Lipsiensis de Hæresiarchis ævi Apostolici et Apostolico proximi, seu primi et secundi a Christo nato Sæculi. Lip. 1690.
- Appendix Dissertationis de Hæresiarchis, &c. aut. T. Ittigio. Lip. 1696.
- The History of the Hereticks of the two first Centuries after Christ, containing an Account of their Time, Opinions, and Testimonie to the Books of the new Testament. By Nat. Lardner, D. D. Lond. 1780.
- Fred. Spanhemii brevis Introductio ad Historiam sacram utriusque Testamenti ac præcipue Christianam, ad an. 1518, inchoata jam Refor. Ed. fere nova omnium purgatissima. Lugd. Bat. 1694.
- Joan. Dallæi de Usu Patrum ad ea definienda Religionis capita quæ sunt hodie Controversa. Genevæ, 1686. This very excellent book appeared first in French, 1632, and it was translated into English in 1651.
- Salutaris Lux Evangelii, toti Orbi per divinam gratiam exoriens, sive Notitia historico-chronologica literaria et geographica propagatorum per Orbem Terrarum Christianorum sacrorum delineata a Joan. Alb. Fabricio. Hamb. 1731. There is subjoined to this work a Geographical Index of all the Bishopricks which have formerly subsisted, or do at present subsist in Christendom. All the works of Fabricius are full of erudition, and deserve the peculiar attention of young divines.
- Casparis Zeigleri de Episcopis eorumque Juribus, Privilegiis, et vivendiratione Liber Commentarius, ex variis veteris Ecclesiæ Monumentis atque scriptis collectus, inque gratiam Juris Canonici studiosorum publicæ luci expositus. Norimbergæ, 1686. In this book a great many curious questions are proposed in great order, and discussed with much learning.

- The History of the Puritans, or Protestant Non-Conformists. By Dan. Neale, M. A. Lond. 1754, 2 vol. 2d. Ed.
- Tracts on the Liberty, Spiritual and Temporal, of Protestants in England. By Anthony Ellis, D.D. late Lord Bishop of St. David's. Lond. 1767, 2d. Ed.
- Institutio Theologicæ Elencticæ, in qua status Controversiæ perspicue exponitur, præcipua orthodoxorum Argumenta proponuntur et vindicantur, et fontes solutionum aperiuntur. Authore Fran. Turretino. Genevæ, 1689, 3 vol.
- Francisci Turretini de Satisfactione Christi Disputationes. Gen. 1666.
- De necessaria Secessione nostra ab Ecclesia Romana, et impossibili cum ea Syncretismo Disputationes. Aut. Fran. Turretino, accessit ejusdem Disputationum miscellanearum decas. Genevæ, 1688.
- Joh. Alphonfi Turretini, Cogitationes et Dissertationes Theologicæ, quibus Principia Religionis cum Naturalis tum Revelatæ adstruuntur et defenduntur, Animique ad Veritatis, Pietatis et Pacis studium excitantur. Genevæ, 1737, 2 vol.
- Syntagma Thesium Theologicarum in Academia Salmurienti variis temporibus disputatarum. Salmurii, 1664, Ed. 2da.
- Francisci Burmanni Synopsis Theologiæ et speciatim Oeconomix fœderum Dei ab initio sæculorum usque ad consummationem eorum. Trajecti ad Rhenum. 1687, 2 vol.
- A Course of Lectures on the principal Subjects in Pneumatology, Ethics and Divinity: with References to the most considerable Authors on each Subject. By the late Rev. Philip Doddridge, D.D. Lond. 1763.
- The Oeconomy of the Gospel in four Books. By C. Bulkley. Lond. 1764.
- The Works of the late reverend and learned Isaac Watts, D. D. Lond. 1753, 6 vol.
- The Works of the Right Reverend T. Newton, D. D. late Lord Bishop of Bristol. With some Account of his Life, and Anecdotes of his Friends, written by himself. Lond. 1782, 3 vol.
- The Works of the Right Reverend T. Wilson, D. D. Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man. With his Life compiled from authentic Papers, by C. Crutwell. Lond. 1781, 2 vol.
- A System of Revealed Religion, digested under proper Heads, and composed in the Words of Scripture, by Jo. Warden, M. A. Lond. 1769.

O C T A V O S, &c.

- Biblia Hebraica secundum ultimam Editionem Jos. Athiæ a J. Leusden denuo recognitam recensita, atque ad Masoram, et correctiones Bombergi, Stephani, Plantini, aliorumque Editiones exquisitè adornata, variisque Notis illustrata, ab Everardo Vander Hooght, V. D. M. Ed. longe accuratissima. Amstel. et Ultraj. 1705, 2 vol.
- Vetus Testamentum ex Versione Septuaginta interpretum secundum exemplar Vaticanum Romæ editum. Præfationem una cum variis Lectionibus, e præstantissimis MSS. Codicibus Bibliothecæ Leidenfis descriptis, præmisit David Millius. Amstel. 1725.

Vetus Testamentum Græcum ex Versione Septuaginta interpretum juxta exemplar Vaticanum Romæ editum. Cantab. 1663. This is a very fair edition of the Septuagint printed by Field, with a preface by Bp. Pearson, at the end of which he recommends a collation of the MSS. of the Septuagint. Mintert made use of this edition in composing his Lexicon.

Clavis Pentateuchi; five Analysis omnium Vocum Hebraicarum suo ordine in Pentateucho Moseos occurrentium: una cum Versione Latina et Anglica. In usum juventutis Academiæ Edinburginæ. Cui præmittuntur Dissertationes duæ; 1. De Antiquitate Linguæ Arabicæ; 2. De genuina Punctorum Vocalium Antiquitate. Auctore Jacob. Robertson S. T. P. Edinb. 1770.

A Dissertation concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points and Accents. By T. Gill, D. D. Lond. 1767.

Francisci Masclef Grammatica Hebraica, a Punctis aliisque inventis Masforethicis libera, &c. Paris, 1731, 2 vol.

Christiani Stockii Clavis Linguæ sanctæ veteris Testamenti. Lipsiæ, 1753, Ed. 6a.

Jo. Chris. Clodii Lexicon Hebraicum selectum in quo Voces rariores et obscuræ Codicis Hebræi Biblici illustrantur, &c. in Supplementum Lexici Guffetiani. Lips. 1744.

Joan. Dav. Michaelis Epif. de LXX Hebdomadibus Danielis. Ad D. Joan. Pringle Baronetum. Lond. 1772.

Observations on divers Passages of Scripture, placing many of them in a Light altogether new; ascertaining the Meaning of several not determinable by the Methods commonly made use of by the learned; proposing to Consideration probable Conjectures on others, different from what have been hitherto recommended to the Attention of the curious; and more amply illustrating the Rest than has been done, by Means of Circumstances incidentally mentioned in Books of Voyages and Travels into the East. Lond. 2d. Ed. 1776, 2 vol. The design of this work is very useful, and it has been executed with great ability by the author, the Rev. Mr. Harmer. We are indebted to the same author for the outlines of a new Commentary on Solomon's Song, drawn by the help of Instructions from the East. Lond. 1768, 8vo. The Society which was instituted in the course of the last year at *Calcutta*, under the auspices of Sir *William Jones*, for inquiring into the History civil and natural, the Antiquities, Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Asia, will, it is to be hoped, contribute not a little by their researches, to the improvement of this kind of scriptural criticism; as well as to the enlargement of our knowledge in many other particulars.

An Essay for a new Translation of the Bible. Wherein is shewn, from Reason and the Authority of the best Commentators, Interpreters, and Critics, that there is a Necessity for a new Translation. Lond. 1727, 2d. Ed.

Apparatus Biblicus; or an Introduction to the holy Scriptures. In three Books. 1. Of the original History and Antiquity of the Jews. 2. Of the Canon, Authors, original Texts, Versions, Editions, and Interpretations of Scripture. 3. Of the false Gods, Animals, precious Stones, Diseases,

Diseases, and public Sports, mentioned in the Scriptures. Together with an Explanation of the scriptural Names and a new Reading of the Scriptures. Done into English from the French of *Pere Lamy*, with Notes and Additions. Illustrated with 36 Copper-plates. Lond. 1728, 2d. Ed. 2 vol. This work will be very useful to those who have not leisure to consult larger treatises, on the subjects which are discussed in it.

Antiquitates Hebraicæ secundum triplicem Judæorum Statum ecclesiasticum, politicum, et œconomicum breviter delineatæ a Conrado Ikenio. Bremæ, 1741, Ed. 3tia. the 1st. Ed. in 1732. *Reland's Antiquitates Sacræ* have been published in different forms, and they are to be met with in *Ugolini Thesauro* with Annotations by the Editor. This book of *Ikenius*' is valuable for its brevity, method, and perspicuity.

Origines Hebrææ: The Antiquities of the Hebrew Republick. By *Tho. Lewis, M. A.* Lond. 1724-5, 4 vol. This is a laborious compilation from the most distinguished writers, whether Jews or Christians, on the manners and laws of the Hebrews.

Jewish Antiquities; or a Course of Lectures on the three first Books of Godwin's Moses and Aaron. To which is annexed, a Dissertation on the Hebrew Language, by *Dav. Jennings, D. D.* Lond. 1766, 2 vol. The Treatises of *Mr. Lowman* on the Ritual and on the civil Government of the Hebrews, may properly accompany these works on the Hebrew Antiquities.

Revelation examined with Candour. Lond. 1735-63, 3 vol. by *Dr. Delany*.

Lettres de Quelques Juifs, Portugais, et Allemands, à M. De Voltaire. Avec des Reflexions critiques et un petit Commentaire extrait d'un plus grand. A Paris, 1776, 3 vol. 4 Ed. These letters contain an elegant answer to the various objections to revealed religion which *Voltaire* had borrowed from our English Deists; they were written by the *Abbé Guenée*. An English translation of them by *Dr. Lefanu* was published at Dublin in 1778, 2 vol.

A Vindication of the sacred Books and of *Josephus*, especially the former, from various Misrepresentations and Cavils of *M. De Voltaire*. By *Rob. Findlay, A. M.* Glasgow, 1770. This is a serious and solid refutation of many of *M. De Voltaire's* most formidable objections to the sacred writings.

A critical History of the Life of *David*: in which the principal Events are ranged in Order of Time; the chief Objections of *Mr. Bayle* and others against the Character of this Prince, &c. are refuted. By *S. Chandler, D. D.* Lond. 1766, 2 vol.

The divine Legation of *Moses* demonstrated in nine Books. By *W. Warburton*, Lord Bishop of Gloucester, Lond. 1765, 5 vol. 4th Ed. A new edition of all the works of this learned Prelate is expected.

Codex Pseudepigraphus veteris Testamenti collectus, castigatus, testimoniisque censuris et animadversionibus illustratus a *Fabricio Hamb.* 1722, 2 vol.

Novum Testamentum Græce. Textum ad fidem Codicum Versionum et Patrum emendavit et Lectionis varietatem adjecit. *Jo. Jac. Griesbach*

- bach Theologiæ Doctor, ejusdemque in Academ. Jenen. Professor publ. Ordinarius. Halæ, 1777, 2 vol.
- The new Testament carefully collated with the Greek and corrected; divided and pointed according to the various Subjects treated of by the inspired Writers, with the common Division into Chapters and Verses in the Margin. And illustrated with Notes critical and explanatory. By R. Wynne, A. M. Lond. 1764, 2 vol.
- The History of the Ministry of Jesus Christ, combined from the Narrative of the four Evangelists, by Rob. Willan, M. D. Lond. 1782.
- A View of our blessed Saviour's Ministry, and the Proofs of his Divine Mission arising from thence. Together with a Charge, Dissertations, Sermons, and Theological Lectures. By the late Tho. Randolph, D. D. Lady Margaret's Prof. of Divinity in the University of Oxford. Oxf. 1784, 2 vol.
- Christiani Stockii Clavis Linguae Sanctæ novi Testamenti. Lip. 1752. Ed. 5a. In the prefaces to his Lexicons, Stockius has enumerated the principal Hebrew and Greek Lexicons of the Bible which were published before his own.
- J. Conr. Schwarz Commentarii critici et philologici Linguae Græcæ novi Fœderis. Lips. 1736, 2 vol. very small 4to.
- Georgii Pritii Introductio ad Lectiorem N. T. in qua quæ ad rem criticam Historiam, chronologiam, et geographiam pertinent breviter et perspicue exponuntur. Lipsiæ, 1704. the 4th. Ed. in 1737. I have never met with any book superior to this as an introduction to the new Testament.
- Justi Henningii Böhmeri XII Dissertationes Juris Ecclesiastici Antiqui. Halæ, 1729, Ed. 2da. This is a very excellent book, the titles of the Dissertations are, 1. De Stato Christianorum Die. 2. De antelucanis Christianorum cœtibus. 3. De Confœderata Christianorum Disciplina. 4. De coitionibus Christianorum ad capiendum cibum. 5. De Christianorum cœtibus in vicis et agris. 6. De Cognitionibus de Christianis. 7. De differentia inter Ordinem Ecclesiasticum et Plebem, seu inter Clericos et Laicos. 8. De confessu Ordinis Ecclesiastici. 9. De Ecclesiæ Statu antiquo generatim. 10. De Jure Laicorum sacerdotali. 11. De Jure dandi Baptismum. 12. De extraordinario primitivæ Ecclesiæ statu.
- Jo. Francisci Buddei Ecclesia Apostolica, sive de Statu Ecclesiæ Christianæ sub Apostolis Commentatio Historico-Dogmatica; quæ et Introductionis loco in Epistolas Pauli cæterorumque Apostolorum esse queat. Jenæ, 1729. The author has briefly treated this important subject with great judgment, and referred to a variety of useful writers.
- Miscellanea Sacra: containing an Abstract of the Scripture History of the Apostles in a new Method. With four critical Essays: 1. On the Witness of the holy Spirit. 2. On the Distinction between Apostles, Elders, and Brethren. 3. On the Time when Paul and Barnabas became Apostles. 4. On the Apostolical Decree. To which is added, an Essay on the Dispensations of God to Mankind, as revealed in Scripture: together with a Dissertation on Hebrews xii. 22—25, now first published. A new Ed. with large Additions and Corrections. Lond. 1782, 3 vol. The merit of this work is generally acknowledged;

- ledged; Dr. Benson owned himself much indebted to it in his history of the first Planting of Christianity, and in some other of his works.
- A new Introduction to the Study and Knowledge of the new Testament, by E. Harwood, D. D. Lond. 1773, 2d. Ed. 2 vol.
- The sacred Interpreter: or a practical Introduction towards a beneficial reading of the Bible. Containing, 1. An History of the four antient Monarchies. 2. A general View of the Jewish Church to the taking of Jerusalem. 3. Remarks on the Pentateuch, Prophets, Gospels, &c. shewing the Design of each Book. 4. An exact Chronology of the Scriptures. 5. A Dissertation on revealed Religion, and an Account of those Divines who have defended it. 6. Difficult Texts explained, &c. By David Collyer. Lond. 1726-46, 2 vol.
- Dominici Diodati, T. C. Neapolitani de Christo Græce loquente Exercitatio; qua ostenditur Græcam seu Hellenisticam Linguam cum Judæis omnibus, tum ipsi adeo Christo et Apostolis nativam ac vernaculam fuisse. Neapoli, 1767. The reader will meet with some observations on this subject in Bowyer's Preface to his Conjectures on the new Testament.
- Problema de anno Nativitatis Christi, ubi occasionem offerente vetere Herodis Antipæ Nummo, in Nummophylacio Clementis XIV. P. O. M. Asservato demonstratur, Christum natum esse anno VIII. ante Æram vulgarem, contra veteres omnes et recentiores Chronologos. Autore P. Dominico Magnan. Romæ, 1772.
- Jacobi Elsneri Observationes sacræ in novi fœderis Libros, quibus plura illorum Librorum loca ex Auctoribus potissimum Græcis et Antiquitate exponuntur et illustrantur. Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1720, 2 vol.
- Joan. Alberti Observationes Philologicæ in sacros novi fœderis Libros. Lugd. Bat. 1725.
- Geor. Raphellii Annotationes in S. Scripturam, Historicæ in vetus, philologicæ in N. T. ex Xenophonte, Polybio, Arriano, et Herodoto collectæ. Lugd. Bat. 1750, 2 vol.
- Elizæ Palairret Observationes Philologico-criticæ, in sacros novi fœderis Libros, quorum plurima loca ex Auctoribus potissimum Græcis exponuntur, illustrantur, vindicantur. Lugd. Bat. 1752.
- Jo. Tobizæ Krebsii Observationes in novum Testamentum c Flavio Josepho. Lips. 1755.
- Georg. Davidis Kype Observationes sacræ in novi fœderis Libros ex Auctoribus potissimum Græcis et Antiquitatibus. Wrabslaviæ; 1755.
- Jo. Bap. Ottii Spicilegium, five excerptum ex Flavio Josepho ad N. Testam. illustrationem. Lugd. Bat. 1741.
- A free and impartial Study of the holy Scriptures recommended: being Notes on some particular Texts, with Discourses and Observations on various Subjects. By Jos. Hallet, Jun. Lond. 1729-36, 3 vol.
- The sacred Classics defended and illustrated: or an Essay humbly offered towards proving the Purity, Propriety, and true Eloquence of the Writers of the new Testament. By A. Blackwell, M. A. Lond. 1737, 2 vol.
- A Paraphrase on the four Evangelists, by Sam. Clarke, D. D. Lond. 1758, 10th. Ed. 2 vol. Though this paraphrase is included in Dr. Clarke's

- Clarke's works in folio, yet I have mentioned it here, as it may be easily procured and is very useful.
- A Paraphrase and Notes on the Acts of the Apostles, and upon all the Epistles of the new Testament. Being a complete Supplement to Dr. Clarke's Paraphrase on the four Gospels. By T. Pyle, M. A. Lond. 1765, 2 vol. 5th. Ed. There is a Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation by the same author.
- Bengelius' Introduction to his Exposition of the Apocalypse: with his Preface to that Work, and the greatest Part of the Conclusion of it, and also his marginal Notes on the Text, which are a Summary of the whole Exposition. Translated from the High Dutch, by J. Robertson, D. D. Lond. 1757.
- Codex Apocryphus novi Testamenti collectus, castigatus, testimoniisque censuris et animadversionibus illustratus a J. Alb. Fabricio. Hamb. 1703, 2 vol.
- An historical Geography of the old and new Testament, by Ed. Wells, D. D. Lond. 1721, 4 vol.
- Dionysii Petavii Rationarium Temporum, cui accedit Supplementum quo Historia ad hoc usque Tempus continuatur. Lugd. Bat. 1724, 2 vol.
- The sacred and profane History of the World connected from the Creation of the World to the Dissolution of the Assyrian Empire, &c. By S. Shuckford. M. A. Lond. 1743, 4 vol. 3d. Ed.
- The old and new Testament connected in the History of the Jews and neighbouring Nations, from the Declension of the Kingdom of Israel and Judah to the Time of Christ. By H. Prideaux, D. D. Lond. 1749, 4 vol. 10th. Ed.
- J. Alph. Turretini compendium Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ a Christo Nato ad finem Sec. XVII. Genevæ, 1737. And with the Continuation, by T. Simon. Halæ, 1750.
- Pauli Ernesti Jablonski Institutiones Historiæ Christianæ. Francofurti ad Viad. 3 vol. 1754-67. The third volume, which contains the history of the Church from the end of the seventeenth to the middle of the present century, was composed by Professor Stosch after the death of Jablonski. An English translation of this work in one vol. 8vo. would be very serviceable.
- An Ecclesiastical History from the Birth of Christ to the present Time. Written originally in French by Mr. Formey, Secretary to the Academy of Sciences at Berlin. To which is added, an Appendix, giving an Account of the People called Methodists, by the Translator. Lond. 1766, 2 vol.
- An Ecclesiastical History ancient and modern, from the Birth of Christ to the Beginning of the present Century: in which the Rise, Progress, and Variation of Church Power, are considered in their Connexion with the State of Learning and Philosophy, and the Political History of Europe during that Period. By the late learned L. Mosheim, D. D. Translated from the original Latin, and accompanied with Notes and chronological Tables, by Arch. Maclaine, D. D. Lond. 1782, 6 vol. The learned translator mentions the approbation which Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, gave of this work in the following terms, "Mo-

“Mosheim’s compendium is excellent, the method admirable, in short the only one deserving the name of an Ecclesiastical History.” The three preceding works, however, have great merit, and may be read with much utility.

A compendious History of the Church, from the Beginning of the World to the present Time (1710). Written in French by L. E. Dupin, and translated into English. Lond. 1713, 4 vol. Echard’s Ecclesiastical History from the Birth of Christ to the Establishment of Christianity under Constantine, in the year 313, is valuable in many respects, the third Ed. was published in 1712, and the first in 1702.

Remarks on Ecclesiastical History from the Commencement of Christianity to the year 1517, when Luther began the Work of Reformation, by T. Jortin, D. D. 1767-73, 4 vol. Dr. Jortin has, in a little compass, taken notice of so many facts, and animadverted on them with so much judgment, that this work will be ever held in deserved repute; he has inserted, also, into it the substance of his Discourses on the Nature, Use, and Intent, of Prophecy; and on Miracles, which were preached at Boyle’s Lecture.

Prælectiones Ecclesiasticæ triginta novem olim habitæ in sacello Collegii Emmanuelis apud Cantabrigienses a Joan. Richardson, S. T. B. Lond. 1726. This is a posthumous work of an author well known by his Vindication of the Canon of the new Testament in Answer to Toland.

Histoire des Juifs depuis J. Christ jusqu’ a present, pour servir de Continuation a l’ Histoire de Joseph. Par M. Basnage. Nouvelle Ed. augmentée. A la Haye, 1716, 15 vol.

The Apologies of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Minutius Felix, in Defence of the Christian Religion, with the Commonitory of Vincentius Lirinensis concerning the primitive Rule of Faith, translated from their Originals: with Notes, for the Advantage chiefly of English Readers, and a preliminary Discourse upon each Author. Together with a prefatory Dissertation about the right Use of the Fathers. By W. Reeves, M. A. Lond. 1716, 2 vol. The reader will peruse the notes of this Gentleman with caution, for he declares with much violence, “that he had rather believe no bible at all, than believe it in the sense of that commentator” Le Clerc.

The genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers, St. Barnabas, St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Martyrdoms of St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp, written by those who were present at their Sufferings. Translated and published with a large preliminary Discourse relating to the several Treatises here put together. By W. Wake, Lord Bishop of Lincoln. Lond. 1710, 2d. Ed.

Dissertatio de S. Scripturarum Interpretatione secundum Patrum Commentarios. In qua probatur, 1. S. Scripturam esse regulam fidei unicam, ex qua de omnibus Articulis fidei creditu necessariis ad salutem Judicium ferendum est. 2. Patres sive primævos sive subsequentes non esse Idoneos S. Scripturæ Interpretes. 3. Non posse Controversias de S. Trinitate motas ex patribus, conciliis, aut traditione vere catholica definiri. Authore D. Whitby. Lond. 1714. Whitby in the Epilogue to this work very boldly adds,— Ex trium primorum seculo-
rum

rum Scriptoribus, haud pauca, in hoc opere, interpretamenta congestimus, ab omni veritatis specie aliena. Ostendant nobis Patrum Patroni *unicam* Scripturæ Pericopen, quæ alias, obscura cum esset, ab iis sit lucem mutuata. But though the authority of Fathers and Councils be of no weight in controversy; the learned will still have recourse to them, as containing the materials of Ecclesiastical History.

The Credibility of the Gospel History, or the Facts occasionally mentioned in the new Testament confirmed by Passages of ancient Authors, who were cotemporary with our Saviour or his Apostles, or lived near their Time. By Nat. Lardner, D. D. Lond. 1727-57, 17 vol. The first part of the Credibility of the Gospel History was published in 1727, 2 vol. and a 3d. Ed. of it 1741. The second part was published at sundry times from 1733 to 1755, in 12 vol. The Supplement in 1756-7 in 3 vol. The intire Work is now become very scarce.

The History of the Establishment of Christianity, compiled from Jewish and Heathen Authors only; exhibiting a Proof of the Truth of this Religion. Translated from the French of Professor Bullet, by W. Salisbury, B. D. Lond. 1776. This work is well executed, and may be serviceable to those who have not Lardner's collection of Jewish and Heathen Testimonies. The reader will find something worth his attention on this subject in a small tract in 4to.—Non Christianorum de Christo Testimonia ex antiquis Monumentis proposita et dijudicata. A Tobia Eckherdo. Quedlinburgi, 1725.

A new and full Method of settling the canonical Authority of the new Testament. By the late Rev. Jer. Jones. Lond. 1726-7, 3 vol.

The History of the Propagation of Christianity and Overthrow of Paganism. Wherein the Christian Religion is confirmed, the Rise and Progress of heathenish Idolatry is considered, the Overthrow of Paganism and the Spreading of Christianity in the several Ages of the new Testament Church is explained. The present State of Heathens is inquired into, and Methods for their Conversion offered. By Rob. Millar. Edinb. 1723, 2 vol.

Letters on the Prevalence of Christianity before its civil Establishment. With Observations on a late History of the Decline of the Roman Empire. By East Apthorp, M. A. Lond. 1778. The author has enriched this work with many learned remarks, and especially with a catalogue of civil and ecclesiastical historians which the reader will find to be very useful.

Five Letters concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Translated from the French of M. Le Clerc, 1690.

A Vindication of the divine Authority and Inspiration of the Writings of the old and new Testament, in Answer to the preceding Book. By W. Lowth, B. D. Oxf. 1692.

An Essay on Inspiration, considered chiefly with Respect to the Evangelists. By Gilbert Wakefield, B. A. Lond. 1781.

Defense des Prophetes de la Religion Chrétienne, par le R. P. Baltus de la Compagnie de Jesus, contre Grotius et M. Simon. A Paris, 1737, 3 vol. Grotius and Father Simon contend, that many of the prophecies cited in the new Testament from the old, have double senses; one

- proper and literal, which respected the times and persons of the Jewish nation; the other allegorical, which respected the advent and person of Christ. M. Baltus censures this as a Socinian mode of expounding the prophecies, and, by a particular examination of the prophecies quoted by the writers of the new Testament, shews, that they primarily respected Christ, and were literally accomplished in him.
- The Use and Intent of Prophecy in the several Ages of the World. In six Discourses, delivered at the Temple Church. To which are added several Dissertations. By Tho. Sherlock, D.D. late Master of the Temple, now Lord Bishop of London. Lond. 1749, 5th. Ed. These discourses were attacked by Dr. Middleton in 1750, and have been defended by Dr. Rutherford, Mr. Rotherham, and others.
- A Defence of Christianity from the Prophecies of the old Testament; wherein are considered all the Objections against this Kind of Proof advanced in a late Discourse on the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion. By Ed. Chandler, Lord Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. Lond. 1725, 2d. Ed.
- A Vindication of the Christian Religion, in two Parts. 1. A Discourse of the Nature and Use of Miracles. 2. An Answer to a late Book, intitled, A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion. By Samuel Chandler. Lond. 1725. Collins' Discourse on the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion, published in 1724, was answered not only by the three authors last mentioned, but by a variety of others; there is an account of the chief of them in Leland's View of the Deistical Writers; and in Fabricius' Lux Evangelica, where above 50 different publications in opposition to Collins are enumerated. In the same authors (Leland and Fabricius) the reader will find a list of those who answered Woolston's Objections to the Miracles of our Saviour.
- An Essay upon the Truth of the Christian Religion; wherein its real Foundation upon the *Old Testament* is shewn. Occasioned by the Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion. By A. A. Sykes, M.A. Lond. 1725. M. De la Roche, in his Memoirs of Literature, speaking of this work, says, — If this book does not appear sufficient to remove scruples about the quotations of the first preachers of the Gospel from the old Testament, I know not what will do it. — Mr. Sykes expresses himself very firmly against a double completion of any prophecy; a double completion, says he, unless it be declared by the prophet, will make all prophecy perfectly useless.
- An Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies concerning the Christian Church; and in Particular concerning the Church of Papal Rome: in twelve Sermons, preached in Lincoln's Inn Chapel, at the Lecture of the Right Reverend W. Warburton, Lord Bishop of Gloucester. By R. Hurd, D.D. Lond. 1772.
- Twelve Sermons on the Prophecies concerning the Christian Church; and in Particular concerning the Church of Papal Rome. Preached at Bp. Warburton's Lecture, by S. Hallifax, D.D. Lond. 1776.
- Twelve Discourses on the Prophecies concerning the Establishment and subsequent History of Christianity. Preached at Bp. Warburton's Lecture, by Lewis Bagot, LL.D. Oxford, 1780.

An Essay towards reconciling the Numbers of Daniel and St. John, determining the Birth of our Saviour, and fixing a precise Time for the Continuance of the present Desolation of the Jews; with some Conjectures and Calculations pointing the Year 1764, to have been one of the most remarkable in History. By the Rev. G. Burton, M.A. Lond. 1766.

The Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion, containing Discourses upon such Subjects as are thought most liable to Objections. By Rob. Jenkins, D.D. Lond. 1734, 5th. Ed. 2 vol.

A Conference with a Theist; containing an Answer to all the most usual Objections of the Infidels against the Christian Religion. By W. Nichols, D.D. Lond. 1723, 3d. Ed. 2 vol.

Discourses concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion, by J. Jortin. Lond. 1746. The subjects of these Discourses are, 1. The Prejudices of the Jews and Gentiles. 2. The Propagation of the Gospel. 3. The Kingdom of Christ. 4. The Fitness of the Time when Christ came into the World. 5. The Testimony of John the Baptist. 6. The Scriptures of the new Testament. 7. The Gospel as it is Grace and Truth. A third Ed. has been published.

An Argument in Defence of Christianity, taken from the Confession of its most ancient Adversaries. By Greg. Sharpe, LL.D. Lond. 1753.

A second Argument in Defence of Christianity, taken from the ancient Prophecies, applied to the most remarkable Events in the Life and Character of Jesus Christ. By Greg. Sharpe, LL.D. Lond. 1762.

The Evidence of Christianity deduced from Facts and the Testimony of Sense, throughout all Ages of the World to the present Time, in a Series of Discourses preached at Boyle's Lecture in 1766-7-8, wherein is shewn, that upon the Whole this is not a decaying, but a growing Evidence. By W. Worthington, D.D. Lond. 1769, 2 vol.

Religionis Naturalis et Revelatæ principia, Methodo Scholastica digesta in usum Juventutis Academicæ. Parisiis, 1754, 2 vol. and a third vol. by Way of Supplement. Authore L. T. Hooke. The author of this book is a Doctor of the Sorbonne, yet there are many things very liberally said in it, as the reader may judge from the following proposition which is maintained in the Supplement, — *Deus solus ob sapientissimos fines causarum naturalium ordinem, per seipsum aut Ministerium Angelorum intervertit: Dæmonum quæcunque naturalis vis sit, nulla est licentia; ac ubi se nostris rebus immiscet, divinorum judiciorum Ministri, non suo arbitrio unquam relinquuntur, neque unquam per eorum ministerium in confirmationem falsi Miracula eduntur.*

The Usefulness, Truth, and Excellency of the Christian Religion, defended against the Objections contained in a late Book, intitled, Christianity as old as the Creation, &c. By James Foster. Lond. 1734, 3d. Ed.

The Reasonableness of the Christian Religion as delivered in the Scriptures. By G. Benson, D.D. Lond. 1759, 3d. Ed. 2 vol. The author not only advances many arguments in proof of the Truth of the Christian Religion, but obviates, in a familiar way, the chief objections of the Anti-revelationists.

A Discourse concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, in three Parts.

Wherein, 1. The Consequences of the Doctrine are stated hypothetically. 2. The Nature and Obligation of moral Evidence is explained. 3. The Proofs of the Fact of our Saviour's Resurrection are proposed, examined, and fairly demonstrated to be conclusive. Together with an Appendix concerning the impossible Production of Thought from Matter and Motion, &c. By Humph. Ditton. Lond. 1740, 5th. Ed. This book was translated into French in 1728, and the year after into Dutch.

A Defence of Christianity, in two Parts. 1. The Law of Nature considered, and shewn to be consistent with Reason and itself, — and the Attention to it productive of the greatest Benefit to Mankind. 2. The Authority and Usefulness of Revelation and the sacred Writings asserted and vindicated, against the several Objections made to them by the Deists in general, and in Particular by the Author of Christianity as old as the Creation. By John Leland, D.D. Lond. 1753, 2d. Ed. 2 vol.

A View of the principal deistical Writers that have appeared in England in the last and present Century; with Observations upon them, and some Account of the Answers that have been published against them. In several Letters to a Friend. By J. Leland, D. D. Lond. 1766, 2 vol. 5th. Ed.

An Enquiry into the divine Missions of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, so far as they can be proved from the Circumstances of their Birth, and their Connection with each other. By W. Bell, M. A. Lond. 1761. There is published by the same author, A Defence of Revelation in general and the Gospel in particular.

Letters from Baron Haller to his Daughter, on the Truths of the Christian Religion. Translated from the German. Lond. 1780.

Dissertations on Subjects relative to the Genius and Evidences of Christianity. By Alex. Gerard, D. D. Edinb. 1766.

An Inquiry into the Causes of the Infidelity and Scepticism of the Times, with occasional Observations on the Writings of Herbert, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Hume, Gibbon, Toulmin, &c. &c. By J. Ogilvie, D.D. Lond. 1783.

An Appeal to common Sense in behalf of Religion. By the Rev. James Ofwald, D.D. Lond. 1768, 2d. Ed. A second vol. in 1772.

The Advantages and Necessity of the Christian Revelation shewn from the State of Religion in the ancient Heathen World: especially with Respect to the Knowledge and Worship of the one true God: a Rule of moral Duty: and a State of future Rewards and Punishments. To which is prefixed, a preliminary Discourse on natural and revealed Religion. By John Leland, D.D. Lond. 1768, 2 vol. All the works of Dr. Leland are valuable.

A Discourse of the Necessity and Usefulness of the Christian Religion, by Reason of the Corruptions of natural Religion among the Jews and Heathens. By Dan. Whitby, D.D. Lond. 1705.

The Light of Nature pursued by Edw. Search (Abraham Tucker) Esq; Lond. 1768-78, 9 vol. In the last four volumes there is added to the general title, — Lights of Nature and Gospel blended.

Of the Principles and Duties of natural Religion. By the Right Rev. John Wilkins, D. D. Lord Bishop of Chester. Lond. 1734.

The Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature. By Jos. Butler, D. D. late Lord Bishop of Durham. Lond. 1754, 5th. Ed.

The Religion of Nature delineated. By Mr. Wollaston. Lond. 1750, 7th. Ed. Considerations on the Theory of Religion: in three Parts. 1. Want of Universality in natural and revealed Religion, no just Objection against either. 2. The Scheme of divine Providence with Regard to the Time and Manner of the several Dispensations of revealed Religion, more especially the Christian. 3. The Progress of natural Religion and Science, or the continual Improvement of the World in general. To which are added, two Discourses; the former on the Life and Character of Christ, the latter on the Benefits procured by his Death, in Regard to our Mortality. With an Appendix, concerning the Use of the word Soul in holy Scripture; and the State of the Dead there described. By Edw. Lord Bishop of Carlisle. Carlisle, 1784, Ed. 7th.

An Essay on Miracles, in two Discourses. By Will. (Bishop) Fleetwood. Lond. 1701. The two main Principles of this Book, — that none but God can work a *true* miracle, — and that it cannot be supposed that a true miracle was ever wrought in opposition to a doctrine established on true miracles, — were opposed by Mr. (Bishop) Hoadley, in a Letter to Mr. Fleetwood. Lond. 1702. And the reading these two tracts occasioned Mr. Locke's writing his discourse on Miracles, which he published in his works.

Traité sur les Miracles. Dans lesquels on prouve que le Diable n'en feroit faire pour confirmer l'erreur; où l'on fait voir, par plusieurs exemples tirez de l'Histoire sainte et profane que ceux qu'on lui attribue ne sont qu'un effet de l'imposture ou de l'adresse des hommes. Et où l'on examine le Système opposé tel que l'a établi le Dr. Clarke dans son Traité sur la Religion Naturelle et Chretienne. Par J. Serces Vicaire d'Appleby dans le Comté de Lincoln. A Amster. 1729. The author says in his preface, that in maintaining that God never permitted the devil to work miracles in support of any dangerous error, and in questioning the physical power of the devil to effect a miracle, he declared war against the opinion of the most venerable theologians and philosophers ancient and modern. The book is well written, and I do not know that it has ever appeared in English.

A Dissertation on Miracles, designed to shew that they are Arguments of a divine Interposition, and absolute Proofs of the Mission and Doctrine of a Prophet. By Hugh Farmer. Lond. 1771. The doctrine advanced in the preceding book, is very ably supported in this. The reader will find in *Werenfelsius'* works the question, — Num Miracula certa sint Veritatis signa — determined, by various arguments, in the affirmative. The author, Mr. Farmer, was accused of having borrowed his Idea of Miracles from Mr. Le Moine's book on that subject, and he published a pamphlet, intitled, An Examination of Mr. Le Moine's Treatise on Miracles, in which he shews the difference of his plan from those of Mr. Le Moine, Dr. Sykes, and Bp. Fleetwood.

A brief Discourse concerning the Credibility of Miracles and Revelation. Wherein the Credibility of Gospel Miracles is shewn, notwithstanding all later Miracles may be rejected as fictitious. To which is added, a Postscript in Answer to the Lord Bishop of Litchfield's Charge

- to his Clergy. By A. A. Sykes, D. D. Lond. 1742, and a second Ed. in 1749.
- Two Questions, previous to Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry impartially considered: viz. What are the Grounds upon which the Credibility of Miracles, *in general*, is founded? And, Upon what Grounds the Miracles of the Gospel, *in particular*, are credible? To which is added, a Dissertation upon Mark xvi. 17-18. *These signs shall follow them that believe*, &c. Lond. 1750. and a second Part in 1752, by Dr. Sykes. This author wrote above sixty different tracts, an edition of all his works would be useful.
- The Criterion: or Miracles examined with a View to expose the Pretensions of Pagans and Papists, to compare the miraculous Powers recorded in the new Testament, with those said to subsist in later Times, &c. By the Rev. J. Douglass, A. M. Lond. 1757.
- A Dissertation on Miracles: containing an Examination of the Principles advanced by David Hume, Esq; By G. Campbell, D. D. Edinb. 1762.
- An Inquiry into the Nature and Design of Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness. By Hugh Farmer. Lond. 1776, 3d. Ed.
- An Essay on the Demoniacs of the new Testament. By Hugh Farmer. Lond. 1755.
- An impartial Inquiry into the Case of the Gospel Demoniacs. By W. Worthington, D. D. Lond. 1777.
- Letters to the Rev. Dr. Worthington, in Answer to his late Publication, intitled, "An impartial Inquiry into the Case of the Gospel Demoniacs". By Hugh Farmer. Lond. 1778.
- An Inquiry into the Heathen and the Scripture Doctrine of Dæmons. In which the Hypothesis of the Rev. Mr. Farmer and others on this Subject, is particularly examined. By John Fell. Lond. 1779.
- An Enquiry into the meaning of the Demoniacks in the new Testament. By T. P. &c. Dr. Sykes. Lond. 1737. And a further Enquiry, &c. by the same author in the same year.
- The Case of the Demoniacs mentioned in the new Testament. By N. Lardner, D. D. Lond. 1758.
- The general Prevalence of the Worship of human Spirits in the ancient Heathen Nations asserted and proved. By Hugh Farmer. Lond. 1783.
- An historical Dissertation on idolatrous Corruptions in Religion, from the Beginning of the World; and on the Methods taken by divine Providence in reforming them. By Arthur Young. Lond. 1734, 2 vol. The object of this author is to shew, that Revelation was designed to prevent Superstition; he has many sensible Observations on particular parts of the Law of Moses.
- Pauli Ern. Jablonski Pantheon Ægyptiorum five de Diis eorum Commentarius. Francofurti ad Viadrum, 1750, 3 vol.
- Archæologiæ Philosophicæ: five Doctrina antiqua de Rerum originibus. Lond. 1733. Auctore Thoma Burnet, S. T. P.
- Origines Gentium Antiquissimæ. By R. Cumberland, D. D. late Lord Bishop of Peterborough. Lond. 1724.
- De Fide et Officiis Christianorum. Liber posthumus. Lond. 1728, Ed. 2da. Autore T. Burnetio, S. T. P. All the Latin works of Dr. Burnet, are written with such perspicuity and elegance of style, that, notwithstanding

withstanding the singularity of some of his opinions, they are highly deserving of attention.

Eight Sermons, preached at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, in Defence of the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. By Dan. Waterland, D. D. Lond. 1720, 2d. Ed. This and the other theological works of Dr. Waterland, are much esteemed by the orthodox, and they may be properly consulted by such Arians and Socinians as wish to know what can be advanced against their principles.

Traité de la Divinité de nôtre Seigneur Jesus Christ, par M. Abbadie. A Rotterdam, 1709. This author published a treatise on the Truth of the Christian Religion at Rotter. 1689, 2 vol.

The Works of Mr. Tho. Emlyn, containing a Collection of Tracts and Sermons on various Subjects. With a large Account of the Author's Life, by Solom. Emlyn, Esq; Lond. 1746.

An Essay on Spirit; wherein the Doctrine of the Trinity is considered in the Light of Nature and Reason, as well as in the Light in which it was held by the ancient Hebrews, compared also with the Doctrine of the old and new Testament. With an Inquiry into the Sentiments of the primitive Fathers of the Church, &c. Lond. 1751, from the Dublin Copy with Additions and Corrections by the Author (Bp. Clayton). This work was animadverted on by Dr. Scot in his scriptural Doctrine of the Trinity, 1754, and answered by Mr. Jones, 1770.

The Apology of Benjamin Ben Mordecai to his Friends for embracing Christianity, in seven Letters to Elisha Levi, Merchant of Amsterdam, together with an eighth Letter, on the Generation of Jesus Christ, with Notes and Illustrations. The 2d. Ed. with Alterations and Additions. By Henry Taylor, Rector of Crawley and Vicar of Portsmouth, in Hants. Lond. 1784, 2 vol. These Letters were printed at various times, from 1771 to 1777, in 4to.; they are composed with great learning and ingenuity, and contain the most formidable attack on, what is called, the Athanasian System that is any where to be met with.

A Letter writ in the Year 1730, concerning the Question, Whether the Logos supplied the Place of a human Soul in the Person of Jesus Christ? to which are added, two Postscripts; the first containing an Explication of these Words, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, as used in the Scriptures. The second containing Remarks upon the third Part of the late Bishop of Clogher's Vindication of the Histories of the old and new Testament. Lond. 1759. By Dr. Lardner. There is reason to refer to the same author, — Two Schemes of a Trinity considered, and the divine Unity asserted. Four Discourses upon Philip. ii. 5-11. Lond. 1784. — *Newton* and *Locke* were esteemed *Socinians*, *Lardner* was an avowed one: *Clarke* and *Whiston* were declared *Arians*; *Bull* and *Waterland* were professed *Athanasians*; who will take upon him to say that these men were not equal to each other in probity and scriptural knowledge? And if that be admitted, surely we ought to learn no other lesson, from the diversity of their opinions, except that of perfect moderation and good-will towards all those who happen to differ from ourselves. We ought to entertain no other wish, but that every man may be allowed, without loss of fame or fortune,

- et sentire quæ velit, et quæ sentiat dicere.* This absolute freedom of inquiry, it is apprehended, is the best way of investigating the sense of scripture, the most probable mean of producing an uniformity of opinion, and of rendering the Gospel Dispensation as intelligible to us in the eighteenth century as, we presume, it was to the Christians in the first.
- The true Doctrine of the new Testament concerning Jesus Christ considered; wherein the Misrepresentations that have been made of it upon the *Arian* Hypothesis and upon all *Trinitarian* and *Athanasian* Principles are exposed; and the Honour of our Saviour's divine Character and Mission is maintained. With an Appendix, containing Strictures upon the first Chapter of St. John's Gospel; and a prefatory Discourse upon the Right of private Judgment in Matters of Religion. This work was revised, before it was printed, by Dr. Lardner; the author (the Rev. Mr. Cardale) published a Supplement to it, intitled, A Comment on some Passages in Christ's Prayer at the Close of his public Ministry.
- The Apology of Theophilus Lindsey, M.A. on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, in Yorkshire. Lond. 1774.
- A scriptural Confutation of the Arguments against the One Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, produced by the Rev. Mr. Lindsey in his late Apology. By a Layman. York, 1774.
- A Sequel to the Apology on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, Yorkshire. By Theo. Lindsey, M.A. Lond. 1776.
- An Inquiry into the Belief of the Christians of the three first Centuries, respecting the One Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Being a Sequel to a scriptural Confutation of the Rev. Mr. Lindsey's late Apology. By W. Burgh, Esq; York, 1778. Mr. Lindsey's principles were opposed, not only by Mr. Burgh; but by Mr. Bingham in his Vindication of the Doctrine and Liturgy of the Church of England; by Dr. Randolph in his Vindication of the Worship of the Son and Holy Ghost, and in his Letter to the Remarker (Mr. Temple) on the Layman's scriptural Confutation, and by others.
- Two Dissertations; 1. On the Preface to St. John's Gospel: 2. On praying to Jesus Christ. By Theop. Lindsey, A.M. With a short Postscript, by Dr. Jebb. Lond. 1779.
- An historical View of the State of the Unitarian Doctrine and Worship, from the Reformation to our own Times. With some Account of the Obstructions which it has met with at different Periods. By Theo. Lindsey, M.A. Lond. 1783. The author has treated this interesting subject with great candour and ability.
- An Enquiry into the Opinions of the Christian Writers of the three first Centuries concerning the Person of Jesus Christ. By Gilbert Wakefield, B.A. Lond. 1784, vol. 1st.
- Five Dissertations: 1. On the Athanasian Doctrine. 2. On the Socinian Scheme. 3. On the Person of Christ. 4. On the Rise, Progress, Perfection, and End of Christ's Kingdom. 5. On the Causes which probably conspired to produce our Saviour's Agony. By Ed. Harwood, D.D. Lond. 1772. And a 2d. Ed. of the Essay on the Socinian Scheme, in 1784. Dr. Harwood rejects the Athanasian and Socinian Schemes as not, in his opinion, founded in Scripture.

- Tractatus de Imputatione divina Peccati Adami in reatum. Authore. Dan. Whitby, S. T. P. Lond. 1711.
- The Scripture Doctrine of original Sin proposed to free and candid Examination. To which is added, a Supplement containing some Remarks on two Books, viz. The Vindication of the Scripture Doctrine of original Sin, and, The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind. By John Taylor, of Norwich, D. D. 3d. Ed. 1750.
- A Discourse concerning, 1. The true Purport of the Words *Election* and *Reprobation*, and the Things signified by them in the holy Scripture. 2. The Extent of Christ's Redemption. 3. The Grace of God, where it is enquired whether it be vouchsafed sufficiently to those who improve it not, and irresistibly to those who do improve it; and whether Men be wholly passive in the Work of Regeneration. 4. The Liberty of the Will in a State of Trial and Probation. 5. The Perseverance or Defectibility of the Saints; with some Reflexions on the State of Heathens, the Providence, and Præscience of God. By Dan. Whitby, D. D. Lond. 1710. Whitby says of himself in the preface to this work that he was brought up a *Calvinist*, and that what first moved him to examine into the truth of the Calvinistic Divinity, was — *the Imputation of Adam's Sin to all his Posterity*, — and the strange consequences of it. He says, that he examined the writings of antiquity, and finished a treatise on Original Sin in Latin, which had been composed about twenty years, but which he had not thought it advisable to publish. This treatise was published in the following year.
- The divine Feudal Law, or Covenants with Mankind represented, together with Means for uniting of Protestants. By Sam. Baron Puffendorf. Translated from the Latin by Theop. Dorrington. Lond. 1703. In this book Puffendorf treats of many of the subjects which are discussed by Whitby in the last article. A tract, intitled, The Re-union of Christians, or the Means to re-unite Christians under one Confession of Faith, was published in London, 1673. It was originally written in French, and in an appendix to another translation of it in 1700, we learn that M. D' Huillean, one of the Ministers of Saumur, had a principal hand in its composition.
- The Doctrine of Grace: or the Office and Operations of the Holy Spirit vindicated from the Insults of Infidelity and the Abuses of Fanaticism. By W. Lord Bishop of Gloucester. Lond. 1763, 2d. Ed.
- The Doctrine of irresistible Grace, proved to have no Foundation in the Writings of the new Testament. By T. Edwards, A. M. Camb. 1759.
- An Attempt to ascertain and illustrate the Authority, Nature and Design of the Institution of Christ, commonly called the Communion and the Lord's Supper. By W. Bell, D. D. Lond. 1780.
- A plain Account of the Ordinance of Baptism, in which all the Texts of the N. T. relating to it, are produced, and the whole Doctrine concerning it drawn from them alone, in a Course of Letters to the Right Rev. Dr. Benjamin Hoadley, late Lord Bishop of Winchester, Author of a plain Account of the Lord's Supper. Lond. 1766, 2d. Ed.
- The History of Infant-Baptism. By W. Wall. Lond. 1720. The first Ed. in 4to. in 1705.

Reflexions on Mr. Wall's History of Infant-Baptism. By J. Gale. Lond. 1711. Wall's main argument in favour of Infant-Baptism, is founded on the practice which the Jews, he says, had of baptizing proselytes to their religion: Dr. Gill has questioned, in a learned tract, the Existence of such a practice amongst the Jews; and others have endeavoured to shew, that, admitting the practice to have existed, it was not extended to Children who were born after their parents had become proselytes; and consequently that the necessity of baptizing children born of Christian parents cannot be inferred from the Jewish practice of baptizing proselytes. Socinus wrote a tract on this question, *An homini Christiano aquæ baptismo carere liceat?* and he determined it in the affirmative.

The Scripture Doctrine of Atonement examined; first in Relation to Jewish Sacrifices: and then to the Sacrifice of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. By John Taylor, D.D. 1751. A small pamphlet was published in 1772, by W. Graham, A. M. intitled, *The Doctrine of Atonement briefly considered, in a Series of Letters to a young Gentleman at the University.* To which is added, Dr. Duchal's Letter to Dr. Taylor on the same Subject; which was first published in the 2d. vol. of the Theological Repository. Before the publication of Dr. Taylor's Doctrine of Atonement, a very sensible essay on Redemption had been published by Mr. Balguy, 1741.

Jesus Christ the Mediator between God and Man, an Advocate for us with the Father, and a Propitiation for the Sins of the World. 2d. Ed. To which is now added by another Gentleman, an Essay to prove the Credibility of the Gospel from the Doctrine of the Efficacy of Christ's Death for the Redemption of the World. Lond. 1761. This is a very sensible treatise (by Mr. Tomkins), in which the author endeavours to establish the literal sense of those passages in Scripture which concern our redemption by Christ; he looks upon the death of Christ as a real sacrifice, and represents the notion the Scripture gives us of these things as consistent with the dictates of Reason and natural Religion.

An Essay on the Scheme and Conduct, Procedure and Extent of Man's Redemption; wherein is shewn, from the holy Scriptures, that this great work is to be accomplished by a gradual Restauration of Man and Nature to their primitive State. To which is annexed, a Dissertation on the Design and Argumentation of the Book of Job. By W. Worthington, A. M. Lond. 1748, 2d. Ed.

An Essay on the Nature, Design, and Origin of Sacrifices. By Dr. Sykes, Lond. 1748.

The Scripture Doctrine of the Redemption of Man by Jesus Christ. In two Parts. In the *former* of which, the principal, if not all, the Texts relating to the Subject are produced, and the Meaning of each Text, where necessary, is examined and explained. In the *latter*, the Doctrine of our Redemption is set forth in 48 Propositions. By Dr. Sykes. 1756. This is one of the last and one of the best works of Dr. Sykes, who died in Nov. 1756.

De Statu mortuorum et resurgentium Tractatus. Adjicitur Appendix de futura Judæorum Restauratione. Lond. 1733, Ed. 2da. Autore T. Burnetio, S. T. P.

An historical View of the Controversy concerning an intermediate State and the separate Existence of the Soul, between Death and the general Resurrection; deduced from the Beginning of the Protestant Reformation to the present Times. With some Thoughts, in a prefatory Discourse, on the Use and Importance of Theological Controversy. Lond. 1772, 2d. Ed.

The Restoration of all Things, or a Vindication of the Goodness and Grace of God to be manifested at last in the Recovery of his whole Creation out of their Fall. By Jeremy White. Lond. 1712. The author gives some account, in his preface, of those who in ancient and modern times had supported the opinion of the final reformation of all mankind. Dr. Hartley maintained the same doctrine in the second volume of his Observations on Man, &c. and Bishop Newton has shewn himself an able advocate for it in one of his Dissertations published in his works.

The Mystery hid from Ages and Generations, made manifest by the Gospel Revelation: or the Salvation of all Men, the grand Thing aimed at in the Scheme of God, as opened in the new Testament Writings, and entrusted with Jesus Christ to bring into Effect. Lond. 1784. By Charles Chauncy, D. D. of Boston, in New England.

An Enquiry into the Nature of the human Soul; wherein the Immateriality of the Soul is evinced from the Principles of Reason and Philosophy. Lond. 1745, 2 vol. 3d. Ed. Mr. Baxter published an Appendix to the first part of this inquiry in 1750.

Sermons on the Evidence of a future State of Rewards and Punishments, arising from a View of our Nature and Condition; in which are considered some Objections of Hume. By W. Craven, B.D. Camb. 1783. The subject is treated with great perspicuity, and Mr. Hume's objections solidly refuted.

Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit. To which is added, the History of the philosophical Doctrine concerning the Origin of the Soul and the Nature of Matter; with its Influence on Christianity, especially with Respect to the Pre-existence of Christ. By Jos. Priestley, LL.D. F. R. S. Lond. 1777.

A free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism and philosophical Necessity, in a Correspondence between Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley: to which are added by Dr. Priestley, an Introduction explaining the Nature of the Controversy, and Letters to several Writers who have animadverted on his Disquisitions. Lond. 1778. The reader who has a taste for these metaphysical disquisitions, may consult some more recent publications on the subject, especially an Essay on the Nature and Existence of the material World. Lond. 1781.

The Theological Repository, consisting of original Essays, Hints, Queries, &c. calculated to promote religious Knowledge. Lond. 1773, 3 vol.

Thesaurus Theologicus, or a compleat System of Divinity, summed up in brief Notes upon select Places of the old and new Testament. By W. Beveridge, D.D. Lord Bishop of St. Asaph. Lond. 1711, 4 vol.

A System of Divinity and Morality, in a Series of Discourses on all the essential Points of natural and revealed Religion, compiled from the Works

Works of above thirty eminent Divines. Revised and corrected by Ferd. Warner, LL.D. Lond. 1767, 4 vol."

Joan. Chris. Beckii Synopsis Institutionum Universæ Theologiæ Naturalis et Revelatæ, &c. in usum Auditorii Domestici. Basilæ, 1765; This is a very good work; the author expresses himself in the following terms concerning the mode of education which prevails in this place, and I believe in Oxford. — Multis placet *Anglorum* discendi ratio, quorum singuli juvenes, cum ad Academias sese conferunt, unum ex publicis doctoribus sibi ducem studiorum eligunt, cujus sequentes consilium legant, meditentur, scribant. Identidem examinantur, ut de progressibus judicari queat et consilia ulteriora suppeditari. Habet hæc methodus sua commoda. Sed incommodum istud est maximum, quod singuli doctores nonnisi paucis hoc modo dirigendis sufficiant, nisi ab omnibus aliis laboribus immunes sint, quod apud nos minime obtinetur. — Our mode of academic institution is still more perfect than this author conceived it to be; and our Tutors have that freedom from other engagements which he wished for.

Joan. Fred. Burgii Institutiones Theologicæ. Vratislaviæ, 1766, Ed. 3tia. Sermons on the Attributes of God. By Dan. Whitby, D.D. Lond. 1710, 2 vol.

Discourses concerning the Being and natural Perfections of God. By T. Abernethy, M. A. Dublin, 1746, 2 vol.

The Being and Attributes of God demonstrated. By H. Knight, A. M. Lond. 1747. It is enough to say of this work, that it is recommended by Benson, Lardner, and Taylor of Norwich.

A practical Catechism. By H. Hammond, D.D. The 12th. Ed. whereunto is added, the Reasonableness of the Christian Religion, by the same Author. Lond. 1683.

Lectures on the Catechism of the Church of England. By W. Gilpin, M. A. Lond. 1781, 2d. Ed. This book greatly merits the attention of young persons. Archbishop Wake's Principles of the Christian Religion, in a Commentary on the Church Catechism; Archbishop Secker's Lectures on the Catechism; Ostervald's Grounds and Principles of the Christian Religion; Bp. Gastrel's Christian Institutes; Bp. Gibson's Pastoral Letters, and a great variety of other religious Tracts are highly deserving of notice; but I omit an enumeration of them; heartily recommending it to the reader, whether he be a Layman or Clergyman, to furnish himself with the collection of such tracts which is made by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.

An Essay on the Composition of a Sermon, translated from the Original of the Rev. J. Claude, Minister of the French Reformed Church at Charenton. With Notes by Rob. Robinson, in 2 vol. Camb. 1779.

Sermons on several Occasions, preached before the University of Cambridge; to which is prefixed, a Dissertation on that Species of Composition. By J. Mainwaring, B.D. Camb. 1780. The studious reader will receive much advantage from the justness of the criticism displayed in the Dissertation and Notes.

A Discourse of the Pastoral Care, by Gilbert Burnet, Lord Bishop of Sarum; with a new Preface and some other Additions. First printed in 1692. Glasgow, 1762.

Books in Divinity.

- Lectures on the Exercise of the sacred Ministry. By the late T. F. Oltersvald. Translated from the French, with a Preface and occasional Notes, by Tho. Stevens, M.A. Lond. 1781.
- The Theological Works of the most Rev. Dr. John Potter, late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury: containing his Sermons, Charges, Discourses of Church Government and Prælectiones Theologicæ. Oxf. 1753, 3 vol.
- The miscellaneous Works of the late reverend and learned Conyers Middleton, D. D. Lond. 1755, 5 vol. 2d. Ed.
- Opuscula Miscellanea Theologica Joan. Burton S. T. P. and his Sermons, &c. in all 6 vol. Oxford, 1744-71.
- The Works of Tho. Sharp, D. D. late Archdeacon of Northumberland, containing occasional Sermons; Tracts on various Subjects; Considerations on the Rubric and Canons; Dissertations on *Elohim* and *Berith*; a Defence of the Dissertations, in three Parts; Discourses touching the Antiquity of the Hebrew Tongue and Character; an Examination of Mr. Hutchinson's Exposition of Cherubim. Lond. 1763, 6 vol.
- Four Dissertations. 1. On Providence. 2. On Prayer. 3. On the Reasons for expecting that virtuous Men shall meet after Death in a State of Happiness. 4. On the Importance of Christianity, the Nature of historical Evidence and Miracles. By R. Price, F. R. S. Lond. 1767.
- Discourses on various Subjects, by W. S. Powell, D. D. Lond. 1776. The editor, Dr. Balguy, observes that these discourses were chiefly intended for the benefit of the younger students in divinity. They are written with great acuteness and knowledge of the several subjects.
- A rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. By C. Wheatley. Lond. 1722, 4th. Ed. This is one of the most useful works on the subject, as it comprehends the substance of *Comber's* Companion to the Temple, of *Nichols' Commentary* on the Common Prayer, and of other similar treatises.
- A Vindication of the Government, Doctrine, and Worship of the Church of England, established in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, against the injurious Reflections of Mr. Neale in his late History of the Puritans. Together with a Detection of many false Quotations and Mistakes in that Performance. Lond. 1740. By Bp. Maddox.
- An impartial Examination of the 2d, 3d, and 4th vol. (8vo.) of Daniel Neal's History of the Puritans. By Zach. Grey, LL.D. Lond. 1736-9, 2 vol.
- Free and candid Disquisitions relating to the Church of England, and the Means of advancing Religion therein. Lond. 1750, 2d. Ed. — In 1677, the third Ed. of a book was published, intitled, — A Discourse vindicating the Lawfulness of those Things which are chiefly excepted against in the Church of England, especially in its Liturgy and Worship, by W. Falkener.
- The Book of Common Prayer reformed according to the Plan of the late Dr. Sam. Clarke; together with the Psalter or Psalms of David. Lond. 1774.
- The Confessional: or a full and free Inquiry into the Right, Utility, Edification

Edification and Success of establishing systematical Confessions of Faith and Doctrine in Protestant Churches. Lond. 1770, 3d. Ed. The author of this work, who is well known to be a very learned Clergyman of the Church of England, takes so much notice of all the writers who opposed his sentiments, that there is no need to give a particular enumeration of the several pamphlets which were written against it. The controversy is still unsettled; it is still a question, whether any Christian Church has a *right* to require from its public teachers any other Profession of Faith, than that of a belief in the Bible, as containing a revelation from God?—It is still a question, whether, granting the Abstract Right, the *Use* of it be *expedient* in any degree, and to what degree, in the present condition of the Church of England? One of the latest and best tracts on this subject, is that by the author of Ben. Mordecai's Apology, intitled, Farther Thoughts on the Nature of the grand Apostacy of the Christian Church foretold by the Apostles: with Observations on the Laws against Hereticks, the Subscription to Articles of human Composition, &c. Lond. 1783.

The Errors of the Church of Rome detected, in ten Dialogues, between Benevolus and Sincerus. To which another is added, containing a brief Vindication of the Revolution, and subsequent Settlement of the Crown upon the illustrious House of Hanover. By the Rev. James Smith. Lond. 1778, 2d. Ed. The author left the communion of the Church of Rome, in which he had been educated, in 1764. He observes, that he lived for some years in the College for Parish Priests at Lisbon, and that he there took the *College Oath*, which is always administered to students, a part of which is, that, whenever the president of the college should think proper, *he would return to England as a Missionary, and bring over as many Protestants as he could, to the Communion of the Church of Rome.* He by chance met with Bennet's Confutation of Popery, and that book, together with the ecclesiastical History of M. Jean Le Seur, principally contributed to make him renounce the Errors of the Church of Rome. This is an useful book for those who wish to have a concise view of the corruptions of Christianity as practised in the Church of Rome.

An History of the Corruptions of Christianity. By Jos. Priestley, LL.D. 2 vol. Some parts of this work have been animadverted on, in a very able manner, by Dr. Horsley, and others; nor has Dr. Priestley been backward in his replies; the curious reader will furnish himself with all the tracts which have been already published on each side of the question; and will expect with impatience the larger *History of the State of Opinions concerning Christ in the primitive Times*; in the composing of which Dr. Priestley is now engaged.

Bibliotheca Sacra, seu Syllabus omnium ferme Editionum sacræ Scripturæ ac Versionum secundum seriem Linguarum quibus Vulgatæ sunt, Notis historicis et criticis illustratus, adjunctis præstantissimis Codd. MSS. Labore Jacobi Le Long, recensuit castigavit auxit C. F. Boernerus. Lipsiæ, 1709.

The Preacher's Assistant (after the Manner of Mr. Letsome), containing a Series of the Texts of Sermons and Discourses, published either singly or in Volumes: by Divines of the Church of England and by
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the Dissenting Clergy, since the Restoration to the present Time, specifying also the several Authors alphabetically arranged under each Text; with the Size, Date, Occasion, or subject Matter of each Sermon or Discourse. By J. Cooke, M. A. Oxford, 1783, 2 vol.—There are some errors in this compilation; but it is rather to be wondered at that there are not more, than that there should be some; I refer the reader to it as to an useful catalogue, from which he may select such writers of sermons as he may think fit to have in his library; for where almost all are equally good, it would be a presumption in me to attempt to particularize the best. If, in addition to the sermons contained in the three volumes of Boyle's Lecture, and in the works of Barrow, Clarke, Tillotson, Hoadley, &c. I was to mention the names of Sherlock, Secker, Jortin, Foster, Abernethy, Seed, South, Ogden, Rogers, Whichcote, &c. and omit noticing Brady, Fiddes, Moïs, Atterbury, Bellamy, Fleetwood, Pyle, Orr, Pearce, Warburton, &c. I might be accused of appearing to give a preference where I had no intention of doing it, and where better judges than myself might think that none was due. If any enumeration, moreover, of books of this kind was made, the names of many living authors ought to be inserted in the list, for they are in no respect inferior to their predecessors in this species of composition. There are some fine discourses also in the French language, by Basnage, Croufaz, Saurin, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, &c. some of which have been translated into English: but no church in Christendom was ever blessed with a greater variety of excellent pulpit Compositions than our own is; and as they constitute one of the most useful parts of a theological Library, it ought to be the study of every Clergyman to procure as large a collection of them, as his circumstances will admit.

It is unnecessary to give any directions, as to the manner of using the books which are here pointed out, since every man will naturally consult such of them as treat of the particular subjects on which he is desirous of obtaining information, and no one will have inclination to peruse them all. Theological learning is the profession of the Clergy, and it may justly be said to every ignorant minister of the Gospel,—"Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" Yet, on the other hand, mere abstract learning, how profound and various soever it may be, is not an acquisition much to be valued by them; it is its application to the useful purposes of their profession, to the bringing men from the dominion of sin to gospel perfection, which will render it of any estimation in the sight of God. I mean not here to speak in disparagement of theological learning; but I do mean to say, that practice is better than speculation, and that He who, in promoting the salvation of his flock by a sedulous performance of his pastoral duties, finds not leisure to be learned, instead of our censure, deserves our warmest approbation; it may honourably be said of such a man,—*contemnebat potius literas, quam nesciebat.* I take my leave of the reader with freely expressing a general wish, That we may all of us, in our respective stations, become more disposed to
provoke

provoke one another *unto Love and to Goodworks*, and less disposed to backbite and devour one another for our Opinions; that Christianity may have its root in our hearts, rather than in our heads; that it may shew forth its fruit in the purity and integrity of our lives, rather than in the vehemence and subtilty of our disputes; in a word, that the time may at length come, when every individual in the Church, and out of the Church, Trinitarian, and Unitarian, may love his own *Herefy* less than Gospel *Charity*.

Errata in the Appendix.

<i>For</i> Testimenti,	<i>read</i> Testamenti.
Ontramo	— Outramo.
Orthodoxum	— Orthodoxam.
Gondæ	— Goudæ.
Theologicæ Ele.	— Theologiæ Ele.
Cantab. 1663	— Cantab. 1665.
Vocis Heb.	— Voces Heb.

