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DISCOURSE

O N

Mistakes concerning Religion,
ENTHUSIASM, EXPERIENCES, &c.

B Y

THOMAS HARTLEY. A. M.

Rector of WINWICK in *Northamptonshire*.

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THE main Design of the Sacred Writings is to bring us acquainted with our lost State, under the Corruption and Apostacy of the Human Nature by the Fall, and with our Redemption by *Jesus Christ*. The Rules and Precepts laid down both in the Law and the Gospel were given primarily to restrain us from Sin, as it was the Occasion of our Ruin, so, if continued in, will be the certain Hindrance of our Recovery: And the Doctrines therein contained instruct us in the Nature of that Grace which bringeth Salvation, and teach us to turn to it as our only Help and Remedy: Thus in refraining from Evil, and being subject to Grace, we are in the way of practical and acceptable Obedience to all God's Commands. To deny that Man is by Nature wretched and sinful, argues extreme Ignorance or Perverseness, and to affirm that he came such out of the Hands of his Creator, is to contradict the Testimony of the Scriptures, and to charge God both foolishly and impiously: To deny therefore Original Sin, in the Sense of our Church, is the most complicated of Heresies, as it makes void the Covenant of Grace, and saps the Foundation of revealed Religion. Every one carries in his own Bosom a Witness to the Truth of this Doctrine, as every one finds in himself, in a greater or less degree, a want of due Love both to God and his Neighbour.

The Gospel of *Christ* is a Dispensation of Peace, graciously calculated to reconcile us both to God and one another, but how it has failed in general of these blessed Effects, through the prevailing Power of Corruption and Sin, let the Annals of Church History testify, which inform us how often *Christendom* has been turned into a Field of Blood, and represent the horrid Barbarities of *Christians*, so called, towards their Brethren, as equalling, and in some Instances exceeding, the tyrannous

nous Hatred of persecuting Heathens: And therefore all those Prophecies which foretel the peaceable happy State of *Christ's* Church on Earth, suffer Violence when expounded as already fulfilled: The outward Establishment of *Christianity* has in no sufficient Sense yet answered the glorious Description, and consequently they must refer to some future joyful Time, when Men shall not only live safe under the Profession, but also in the Temper and Spirit of the Gospel: Then, and not till then, shall Nation cease to lift up Sword against Nation, and they that are called by the Holy Name, depart from Iniquity and love as Brethren.

The bloody Sword of Persecution hath indeed for some time slept in its Scabbard, but the Spirit of it neither slumbereth nor sleepeth: The Animosities that prevail among the several divided Parties of *Christians* in the World are an indubitable Proof of this; nor can we hesitate to pronounce that they have War in their Hearts whilst they sharpen their Tongues like a Serpent, and shoot out their Arrows, even bitter Words. If we go to and fro among the outward Churches of *Christendom* and fix our Attention on the wrangling Disputes of the Learned, and the bigotted Zeal of the ignorant Multitude, instead of saying, Lo here is *Christ*, or lo, there we shall be tempted to say, that He is neither here nor there, but that the whole is a Babel of Contention, and that were the emblematic Dove sent forth from the Ark of God amongst us, she would find little Rest for the Sole of her Foot; nay, to such a Heighth have the Waters of Strife prevailed, as scarcely to afford her an Olive-Branch for a Token of Peace upon the Earth. Now where Envy and Strife is, there is not only Confusion, but every Evil Work, Wickedness in High Places, and Wickedness in Low.

Great Pains and much Invention have been employed by Authors of different Persuasions, to fix the Characte

of *Antichrist* on this or that particular Church: Some of our own, learnedly wise in their Expositions of the *Apocalypse*, have fancied that this Mytery of Iniquity, in every Limb and Feature, is exactly and singly pourtrayed in the Bishop of *Rome*; and Some among the Protestant Dissenters, led by an educational Prejudice against Episcopacy, have divided the Hoof, and given one half to the Church of *Rome*, and the other to the Church of *England*, not knowing that *Antichrist* has no more to do with the Hierarchical, than with any other Form of Church Government; that he is not confined to any particular Characters, Places, or Churches, but hath set his Foot on the Breadth of the whole Earth, and erects his Throne as easily in a Synod of Presbyters, as in a Consistory of Cardinals: For wherever there is a thirst after earthly Dominion, or the Exercise of tyrannical Power over Mens Consciences; wherever the same Hands that deal out the mystical Body and blood of *Christ*, are defiled with the Wages of Unrighteousness; wherever those Hearts which should be Temples of the living God, and bear the Image and Supercription of the humble *Jesus*, are exalted in Pride above their Brethren; wherever any Thing that is in Man, or can be of Man, usurps the Place of *Christ*, and robs Him of any Part of the Honour of our Salvation; and lastly, wherever Persecution hangs out her bloody flag, for the ravening Wolves to hunt and devour the harmless Sheep of *Christ*; whether this be at *Rome* or *Geneva*, among *Papists*, *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, or others: There Abomination sitteth in the Holy Place --- There *Cain* smiteth *Abel* --- There *Antichrist* lifts up his Horn,

That is a common Error and fatal in its Consequences to true Religion, which places, more to the account of the outward Constitution of that national Church to which Men belong, than to the Life and Power of Godliness:

Godliness: Hence it is, that most of the Disputes which have exercised the Pens and Patience of Writers and Readers, have been about the external Polity, the Ceremonies, or the different Opinions of this or that Church, rather than concerning the Fundamentals of *Christianity*: and hence that in general People do not so much mean by *making Converts* the winning of Souls to *Christ*, and bringing them under the powerful Influences of Gospel Salvation, as making them Profelytes to some particular Modes of Worship, or to a certain Way of Thinking about Religion. That Sameness of Communion in Externals among *Christians*, who are united in Spirit and Affection, is a desirable Thing no one can well deny; but that such Agreement in all outward and necessary Things is necessary or to be expected, ought not to be affirmed; * for were People divested of that Pride, Selfishness, and Impatience which so indispose them for bearing with others, they might find that different outward Communions among *Christians*, are as compatible with the Peace of the Universal Church, as different Bodies Corporate are with the Peace of a Kingdom: I speak of such Christian Societies as build upon one Foundation, hold the same Head, and maintain no Principles contrary to the Essence of Faith or the Safety of Civil Government: Such
different

* The Falling of the Church into Variety of Opinions and Modes of Worship, is impossible to be prevented by lawful Courses, since infallible Gifts and Prophets have disappeared: Therefore it is a Thing not to be condemned in it self; for under Diversity of Judgments and Forms, God may be worshiped in Spirit and in Truth, as in the primitive Time by the Jewish and Gentile Christian; which Variety offends not God, so that Obedience to Magistrates be firmly retained, and a Zeal for Holiness more than for Opinions, and those healing Principles of Charity be kept alive, which cherish mutual Forbearance and Love to each other, under our different Apprehensions and Modes of Worship. See *Bromley's Sabbath of Rest*, Article M A K K E L O T H.

different Families of *Christians*, if the Expression may be allowed, amicably dissenting concerning lesser Points, and applying St. *Paul's* Doctrine of Moderation about Meats and Drinks to the respective Subjects of their Difference, may have been permitted in the Church from the Beginning, to serve as so many Checks one upon another to restrain from disorderly Walking, to excite holy Emulations, to afford various Occasions for the Exercise of Christian Charity, to prevent Combinations to corrupt the Scriptures, or as a Means to preserve or revive some precious Truth or Doctrine, that might otherwise suffer Loss: But tho' some or other of these good Ends may hereby be answered through the over-ruling Power of Providence, yet it would confessedly be making a bad Use of this Argument, to form it into a Pretext for Divisions entered upon through Wantonness, or to palliate the Guilt of causeless Schisms grounded in Fondness for Novelty and Change.

What has here been said in Favour of tender Consciences, well agrees with the Temper and Moderation of our excellent Church in this Matter; yet some, otherwise minded, object to all such charitable Indulgence, That God is the God of Order and not of Confusion: But the Application of this Text obtains no proper Place here, as Order is well consistent with Diversity, tho' not with Confusion; nay Diversity, in proper Disposition and Arrangement, is in frequent Instances the very Beauty of Order; and such Diversity is visible in all God's Works; every *Genus* of Animals and Vegetables in their different Tribes bears Testimony to this Truth, and doubtless the blessed Angels and Spirits of just Men made perfect belong to different Classes and Governments, according to their various Kinds and Degrees of Excellence, and their different Capacities for Glory: If Men therefore differ, let it be according to their Order and to the Will of God, and then all is

well, the want of Unity in their Form will be no Hindrance to their Unity of Spirit in the Bond of Peace, and their Differences will become only as different Notes in a Psaltery, whose Variety harmonizes in one melodious Tune of Praise to the Lord of all Lords, whose Wisdom, Power, and Goodness are displayed with infinite Diversity, tho' wonderful Order, throughout the Kingdoms of Heaven and Earth.

As the Word *Establishment* is often used by some as a Plea for Uncharitableness, and such a Constitution is too much rested in by others, as a proper Security for the Truth and Welfare of Religion: That we may not grow remiss by our Advantage, and so become Losers by that which was intended for our Benefit; that we be not high minded but fear, and not trust in the Arm of Flesh for our Defence, but in the living God, it will be proper on this Account, as well as to answer other Designs of this *Preface*, to consider some of the various Changes and Revolutions that have happened in the Church since its first Alliance with the State. And here we shall do well to reflect, that the Establishment of *Christianity* under the Countenance and Protection of the Civil Power, great as the Blessing is in it self, is but an accidental Circumstance, and no essential Property of a Christian Church, seeing that we acknowledge those to have been the purest Ages of it, before it knew any such Tutelage: For so it has happened, thro' the Malice of *Satan* and the Corruption of human Nature, that the pious and praise-worthy Care of Christian Princes in providing for the Encouragement and Support of Religion and the Security of its Professors, has been in many Instances disappointed, and that by a most unhappy Reverse of hoped for Consequences, the Indulgence of its Friends has on many Occasions proved more fatal to the true Interest of *Christianity*, than the Persecutions of its Enemies. The Church which be-

fore,

fore, under all the Weakness and Disgrace of Infancy and Sufferings, grew up as a tender Plant, and as a Root out of a dry Ground, yet bearing much precious Fruit, when transplanted into the richer Soil of an Establishment, did soon lamentably degenerate: It waxed great indeed in the Sunshine of Prosperity, and under the copious Showers of royal Favour and Bounty; but its Fruitfulness was impaired thereby: She stretched forth her Branches unto the Sea, and her Boughs unto the River, but little else than Leaves were seen to grow thereon. No sooner did Riches and Honours, *Satan's* last and most prevailing Temptations, flow in upon her, than *Christianity* began to wear another Aspect, the hitherto inflexible Spirit of its Professors gradually softened into a Conformity to this World, and christian Simplicity gave Way to earthly Policy: Ease and Affluence engendered Security, and whilst Men slept in a false and fatal Peace, the Enemy with a full Hand sowed thick the Tares of Covetousness, Ambition, and Worldly-mindedness in their Hearts, which grew up and choaked the good Seed. Henceforward, as Church-History informs us, was to be seen great Striving among Ecclesiastical Persons, for the highest Dignities and richest Preferments, and much pontifical Contention about Precedency and Jurisdiction: The Disciple now wanted to be above his Master, and the Servant above his Lord: Nay, *Christ's* pretended Vicars began to aspire at supreme Sovereignty over Princes, and to set the Foot of Church-Power upon the Neck of Royalty.

Most Authors fix the Ceasing of miraculous Powers in the Church, about the Time of *Constantine*; and the Reason commonly assigned for such Discontinuance is, that being now under the Protection and Security of an Establishment, she no longer stood in need of those extraordinary Seals and Attestations to the Divinity of her Original and Doctrines; whereas the Truth of the

Matter in a great Measure lies here: The inward Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit were eminently possessed by the primitive *Christians*; their ardent Love of God, their holy Imitation of the Life of *Christ*, their powerful Faith, their severe Discipline, their Deadness to the World, and their fervent Devotion, enriched their Souls with wonderful Communications of the divine Energy; they were indeed living Temples of the Holy Ghost, and *Christ* wrought in their Faith, and by their Faith; and therefore, many mighty Works did shew forth themselves in them: But when *Christians* forsook their first Love, and became wedded to the Things of this World, they commenced Members of another Kingdom, their spiritual Powers departed with the spiritual Life, and consequently the Effects ceased; so that from the Fourth Century downwards we meet with but few Miracles of public Notoriety, that may be depended on.

Under this visible Declension of *Christianity* in the Spirit and Power of it, the outward visible Church, conscious that these Divine Signatures were departed from her, and that she was no longer, in general, that pure, that chaste, that heavenly Spouse of *Christ* all glorious within, and marvellous in Gifts as before, began to deck herself in all the painted and pompous Ornaments of a glistering outside Worship; magnificent Temples with much Imagery and Sculpture, were erected, and beautified with all that Man's Art and Device could project and execute; costly Vestments, gilded Furniture, Crosses of Gold and Silver decorated with precious Stones, stately Wax Candles, &c. were introduced into the Churches, as well to feed the Pride of Man, as to make a sanctimonious Show, and supply the want of the true Riches. It was now also that Men began to fetch their Divinity from the Schools, and to substitute human Learning in the room of that Wisdom

dom which is from above, whilst a System of Opinions, Distinctions, and curious Speculations on the one hand, and a gorgeous Ceremonial on the other, made up the Religion of the Times.

From this Glance of Things, thus far, there is too much Reason to conclude, that true *Christianity* was far from gaining Ground from the Time of its Establishment downwards, and that earthly Riches and Honours proved Means ill suited to advance the Interest of Evangelical Piety; nor is it difficult to point out wherein the Church, in these more early Days, mistook her Province and lost her Way; as also how much better she would have consulted her Safety and true Honour, if content with protection and Support from the State, she had more faithfully preserved her Allegiance to Him, whose Kingdom is not of this World, and not defiled herself with the Maxims, Politicks and Alliances that are only of this World, mindful of the Fate which attended the confederate Ships of *Jehosaphat* and *Ahaziab*, at *Ezion Geber*. But the Lord, who never left himself without Witnesses even in Times of the greatest Degeneracy, and who raised up Prophets of old to recover the Apostate *Jews* from their Defections to Idolatry, has in all Ages of the Church called forth holy Men, animated with a pure and fervent Zeal for his Glory and the Good of Souls, to bear their publick Testimony to the Truth, and to rescue Religion from Ignorance, Error, and Corruption: Accordingly we read of *Waldo* at *Lyons*, *Claude* Arch-bishop of *Turin*, *Thomas à Kempis*, *Thauler*, *Wickliffe*, and others, either boldly protesting against such Innovations in Doctrine, as had endangered the Foundations of Religion, or built thereon nothing better than a rotten Superstructure of Wood, Hay, Stubble; or else leading the benighted *Christians* of those Times through the Darkness and Formality of an outside Worship, to Repentance from dead

dead Works and a living Faith, to a Righteousness and Truth in the inward Parts : nor ought we to think so uncharitably of those, who were out of the Reach of their Instructions and Examples, as therefore to conclude that among them were wanting many holy Souls who, tho' in much Weakness and Superstition, yet in Simplicity and true Devotion, found their Way to God, and were accepted of Him.

An Author of Church History, who betrays no Partiality in Favour of the Ascetic Life, gives the following short Account of some *British* Monks, who lived according to the Rule of St. *David*, at *Vall Rosine* in *Pembrokeshire* * : “ They were raised with the Crowing of the “ Cock from their Beds, and then betook themselves “ to their Prayers, and spent the rest of the Day in their “ several Callings. When their Task was done, they “ again bestowed themselves in Prayers, Meditations, “ Reading and Writing; and at Night, when the Hea- “ vens were full of Stars, they first began to feed, hav- “ ing their temperate Repast to satisfy Hunger on Bread, “ Water, and Herbs: Then the third Time they went “ to their Prayers and so to Bed, till the Circulation of “ their daily Employment returned in the Morning. “ A Spectacle this of Virtue and Continnence ! Who “ altho' they received nothing or any Thing very un- “ willingly, yet were so far from wanting Necessaries, “ that by their Pains they provided Sustenance for “ many poor People, Orphans, Widows, and Stran- “ gers. ”

To the above-mentioned Names succeeded, at some Distance, the illustrious Catalogue of Reformers both at Home and Abroad, who pared off many Errors and Superstitions from Religion, and exalted the Doctrines of divine Grace on the Downfal of Merits, Indulgences, and

* *Fuller*, in his *Church Hist.* Book VI.

and other lucrative Figments of Man's Invention: The People were now permitted to read the Bible; the publick Service of the Church was performed in a Language understood by all, and Persecution was no longer established by Law. Thus Light, Liberty, and Moderation, became the Glory of our excellent national Church: And tho' it be generally allowed, that our Reformers went too far with *Calvin* in some particular Points, yet a Church so well ordered and modelled in the main of her Doctrines and Constitution, had little Reason to complain of some few Tenets, which in the Hands of Moderate Men could do no Hurt to Religion. But to evince, how insufficient all outward Reformation is to attain its End, where the Heart is unrenewed by Charity and the Spirit of a sound Mind; our Forfathers were no sooner rescued a second time from the Yoke of Bondage in *Q. Elizabeth's* Days, but they entangled themselves and disturbed the Peace of the Church with Disputes about the most indifferent Things, whilst Opinions concerning the Preference due to this or that Service Book, particular Vestments, bodily Gestures, nay even the Figure and Situation of a Communion Table, proved of greater force to divide their Affections, than their Agreement in fundamental Doctrines to preserve them in Brotherly Love: And as if on purpose to teach us, not to place our Strength and Confidence in any the best framed Constitutions, and to instruct us in our need of continual Watchfulness, in less than a Century *Arminianism* got footing amongst us and mer with Encouragement: The Dignity and Powers of the human Nature began to be more highly thought of, than according to the Doctrine of our Articles, Men's Attention was called off from the Inside to the Outside of Religion, and more Pains Employed to decorate the Form than to urge the Power of Godliness: Nor did it a little help Religion on its Way down-hill, that some
 who

who talked loudly of Grace and the Spirit, shewed themselves Men intoxicated with the Dregs of earthly Policy, thirsting after temporal Dominion, and turning Faith into Faction. This served to confirm Prejudices already conceived against Doctrines good in themselves, but disgraced by the Practices of some that held the Truth in Unrighteousness: Add to this, that an overstrained Rigour in some Things, and an aukward Formality of Behaviour in many who assumed the Garb, but wanted the Life of Religion to give it Comeliness and Grace, proved so disgustful to the opposite Party, that to avoid the Name of Precisians they cast off the very Appearance of Religion, and so turned Liberty into Licentiousness: Every Thing that looked like Piety was now termed Puritanism; Profaneness and the Love of Pleasure knew no Bounds, and it was common to place more of Loyalty and Religion, in drinking Bumpers to Church and State than in sober Seriousness. Politicks and Polemicks began now to have a great share in the Religion of the Times, and this occasioned a variable and timeserving Kind of Divinity: Thus the same Doctrine of passive Obedience and Nonresistance, which was a distinguishing Badge of Orthodoxy in one Reign, was eliminated in the next: One while he was thought best affected to the Church of *England*, who exclaimed loudest against the Church of *Rome*; and soon after a Spirit of Moderation appearing in Favour of scrupulous Consciences, the Alarm was sounded, that the Church was in Danger from a very different Quarter, and the Rage lately vented against the *Papists* was now turned against the Protestant Dissenters: The gross of the Establishment espoused the Quarrel, and parted themselves into the nonsensical Distinctions of High-Church and Low Church, whilst a mad party Zeal ran away with the Charity of both sides, and true Religion was lost in the Scuffle.

The Enemies of revealed Religion triumphed at beholding these Animosities and Divisions in the Church, and from such Inconstancy and Change of Principles fetched Arguments in Favour of Infidelity. They considered the Clergy as labouring more to support the Credit of a party than the Interest of true Piety, and were tempted to think that nothing more was meant by Church, than that outward Constitution of it, from which they derived their Power and Preferments: And that which contributed to the Growth of Deism, as much as any other Cause was the great Defection from the Doctrines of the Reformation: In the room of serious theological Reasoning and Moral Essays had long before been substituted, and the Fashion in this respect was not altered; the prevailing Divinity with many was a sort of ethical, political, polemical Something, that we have no Name for, a kind of *Christianity* with little or nothing of *Jesus Christ* in it; it came not tinged with the Spirit of the Gospel, and therefore produced no spiritual Effects in the Temper of the Times. How long this continued in Fashion, or how much of it is still left, I take not upon me here to affirm: However we are bound in Justice to allow, that many excellent Names, with good Bishop *Beveridge* at the Head of them, come in for Exceptions to the above Remark.

A learned Divine of the Church of *England*, in a Treatise published about the Time I am speaking of, wherein he freely censures the Defect beforementioned, together with that erroneous Way of debasing *Christianity* to a Level, with natural Religion made use of by some celebrated Divines then living, and whose Writings are still held in too high Admiration by many, expressed himself thus: "It is verily a Fault in too many of the publick Teachers of our Times, that their Sermons are moral Harangues generally, as if they were preaching at Old *Rome* or *Athens*, and their Auditors
" were

" were all Infidels: We see the bad Effects of this or
 " more accounts than one: The constant insisting on
 " nothing but Morality hath lately inspired Men's
 " Heads with this Notion, that revealed Religion is of
 " little Consideration and Worth; and this hath been
 " one great occasion of Deism. „ And a few Page
 after: ---- " Since so many preachers have confined
 " their Discourses as to the main, to Morality, there hath
 " been less Success in Preaching than ever. There is
 " plenty of excellent Discourses from the Pulpit, wherein
 " the Nature of all moral Offices is set forth, but not
 " withstanding this, there never was less Morality in
 " Mens Lives and Actions, which shews that there is
 " something of a higher Nature wanting, and that the
 " bare inculcating of moral Duties and virtuous Living
 " is not sufficient to mend Mens Practices. * „

It must be allowed that there is too much Truth in
 these Complaints, and that the Strain of our Divinity
 has warped much from the Reformation Standard within
 this Century, as will plainly appear by comparing the
 Writers of both Times. We abound with learned and
 ingenious Discourses on the Extent and Obligations of
 natural Religion, ideal Finesses and Relations of Things
 and the Beauty of moral Rectitude; But these serve
 rather to amuse than amend the Age, and bring us no
 nearer to true *Christianity* than an Hypothesis in natu-
 ral Philosophy: Such airy Speculations have always
 proved too weak a Foundation for practical Piety
 they want both Solidity and Authority. It is an un-
 pardonable Error in most of these Writers, that they
 consider human Nature as standing in the Ability of
 perfect Freedom, and therefore instead of leading the
 Soul to God in an humble Acknowledgment of its natu-
 ral Impotence and Corruption, that He may help and
 heal it with renewing and sanctifying Grace, they ad-
 dret

dress themselves to a supposed Sufficiency in Man, crying out ---- *Do this and live*, tho' where he may find Strength for the doing they shew not: Thus they turn the Covenant of Grace into a Covenant of Works, and send us to the Law for Justification; they make Reason, unenlighten'd Reason, our Guide, and Free-will our Strength, and so lay other Foundations than that which is laid in the Gospel of *Christ*. The Social Virtues, and relative Duties must be urged, and urged Home too, for they confessedly make a considerable Part of our Business here; but than if we write to *Christians*, let us consider them in their necessary Connexion with Gospel Principles; let us represent them as only acceptable to God in *Christ*, when founded upon a sound Conversion generated by a living Faith, and accompanied with Humility, and the Love of God: In word, they must be Christian Graces exemplified in Practice and wrought in us by the Influence of the Holy Spirit, otherwise they cannot be called Christian, but natural Morality, mere civil Virtues, useful indeed in the present System of Things, but void of all Relation to the divine Life and the Kingdom of Heaven.

Another Method of treating Divinity, too much in use with some, is that which consists in curious and needless Speculations on the external Evidence of *Christianity*, and in dry Appeals to natural Reason for the Credibility of it: Thus to hear it very elaborately prov'd that *Jesus Christ* was no Impostor, and that his Religion is an Institution that challenges the Assent of every rational Enquirer: To be entertained with nice Disquisition on the Nature of Miracles, in order to shew that the Apostles did not do them by any Art of *Leger de main*, nor yet by diabolical Conjuraction: To hear it made very plain, that they were downright honest Men, and that it is not at all likely that they had any Intention to deceive us in what they have related, &c. &c.

However such kind of Reasoning may be allowed to take place in refelling the Cavils of Infidels, and putting to silence the Ignorance of such foolish Men as start such foolish Objections, yet this way of Proof from the Pulpit is inept and futile, and so far from ministring Grace to the Hearers, or helping to build them up in the Faith, that it rather serves to suggest matter of Doubting in Things where of they made no Question before. Curious Enquiries in Religion have of late Years, in many Instances, been carried to a great length of fanciful Indulgence, giving birth to many unprofitable Questions, and been so far from answering any pretended Usefulness in repressing the Spirit of Infidelity amongst us, that it has greatly increased under it; which proves that these are not the Weapons that are mighty through God, to the pulling down the Strong-holds of Unbelief, and to make Converts to the Gospel of *Christ*. Does it not require much Patience, to hear the Credibility of Gospel History, measured by that Distance of Time, at which any Age is removed from the first Publication of it; in which one Author * has gone so far as to assert, that at the Expiration of 3150 Year its Evidence will be quite extinct, and therefore *Christ* will come to Judgment before that Time. To invalidate the Proof of this Author a late Writer on Miracles assures us, that the Evidence of *Christianity* is so far from losing any thing of its Force that it grows stronger by Length of Time, because the Examinations of learned Men furnish us with fresh Motives for believing, and because the longer it has kept its Ground the surer it stands. Can any Thing be more trifling than such whimsical Calculations? Can any Thing more derogate from the Honour of the Christian Religion, than to subject the Credibility of it to the Inventions of learned Men, or to build any Par

* Craig's *Theol. Christianæ Principia*,

of its Evidence on so lubricous a Foundation as the
Lapse of Years? Does it not look as if we were sadly
distressed for Arguments in Favour of *Christianity*, when
its pretended Advocates have recourse to such airy Fig-
ments of a sportive Fancy in order to support it? Are
not its old Foundation sufficient to bear its Weight?
Or must we stay till new *W-----ns* arise to furnish us
with more fresh Discoveries to evince the Truth of
the Bible?

Whither will the Affectation of Novelty, this Itch of
saying or hearing some new thing, carry us? And how
long shall we go on to gratify the corrupt Taste of a
vain Age, which seeks only Amusement in Reading? Is
it not high Time to engage the Attention of Mankind
on the Side of solid and important Truths, to take
leave of our polemical and conjectural Divinity, and no
longer deal out of that light Bread which satisfieth not?
We have now of a long time been speaking to the
Head, according to the Rudiments of this World, and
in the Way that Man's Wisdom teacheth, and we find
the World neither the wiser nor the better for it. Let
us then lay the Axe to the Root, and level our Strokes
at the Heart, break open the Fountain of its Corruption,
uncover the hidden Mystery of Iniquity in the inward
Parts, shew Men their horrid Apostacy from God in the
very Essence of their fallen Nature, and bring them to
the loathing of themselves by the Sight of their Vileness,
Wretchedness, and Sinfulness, till they are forced to cry
out with the Leper---Unclean, unclean! In this Part of
our Ministry the Law of God does its Office, by hold-
ing forth a Glass that exposes to full View our Naked-
ness and Shame, shewing us how we have joined actual
to original Sin, and so added Iniquity unto Iniquity;
here Conscience is taught to plead guilty, and we are
brought to subscribe to the Equity of our own Con-
demnation, and to justify God in the Execution of the
(B) 2 Sentence!

Sentence! The Pride of Man's Glory being thus stained with Disgrace, and his Haughtiness laid low by these and such like humbling Convictions, the Soul begins to feel its Need of a Redeemer, and the Mind is prepared for the Reception of Gospel Truths, better than by a thousand Arguments of a metaphysical Texture, or the most persuasive Eloquence of Man. A Fountain open for Sin and for Uncleanness in the Side of a crucified Saviour--- The Offers of Pardon and Peace from a God willing to be reconciled to his rebellious Creatures in the Son of his Love--- A free Tender of Salvation to poor lost Sinners--- These are Truths which recommend themselves emphatically.--- They stand in no Need of Help from human Learning to set them off, nay they are Subjects which would suffer Diminution from the most pompous Strains of Rhetoric. The Heart mollified by Grace and a tender Sensibility of its Sin and Danger, exults at the Sound of these glad Tidings, like the Child in the Womb of *Elizabeth* upon the Salutation of *Mary*; it is willing and desirous to be saved in God's own Way, and therefore confers not with Flesh and Blood about the Means or the Mystery; it objects not with *Nicodemus* -- *How can these Things be?* But silences every Doubt of carnal Reason with -- *Lord! If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean -- I believe, Lord! help thou my Unbelief.* In this Obedience of Faith under Grace, the Soul no longer makes Resistance to the Drawings of the Father to the Son, and so receives the Spirit of Adoption; for as many as receive Him, (*Christ*) to them he giveth Power to become Sons of God. And in this Ground is opened the Doctrine of the New-Birth, or God's spiritual Kingdom in the Soul, where *Christ* is represented as sitting on his Throne, and ruling with his Sceptre of Righteousness in the hidden Man of the Heart, there doing the Office of a Refiner's Fire and of Fullers Soap, by cleansing us from inward Pollution,

and

and purifying us unto Himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works, and making us Partakers of his own divine Nature.

Here we take a double View of Gospel Salvation, *viz.* as it stands both in the History and in the Mystery. In the former is fully exhibited to us *Christ*, the Lamb of God slain, and offered up a Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World, and raised again for our Justification: Herein is characterised that Just one who fulfilled all Righteousness, and satisfied all Justice for Man, by his Active and passive Obedience; the Prince of Peace reconciling God unto the World by the Blood of the Cross; the perfect Pattern of immaculate Purity and Holiness setting us an Example, that we should follow his Steps: In a Word, the ministring, suffering, dying, and yet triumphant Saviour of the World. In the latter, *viz.* the Mystery of the Gospel, we see how Things inward answer to Things outward, as Face to Face in a Glass, by a corresponding Work of the Spirit of God in our Souls. Thus we are baptized into his Sufferings, and made conformable to his Death by the Energy of divine Grace, slaying in us the Body of Sin, and crucifying the World unto us, and us to the World: Pursuant to this we are risen again with *Christ* unto Newness of Life, by the quickning Power of his Resurrection; or being planted together in the Likeness of his Death, we shall be also in that of his Resurrection. In like Manner as *Christ* was in his outward Office the Minister of Reconciliation betwixt God and us, so is he styled the same by his spiritually Dwelling in us: "If being Enemies we were reconciled by his Death, how much more shall we be saved by his Life," that is, by the Life of *Christ* manifested in us, which the Apostle calls: *The Riches of the Glory*, (or exceeding rich Glory) of *the Mystery of the Gospel*, *viz.* *Christ in us, the Hope of Glory*. And as our Peace is ascribed to the Blood of

the Cross, so is Peace of Conscience to the cleansing Blood or Life giving Virtue of an inward and Spiritual sprinkling: Thus all Righteousness and Peace are fulfilled both externally and internally, and *Christ* is made unto us compleat Redemption.

Were it not that we are in general so much accustomed to hear and read and think of Religion, only as something without us, or as something to be done by us, we should readily subscribe to the following Truths delivered by the most Rev. *John Arndt*, in his Book of *True Christianity*, Ch. VI. “ Forasmuch as the Substance of the Christian Religion consists in our Regeneration, or the spiritual Renovation of the Mind, it was the Will of God, that those Things which should be transacted in Man spiritually and by Faith, should be also outwardly set forth in Writing, and in the Words of Scripture: For since the *Word* is the Seed of God in us, it is necessary that it should spring up and bring forth spiritual Fruit in us: By Faith must that be effected within us, which the Scripture declares in the Letter without us: If this Effect doth not follow, then ’tis plain, that the Word is still unto me a dead Seed, and an Embrio destitute of Life and Motion: Hence in Faith and in Spirit I ought to taste and to see the Truth of the Scriptures: For when God manifested his Will therein, He did not design that it should be buried in Paper and Ink, but that in Faith and Spirit it should spring and grow up in us to another Man, even a new and inward Man: The Reason is, because all is to be fulfilled and performed in Faith and Spirit, whatsoever the Scriptures do outwardly teach” He then goes on to exemplify this Truth in many Particulars, and concludes as follows: “ The Sum of all is: The Holy Scripture doth outwardly bear Witness to all those Things, which by Faith ought to be fulfilled in Man: They describe that

“ Kingdom

Kingdom of God in the Letter, which must receive
 its Accomplishment in the Spirit; it describes *Christ*
 from without who must live within me by Faith; it
 describes *Adam* in his Fall and Restoration, which I
 must find in myself; it describes the new *Jerusalem*,
 the new Birth, the new Creature, all which I must
 have some Experience of, or else the Scriptures will
 profit me nothing: Now this is all of Faith, it is the
 Work of God, and the Kingdom of God in our
 Hearts” *Christianity*, thus considered in a spiritual
 View, and consequently in its true Relation and Bene-
 fit to the Soul of Man, comes represented in a way sui-
 table to its Dignity and Usefulness, and is properly dis-
 tinguished from that ideal or external Thing, which so
 commonly usurps its Name; making known to all Men,
 that the Perfection of that Religion which bringeth Sal-
 vation, consisteth not in Notion and Speculation, but
 in Spirit and in Truth; not in Form but in Power;
 not in Opinion called Orthodoxy, or in bodily Exer-
 cise, but in Experience and Change of Nature; and
 that no Creeds nor Systems of Divinity, no particular
 Schemes or Modes of Worship, have any other Excel-
 lency or Help in them for us, than as they are proper
 Means to produce or cherish the Life of God in the
 Soul of Man.

The Reverend Mr. *William Law*, in some of his ex-
 cellent Treatises, * has explicated the Doctrine of the
 new Birth with uncommon Penetration, and shewed
 with great Solidity, that the Whole of our Salvation is
 grounded in it and rises from it: He has with a convinc-
 ing Sagacity rescued this most important Mystery of
 our Redemption from the Errors of particular Systems,
 and the learned Ignorance of verbal Critics; opened
 the Nature of original Sin thro’ the Fall in to rational

(B) 4

and

* See his *Appeal to Deists*, &c. Treatise on *Regeneration*, and
Spirit of Prayer.

and satisfying a manner, as fully justifies this Doctrine of Scripture against the most acute Objections of cavilling Infidels; and at the same Time refuted that irreverent, but common Notion of the Divine Majesty's being actuated by a Spirit of vindictive Wrath in his Proceedings against fallen Man. He has likewise therein shewed what we are to understand by the Wrath of God with respect to Man, even that horrid, dark, anguishing State of his Soul, which is its proper Condition and Nature as separated from the Divine Life and Image, and which can only be restored by a Birth of the Son of God in its inmost Essence, and so becoming a central Source of Light and Meekness, of Love and Joy therein: That the Reason why the Unregenerate do not feel themselves in such a State of Wee and Torment in this Life is, because the Soul, during its Union with the Body, qualifies or unites with the Gratifications of Sense, the cheering Influences of the Sun, and other Satisfactions of outward Nature, which charm its Misery for the present *; but that upon this Constitution being dissolved, and all its Communication with the animal Life and the elementary Kingdom of this World ceasing, the Soul so unredeemed loses every Source of Mitigation and Comfort, and falls into its own proper Hell, described in Scripture by the never-dying Worm, and the unquenchable Fire. From this Explanation of the Doctrine before us, the gracious Method of our Redemption by *Jesus Christ* in the way of our Union with Him, and receiving a Divine Nature from Him, presents itself as the sole possible Remedy of Man's Misery, the only conceivable Ground of his Salvation: it sets forth God's Love to all without Partiality, in providing a Sa-
viour

* Thus it is credible, that the very Devils find some Mitigation of their Torment, by Uniting with the Bodies of Men and Beasts, which is the probable Cause of their great Desire after such Union, as in the Case of the Swine, *Matth. viii.*

iour for all under every Dispensation, and represents
Jesus Christ as that Saviour in the most intimate Relation
 to us that can be, even as that quickning Spirit
 which is the Soul's true and only happy Life. All the
 Difficulties that embarrass our common Methods of
 Reasoning with Unbelievers on the Subject of our Re-
 demption, vanish before this Explication of it, as it like-
 wise vindicates the Honour and Goodness of Almighty
 God from that profane Charge of his being the Author
 of Man's eternal Misery, thro' such Want of Compassion
 and Forgiveness, as is declared to be an Offence
 against God in ourselves; for it proves to a Demon-
 stration, that everlasting Death is no arbitrary Infliction
 of the God of Love upon Man for Sin, seeing that He
 has done all that could be done to prevent our Ruin,
 but that it is the natural and necessary Consequence of
 Sin chosen, loved, and persisted in, and of Grace and
 Salvation rejected. If the Reader is not satisfied with
 his Author's Manner of treating these Subjects; as his
 Writings are abundantly sufficient for its Defence, I
 refer him in particular to his Treatise, intituled, *The
 Way to the Divine Knowledge*, in which he has obviated
 most of the material Objections that can be brought
 against it. Upon the whole, this Author's Works are
 excellently well calculated for Usefulness to many dif-
 ferent sorts of Readers, and to promote Piety in all.
 His *Serious Call* and *Christian Perfection* contain very
 affectionate Addresses urged with the most cogent Mo-
 tives to this End, and are liable to no other Objection
 than what is natural for Persons of too relaxed a Piety
 to offer. His *Answer to the Plain Account &c.* is a ju-
 dicious Confutation of that gross and fundamental Er-
 ror, which consists in placing Religion more in the
 outward and visible Sign than in the inward and spiri-
 tual Grace. His *Appeal to Deists, &c.* proves with
 great Force of Reason, that the Oeconomy of our Re-
 demption

demption by *Jesus Christ* is no positive or arbitrary Institution, but a Display of infinite Love and Goodness according to the Laws and Constitution of eternal Nature. His *Answer to Dr. Trapp* is a just Correction and Representation of the *Folly, Sin and Danger* of cautioning a careless World against being *Righteous overmuch*: And his subsequent Writings do, according to their several Subjects, assert the Honour and Dignity of the Christian Religion as a Divine Nature and Life, against the dogmatical Dullness of the Sophist; the artificial Pedantry of the literal Sciolist; the malevolent Narrowness of the Bigot; and the infectious Obscurity of the Formulist. A Person of high Character and of a penetrating Judgment in Divine things (whose Name would give Authority to this Remark) in a Letter to a Friend, speaks of Mr. *Law's* Works as follows: "They are certainly some of the best Things for well disposed Minds to read that I ever met with — They lead out from *Babel* and all the Delusions of a Sectarian and Party Spirit in Religion; and I find them the only Books for the sensible Deist." It must be owned, that in his latter Writings there are some Things of an uncommon Texture, which suit not the Apprehension or Turn of every Reader: But then let it be remembered, that as one Part of his Business lay with the subtle Deist, who, sheltering his Infidelity behind the Intrenchments of Philosophy, bids Defiance to revealed Religion, it would have been inept to argue with such a one from Principles which he absolutely denied, therefore he found it best to force his Lines, and to engage him upon his own Ground: And here he proves that to be no other than a deceitful Reason and a false Philosophy that furnishes Arguments for Infidelity: and shews that *Christianity* receives Illustration and Evidence from that true Philosophy which is the Light of God in the Soul, making manifest Himself and his Works both in material

erial and spiritual, in temporal and eternal Nature, and which is profitable, as well to establish the Faith of the Believer, as to put to silence the Ignorance of foolish Men. I shall conclude these Remarks with the Author's own Words, in his *Way to Divine Knowledge*, p. 246.

“ Let not the genuine, plain, simple *Christian*, who is happy and blessed in the Simplicity of a Gospel Faith, take Offence at this Mystery, because he has no Need of it; for it is God's Goodness to the distressed State of the Church, fallen from the Life and Power of Gospel Faith, and groaning under the Slavery, Darkness and Perplexity of bewildered Reason and Opinions.

“ Neither let the orthodox Divine, who sticks close to the Phrases and Sentiments of Antiquity, reject this Mystery as heretical, because it opens a Ground of Man and of the divine Mysteries, not known or found in the primitive Writers: For this is the very Reason, why he should thankfully receive it with open Arms, as having and being that very Thing which the distressed, divided State of the Church now so greatly wants, and yet did not want, till it was fallen from its first Simplicity of Faith: For whilst Faith and Life defended the Mysteries of Religion, the Ground and Philosophy of it was not wanted: But when Orthodoxy had given itself up to Reason, and had nothing else for its support but Reason and Argument from the Letter of Scripture, without the least Knowledge of the first Ground of Doctrines, then it could only be defended, as it is defended in every Sect and Division of the christian World.”

And here we cannot sufficiently admire and adore the divine Goodness, in raising up such Lights and Helps, as are best suited to the Needs of his Church in every Age and Circumstance of it: Our own Obligations in this Particular call upon us for large Returns of religious

ous Gratitude : We have seen *Christianity* not only defended with invincible Strength against its Enemies, but rescued from Errors of Ignorance, and a dead Formality no less dangerous than open Infidelity. We have our skillful Workmen of different Denominations, that need not be ashamed ; some demonstrated in a Method of Proof not to be gainsaid, that the sacred Truths of our Religion have their sure Foundations in the Depths of a divine Theosophy : Others by apt Analogy between Things natural and divine, added to a profound Skill in the original Language of the Old Testament, pouring Light on the Mysteries of the New : A third Sort urging evangelical Doctrines in Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power, to the Conviction and Conversion of their Readers and Hearers : And lastly, Some enabled by long Experience in spiritual Things to help the *Christian* on his Way, thro' the secret mysterious Paths of that Life, which is hid with *Christ* in God. The chief of these both in Number and Strength we challenge for our own -- Members of the same Communion -- Sons of the Church of *England*, and an Honour to our Church : For are they not faithful Soldiers of *Christ*, mighty thro' God to fight the Lord's Battles, and such as both defend and adorn it by their Faith, by their Doctrine, and by their Lives ? But what Kind of Reception and Encouragement have many of them met with from us ? Have we given them the right Hand of Fellowship, and the Honour due to the Champions for the Truth, and Men of Renown ? Or have we not given them Cause to complain, that they have been wounded in the House of their Friends ? Have not opprobrious Names and Distinctions been fastened on them, to make them pass for Sectarists and Schismatics ? Has not every Door to Favour and Advancement been shut against them, and, whilst Church Preferments are daily sold to the highest Bidder, like Fishes in a common Market, have we not

seen

seen some of them starving in little Schools, Curacies, and Lectureships, or depending on occasional Benefactions for their Subsistence? And have we not seen of these able Ministers, not of the Letter only, but of the Spirit also, supplicating Votes to be received for their Pastors by those who, had they known their true Interest, would first have sought this Honour and Blessing of them; and have we not seen them supplicate in vain? These Things ought not to be said, if these Things were so: But it is not the Design of this Preface to be particular. O when shall we learn to distinguish better! When shall we rightly know the Things, that belong unto our Peace!

What Cause shall we assign for that Opposition to Gospel-Truths that appears amongst us, and for that Dislike to those, who urge the Necessity of Regeneration and of the spiritual Life? The true Reason is nigh at Hand, tho' others are pretended: Such Doctrines are contrary to the Maxims and Principles, that govern the Hearts and Conduct of the Children of this Generation, are at Variance with the false Interests of Flesh and Blood, declare open War against the Kingdom of Self, and strike at every Thing that is most near and dear to corrupt Nature; and therefore carnal Men of every Denomination think themselves concerned in Character, to oppose and discredit such a Representation of *Christianity*. They can be zealous in Opinions, Forms, and an external Worship of any Kind, because these leave them in quiet Possession of their Ambition, their Covetousness, their Love of themselves, and their Love of the World: They can readily take up a Profession of Faith in a suffering Saviour, nay bring themselves to trust in an outward Covering of his Merits and Righteousness for Salvation, because this costs them nothing; but to be cloathed with his Spirit of Humility, Poverty, and Self-denial; to renounce their own
Wills

Wills in his Lowliness, Meekness, and total Resignation to the Will of God ; to mortify the fleshly Appetites ; to be crucified to the World ; to strip themselves of all Complacency and Satisfaction in those Endowments, whether natural or acquired, which appear great and glorious in the Eyes both of themselves and Others ; and, in a Word, to take up their Cross, and nakedly follow a naked *Christ* in the Regeneration : -- These are hard Sayings, they cannot bear them : but Wisdom is justified of her Children ; unacceptable as these Doctrines are to others, yet to them, and in them too, they are the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God. It was by such Foolishness of Preaching, that *Christ's* Kingdom first prevailed over the Kingdoms of this World, and it must be by the same Doctrine, under the Influence of the same Spirit, that we can only hope for its Continuance to the End of it. Evangelical Preaching is the most proper Means of producing evangelical Fruit, such as a living Faith in *Jesus Christ*, Heavenly-Mindedness and Holiness in the inward Parts ; and unless the great Gospel-Doctrine of Regeneration be mainly insisted on, the people in general will be so far from seeking a new Nature, that they will not know, that they want it. But these Truths affectionately urged enlighten the Understanding, convince the Sinner, warm the Heart, and through Grace are powerful to convert and change it. And accordingly we find, that where this great Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh and revealed in the Heart by his Spirit, is preached with Energy, and from an inward Experience of its Power, the Word prevails mightily, and is received into every fitly prepared Heart, not as the Word of Man, but, as it is in Truth the Word of God, who still bears Testimony to the Word of his Grace, with Power from on High.

That the Doctrine of Regeneration, or a new spiritual Birth of a divine Nature in the Soul, together with other
Matter

Matters of inward Religion, as well as they that preach them, have of late Years fallen under the Disgrace and Reproach of *Enthufiasm* with many, will not be denied: But that this Charge is nothing new, or contrary to what might be expected, the pious Mr. *Burkitt* declares, in his Note on that Passage in *St. Mark*, where some are said to have gone out to lay Hands on our Lord, saying that He was beside himself, "Learn hence (says Mr. *Burkitt*) that the forward Zeal and Diligence of *Christ* and his Ministers in Preaching the Gospel, is accounted Madnes and Phrensy by a blind World: But they may say with the Apostle, *If we be beside ourselves, it is unto God.*" And in his Note on these last Words (2 Cor. v. 13.) he observes as follows, "Wicked and carnal Men account and represent the holy Servants of God as a sort of Mad-men: Workings of Grace are sometimes so far above Reason, that they seem to be without Reason. There are several Acts of Holiness which the profane World esteems as Madnes, as eminent Self-denial, great Seriousness in Religion, their burning Zeal, their holy Singularity, their Fervors of Devotion, their Patience and Meekness under Sufferings and Reproaches. All these Acts of Holiness represent the Saints as Mad-men to a carnal Man." I dwell the longer on the Article *Enthufiasm*, as well because a late Author has availed himself of the common Acceptation and Abuse of this Word, to ground thereon his irreverent and profane Treatment of the Mysteries of the Divine Life, and to cast Reproach upon every Thing that is inward and experimental in Religion, as because it will open the way to some useful Instructions for the common Reader.

As the Word *Enthufiasm* is frequently misapplied, because little understood, it will be needful to settle its Definition and Kinds, in order to fix its Sense: For Want of due Precision herein many confound different
 Kinds

Kinds of Enthusiasm widely remote from each other tho' their Reason for this is oftentimes easy to discover. The Word, according to its present vulgar Use, answers well enough the Purpose of Reproach, and as few Persons have Discernment sufficient to see the Misapplication, the Odium intended easily falls upon the Person or Doctrine they are pleased to connect with it. But if this Word is sometimes taken in an ill Sense, it has also a good Meaning belonging to it, as will be shewed in its proper Place; and in the latter Sense, to use the Words of a learned Author, "A Spice of Enthusiasm" is no unreputable Thing, seeing that a Man seated on "this Bench finds himself in very good Company, some" of the greatest Philosophers, Prophets, Legislators, "Doctors, Fathers, and Saints in all Ages being confes-" sedly his Assessors.,

Enthusiasm, as it respects Religion, divides itself into a threefold Distinction, all agreeing in the Sameness of the Object, but differing in the State of the Persons, who are the Subjects of it. I shall consider these three Kinds under the several Epithets, malignant, mixed, and pure.

One Species of a malignant Enthusiasm, and that the most common, consists in a blind intemperate Zeal for something called Religion, of any Denomination, under the imbittered Fury of a Party Rage, directed by the untutored Passions of the animal Man, and standing in all the Depravity of corrupt Nature. It can look no farther than Names and sensible Things, and therefore treats with Contempt the Mysteries of the Divine Life, is an utter Enemy to all Spirituality in Religion, and uses the Word *Sanctified*, as applied to Persons, only as a Term of Derision, appropriating Sanctity to Places, Buildings, Vessels, or Vestments: But tho' its Zeal be exercised on nothing better than Ceremonies, Names, and sensible Objects, yet it is no less interested in their Defence than

f eternal Salvation entirely depended on them, and therefore such as come under this Predicament, are ready upon the last Preference given to the Essentials over the Circumstantials of Religion to cry out as loudly as the Men of *Ephesus* for their great *Diana*. If some Notions about Doctrines enter into this kind of Zeal, as Charity is wanting, they only serve to inflame it the more, whilst they go about to sanctify their Wrath with the Pretence of contending earnestly for the Faith. The mad Knight Errantry of the Crusades was strongly infected with this Spirit of enthusiasm, and likewise all Wars in every Age that have been entered into for the Propagation of Religion; and such Madness unto the Death has been fancied Martyrdom. Now as this kind of a wild-fire Zeal greatly inflames the unmortified Passions, the Devil finds an easy Access thro' it to the Heart, where he reigns with uncontrolled Dominion, and is properly and truly Abomination sitting in the Holy Place, even that Place which should be a Temple consecrated to God, and the peaceful Mansion of the Spirit of Love: And this is deservedly called malignant Enthusiasm from the Effects it produces, as Variance, Wrath, Strife, Wars, Persecutions, and Massacres on account of Religion, Men acting the Part of Savages one by another at the Instigation of the Devil, and calling the Murder of their Brethren the doing God Service. All such Professors, however they may boast the Antiquity of their Church, the Excellency of its Constitution and Discipline, or the Orthodoxy of its Creed, do notwithstanding fall greatly short of the Religion of good Heathens, and we scruple not to pronounce, that *Plato* and *Plotinus* had a far better Faith and Practice. The learned Dr. *Henry More** speaking of the Illumination of certain Theosophists, which he attributes to natural Light and a complexional Philanthropy, expresses himself thus: "This Illu-

(C)

" mination

* See *this Divine Dialogues.*

" mination of the Theosophists is not so contemptible
 " but that they justly magnify it above the grim Fero-
 " city of the superstitious Factions in the embittered
 " Churches of the World, who have not so good an In-
 " spiration as this, but their Tongues and Hearts are set
 " on Fire of Hell. This Light of Nature, I say, is a-
 " bundantly well appointed both for Right and Skill, to
 " chastise and reproach the gross and grievous Immo-
 " ralities of hypocritical Religious, and to be subservient
 " to that Truth and Life that is really Divine "

Is there any need to justify the Doctor's Remark, or
 to prove that mere human Virtues founded on natural
 Benevolence are preferable to a persecuting and there-
 fore false *Christianity*? How even Reformation has been
 deformed by this Antichristian Leaven in some who have
 boasted in her Name, a moderate Acquaintance with
 Church History will make appear, and sadly shew how
 the same Spirit of Wrath and Bitterness which, in the
 Form of *Popery*, burnt the *Protestants* in Queen *Mary's*
 Days, soon after crept into a better Form, and hunted
 down the *Puritans* in those of Queen *Elizabeth*: And
 when Presbytery got into the Chair of Authority,
 the same evil Genius, dressed in a new Cloak of Re-
 formation, forged the Fetters of a new Uniformity, and
 laid the Axe to the Root of Episcopacy. Independency
 promised better Things, and pleaded loudly and strong-
 ly for Liberty of Conscience and Universal Toleration;
 and yet when *Independents*, driven by the Rigours of
 Church Government out of *Old England*, got Foot-
 ing and Power in *New England*, they forgot their Suf-
 ferings and their Principles, and there persecuted the
Quakers; but these last, tho' we have seen them with
 Government in their Hands, were never known to per-
 secute or molest any for Conscience sake. To the
 Honour of that People this is spoken. But to proceed.

Under this Species of malignant Enthusiasm stand
 likewise

kewise ranged all those who have made themselves infamous in the World by their impious Pretensions to a Divinity of Character, equalling themselves to one or other of the three Persons in the sacred Trinity; of which Sort were some of the Heresiarchs of old; and among the more modern ones are to be reckoned *David George*, who gave out, that he was the spiritual Messiah in whom all the Prophecies centred, and other blasphemies: As also that *Peruvian Doctor*, who affirmed that he was possessed of a Sanctity superior to that of Angels, and that God Almighty had offered to make him partaker of the Hypostatic Union, &c. To which may be added in a lower Degree the chief Leaders of a Fanatic Tribe in *Germany* * in the Sixteenth Century, who boasted that they were commissioned by God to restore the Kingdom of *Christ*, aspired at Sovereignty, and attempted to depose Princes, declaring that they themselves were the Meek who should inherit the earth: And with these may be joined the Fifth Monarchy Men of the last Age, and all such filthy Dreamers who go about with carnal Weapons in their Hands, to erect *Christ's* spiritual Kingdom on mundane Systems.

We see in these Instances, how Zeal for Religion bringing up in Hearts unpurified by Christian Faith and Humility, partakes of all the Foulness of the Soil that feeds it, mixes with the unsubdued Passions of the natural Man, and, where it meets with any uncommon degree of Pride, and affected Singularity, lays itself open to all the Delusions of Satan, becomes impregnated with the Spirit of Error, and brings forth the poisonous Fruits of a malignant Enthusiasm.

The second Kind of Enthusiasm that falls under Consideration is of a mixt Nature: I do not mean that it partakes in any Degree of the Malignancy of the foregoing Species, for the Soul in this Case is so far influenced

* *Thomas Münzer* &c.

fluenced by the Holy Spirit, that the Devil has not sufficient hold of it to drive it into any criminal or sinful Excesses, yet it is not without a greater or less Degree of Infirmary, Weakness, and Error. But before we proceed on this Head, it will be proper to give the original Sense of the Word Enthusiasm, according to its true Etymology.

They who were supposed to be in this State were called by the Antients *Enthusiastai*, *Entheoi*, *Theolaptoi*, or *Numine afflati* --- Men animated in an extraordinary Manner with the Spirit of God, or apprehended, seized, or inspired of God. And this Meaning of the Word is allowed and used by Dr. *H. More*, in his *Treatise on Enthusiasm*, where he speaks of *verum, pium, probatumque Enthusiasmum sanctarum, sincerarumque animarum*, or the pious, true and approved Enthusiasm of sincere and holy Souls: doubtless meaning among these such as he describes in *the Vision of the Rider of the White Horse*, Men rooted and grounded in the Love of God, and flaming with a Holy Zeal for *Christ*, and therefore fit Instruments to reform the World. I cannot help quoting the Passage (tho' with some little Abbreviation) as it seems to be delivered in the Ardour of a prophetic Spirit: "The sharpened Sword which is here said
 " to come out of the Mouth of *Christ*, is in Effect the
 " very same that comes out of the Mouths of his Saints,
 " who rule the World by convincing them of their
 " Wickedness and causing them to return to God.
 " This sharp, piercing and vehement Reproof out of
 " the Mouths of the People of God against the Beast
 " and the false Prophet is here said to be a Sword com-
 " ing out of the Mouth of *Christ*, because their Mouths
 " are his Mouth, and He inspires them by his Spirit
 " to transmit that Blast of Fire and Flaming Breath (as it is
 " called in *Esdras*) whereby the Wicked are consumed.
 " This Flame and this Sword I take to be clear Truth and
 " found

“found searching Reason inspired from the Eternal Word, which whetted with a holy, sincere, and unaffected kind of Enthusiastic Zeal, and backed with an unexceptionable Life and Conversation, will be like a sharp-edged Sword with the Weight of running Quick-silver in the Back of it, whose Stroke will fall with such a sway that it will even chine the Enemy at one Blow, will divide asunder Soul and Spirit, and pierce through the Joints and Marrow.” Let thus much suffice to distinguish between true and false Enthusiasm, and to rescue the Word from that popular Odium and Abuse of Language with which the Pretence or Delusion of some feigned or fanciful *Illuminati* have disgraced it.

But however exalted the foregoing Character given by the Doctor may seem, and really is, yet inasmuch as it generally comes under the Denomination of mixt Enthusiasm, it is not exempt from Infirmary and Error: But if we resolve to admit of no Reformers but such as are perfect Saints, and free from every Degree of Hallucination and Misconduct, we are not likely to see any Amendment wrought in the World. That Difference which appears among the Fathers of the Church in their Judgment concerning some Points of Religion; their Disputes one against another; * their Retractions, and some other Particulars in their Lives and Conduct, if brought to the Test of a severe Examination, may all serve to exemplify the Truth of the Apostle's Words, that every Priest taken from among Men is compassed about with Infirmary. Yet what shall we say of a Bayle or a Middleton, who could overlook the eminent Gifts and Graces of these holy Men, to pick out their Blemishes of human Infirmary, in order to discredit their Testimony and all that was divine in their Characters. There

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* As betwixt Chrysostom and Epiphanius, Jerom and Rufinus, Cyril and Theodoret, &c.

is not perhaps any Thing more opposite to the Gēnius of true *Christianity*, than that Closeness and Bigotry of Spirit which hinders us from seeing and loving the Beauty of Holiness in the Character of any Person, only because he thinks not or walks not with us; as if the all-bountiful God measured out his Grace and Goodness according to the scanty Pattern of the national, notional Orthodoxy of Men: And therefore what a little Heart must a late Writer have had, when he went about to depreciate the exalted Virtues of the Marquis *De Renti*, on account of his being of the Romish Communion! could he see nothing worthy of his own Imitation in that excellent Nobleman, that Mirrour of *Christian* Piety? Could he fix his Eye upon nothing in so glorious a Character but his Reverence for a monitory Crucifix, that Excess of Honour he paid the Saints, and some other Particularities of his Church which we commend not? Let it be told him, what he might have seen, if his Eyes had not been blinded by Prejudice: He might have seen in him a young Gentleman of Quality and Fortune renouncing the Poms and Vanities of the World for the Love of God: He might have seen in him an Instance of profound Humility in high Life walking in the Steps of his Blessed Master, and after his Example going about, doing good both to the Bodies and Souls of Men: And he might have beheld in him the manifest Tokens of a devout Heart and heavenly Affections, and a most illustrious Exemplification of divine Faith, Hope, and Charity. All this he might have seen in the Marquis *De Renti*, if it had not better suited a mocking Humour to ridicule his Mortification and Self-denial together with some Mixture of Weakness in a Life consecrated to God. How much more ingenuous, of how catholick a Spirit was that honest Quaker who was so charmed with this Pattern of Christian Excellency (tho' I believe as much

averse

verse to Superstition as this Author) that he thought an Epitome of such a Character an Embellishment to his Book. * “ He was (says he) a Man of an enlightened Mind; and of a Soul mortified to the World, and quickened to some Taste of a supernatural Life: Let his Youth, let his Quality adorned with so much Zeal and Piety, so much Self-denial and Constancy, become exemplary to those of worldly Quality who may be the Readers of this Book.” But it seems, *He had a strong Tincture of the Enthusiastic Spirit.* Let it be asked, instead of a Reply; What Spirit he was tinctured with, and what Cause he meant to serve, when he took so much Pains to disgrace the Character of the holy Marquis *De Renti*?

The Reader probably by this time begins to grow better reconciled to Enthusiasm in a proper Sense of the Word, and to find that it is no such terrible Bugbear as they might before imagine, nay, on the contrary, wears a beautiful Form! But let it be carried in-Mind, that they in whom the Spirit of God so dwells are but Men, and that therefore, as they have this Treasure in earthen Vessels, their Strength will be joined to Weakness, like the Feet of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image which were partly of Iron and partly of Clay; for few, very few there are, who have their Minds so thoroughly enlightened with Wisdom from Above, and their Hearts so totally purified by Faith and Humility, as not to have remaining in them great Mixtures of Ignorance and Frailty: Hence arise frequent Mistakes in very eminent *Christians* with regard to their Spiritual Estate, great Unevenness and Inconstancy: They find in themselves at times a very ardent Love for God, and the Flame of their Devotion rises high; and in such Frames scarce any Figures are lofty enough to express the Sublimity of their Raptures --- We see them skipping like

Roes upon the Mountains --- riding on the Wings of the Wind, or soaring as an Eagle towards Heaven. These may be called irregular Flashes of the celestial Fire, or transient Touches of the divine Spirit, which even penetrate the animal Nature and transport them beyond themselves. Young Converts to the divine Life have generally the most sensible Experience of them, the Reasons of which are assignable; but they are apt to place too much to their account, immoderately coveting them, and as much dejected upon their being withdrawn; hence frequent Complaints of Desertions, Darknes, the Hidings of God's Face, &c. The like Vicissitudes we meet with in *David*; sometimes we see him set upon his high Places, and boasting, that his Hill is made so strong that he shall never be moved; and then presently he is in Heaviness --- God has turned away his Face from him, and he is troubled.

The Soul is sometimes in a more tender Frame, and feels it self as it were melted into divine Love, so that if the former may be compared to Fire, this State may be said to resemble Oil, which is a Figure (if it be only a Figure) often used in Scripture to denote inward Joy and Gladness, as well as the Graces of the Holy Spirit. When the Soul is thus affected, it is natural for it to adopt another kind of Language whose Style is pathetic and mellifluous --- It walks in the Garden with its Beloved, whose Lips like Lilies drop sweet Myrrh --- It leans upon his Bosom, and he spreads over it the Banner of his Love --- All is ineffable Sweetness, and the Burden of the Song is --- My Beloved is mine, and I am his. The Reader need not here be told that this is the Language of the *Song of Solomon*, which was doubtless the divine Breathings of a Spiritual Affection, and not, as some of an earthly Mind suppose, the amorous Expressions of a carnal Love. But these Gusts of Suavity and Delectation are not ordinarily of any long Continu-

ance, being rather designed as refreshing Cordials to sustain the Spirit in this its State of Weakness, to allure it on its Way, and to disgrace the low, gross Satisfactions of Sense, than appointed for its constant and daily Food, and therefore ought not to be passionately or impatiently coveted. We should leave the dispensing of his Comforts to God alone, who knows best what we stand in need of, and remember that a Life of Faith, under the Denial of these Spiritual Delicacies, accords for the most Part, better with the Nature of a probationary State. It may not be amiss to observe here by way of Caution, that to publish or promiscuously declare these our inward Experiences is not at all Times prudent: What passes in the Interior betwixt God and our Souls, is not alwys designed for the Benefit of others, but for our own private Instruction, Trial, or Improvement: Besides, as the Religion of too many rises no higher than their Forms, it will be talking to them as in an unknown Tongue, whilst People of a cavilling and scoffing Spirit will not fail to treat the Relaters as mad-brained Enthusiasts: But this must be left to Christian Prudence, as there are confessedly Occasions, where they may be of great Use to such as are fit to profit by them.

Another Error which People of good Dispositions under strong Religious Influences are subject to, is that of confounding the Motions of God's Holy Spirit with those of their own natural Wills and Propensions. It is said of *Socrates's* Genius or Dæmon, and that by himself, that it was dehortatory, not impulsive, restraining by inward Checks from acting upon particular Occasions, but not prompting him upon any: Tho' this is not true of that good Spirit under whose Influence all true *Christians* are, and from whom all our holy Desires and good Councils do proceed; yet as to the distinct Knowledge of its Operations, we are generally

more sensible of its restraining than inciting Power over us: However that be, where the Impressions are not clear and convincing (as oftentimes they are not) they should be attended to with a cool deliberate Judgment and a Mind as free as possible from all partial Affections and every sinister Bias, tried by the Rule of the written Word according to the Light given us, and offered up in Prayer for clearer Direction, and then if the Instigation continues, and does not cross any plain Duty, we are warranted in acting pursuant thereto, tho' it be contrary to the common Sentiments and Ways of others, for the *Christian* is not to be judged by the Opinions and Rules of common Men; but if he doubt, let him not act, for whatever is not of Faith is Sin: However, in this Case, it is both safer and better to call his Motive by the Name of Impression or Persuasion than an Impulse of the Spirit, since by the last we generally mean some extraordinary Vouchsafement of Light, or holy Violence upon the Will, and that upon uncommon Occasions: For want of distinguishing with a cool dispassionate Judgment in Cases of this Nature, the Ebulliency of natural Fervors and a premature Zeal will be apt to pass easily upon the Mind for divine Impulses, and our own hasty Resolves for the Dictates of God's Spirit.

A third Error which has sometimes misled very serious and pious People, is that of the Imagination drawing Pictures of so lively a Resemblance as to impress them with a strong Belief of their Reality: And to these Illusions pensive and solitary People are the more subject, on account of their greater Abstraction of Thought, for as the imaginative Faculty has a kind of creative Power, so it gains Strength by the habitual Exercise of it. The Lives of the Romish Saints are full of Relations of this sort, and as the People of that Communion generally exceed on the side of Credulity, as

much

much as some of their Neighbours on the contrary Extreme, so this their Fondness for the Marvellous has proved a great Temptation to the Writers of those Lives to make great Additions to the Truth. But because many of these Appearances have been merely illusory, or Creatures of the Imagination, we are not upon that account to disbelieve such as come properly attested by Persons of Credit, seeing every Deceit as a Counterfeit implies a possible Reality: Besides, an absolute total Incredulity in this respect can only be supported by a degree of Credulity in another way, that is more than sufficient to believe the Point in Question; for it must proceed upon a Belief, that there can be no Communication between us and the World of Spirits, or that all such Communication is ceased, which admits of no Shadow of Proof; as also that some of the best People in all Ages have born their Testimony to an Untruth, in what they have related concerning such Appearances as from their own Knowledge. That Instance of this kind given us by *Dr. Doddridge* in the Life of Colonel *Gardiner*, may, I think, be safely admitted; and were it not that I well know with what Prejudice Narratives of this sort are generally received, I could add others of equal Authority. If it be replied, that these, according to my own Supposition, might only be Representations presented to the Mind by the Imagination --- It is readily allowed: But yet to affirm that there can be no possible Way for the Party immediately concerned to distinguish betwixt Fancy and Reality, in these Things, is to affirm, that *St. Paul* could have no Certainty in Relation to the Vision of the *Macedonian*, nor in that of the Angel in his Voyage to *Rome*, and yet we do not find that he was in any Doubt as to either, nay Doubt here would necessarily have defeated the End for which they were sent, the one being appointed for his Direction, the other for his Consolation.

But

But I think it will scarcely be doubted, for sure it ought not, whether God can give us so lively and vigorous Perception of such Representations, as to stamp upon them all the Clearness of Certainty: Nor is it material whether the Imagination be the Seat of them or not, as He can convey unquestionable Notices to us by this as well as any other Faculty of the Mind; and to deny this Power to his good Spirit, whilst we allow that evil Spirits can practise upon the Imaginations of Men with delusive Images, is placing the greater Power in the wrong Scale. As to the Credibility of these Appearances with respect to others, that will depend much upon the good Estimation, in which the Relator stands with us for Veracity and Soundness of Mind, for, as these things are mostly for private Use, they seldom carry with them any further Credentials, unless some remarkable Effect follows which is so connected with them as to add corroborating Evidence, and such perhaps may be reckoned the sudden Reformation of Colonel *Gardiner*.

Upon the whole; as the Imagination in this our fallen State is much disordered, like the other Faculties of our Minds, through that Darkness and Deceivableness which Sin hath occasioned, therefore, as in the Matter of Impulses before, so here, great Care and Caution should be used, that we suffer not the Workings of our corrupt Nature to impose upon us, nor give Access through them to the Spirit of Error and Delusion to deceive us into a false Enthusiasm: And in order to this it will be needful to live in a daily Mortification of the sensual Appetites and Passions, which have a very powerful Influence over the Imagination; not to indulge any fond Desire after Visions and Voices, but to cherish an humble Frame of Mind, that no Inflations of Spiritual Pride may dispose us to believe a Lye: And to be much in Prayer to God, to deliver us from the
Temptations

temptations and Delusions of *Satan*, and all Deceits of our own treacherous Hearts, so apt to betray us into the Enemies Hands; and that He will give us a right Judgment in all Things, that we may be able to discern betwixt Truth and Error. Such a Discipline will be a Means to preserve our Minds from the Imposture of false Pictures & Images, and enable us to make a right Use of God's Dealings with us, both in the Dispensations of his Providence and his Grace.

There was the more need to be particular on this Head, as well to guard on the one hand against an Error which some well-meaning and pious People have been misled by, as against that prevailing Incredulity on the other which treats all Appearances of a supernatural kind as Fictions or Distemper of Mind, which is too much the fashionable *Hobbism* of this Age, and has a direct Tendency to Atheism: And indeed a strong Tincture of the latter is much to be suspected, where Men openly profess themselves so far *Saducees*, as to disbelieve all Manifestations of Angels or Spirits upon any Testimony whatever. Such Persons generally make the highest Pretensions to the Name of Rational, tho' in this Instance they give no Proof of their being so, seeing that Reason is not more concerned in denying than affirming the real Existence of these Things, it being rather the Office of Reason to seek for Truth here, as in most other Cases, in the Mid-way betwixt believing too much and too little: And as to any Difficulty of distinguishing betwixt true and false in this Matter, the Objection concludes no more strongly here than it does against trusting to the Report of our Senses, to the Professions of Friendship, or to many other Matters that occur in common Life, on account of the various Deceits and Impositions that we are daily liable to.

It may not be unseasonable in this Place to add a
general

general Caution against treating with Ridicule or Levity, what serious and religious People declare concerning their Experiences, tho' they may not be altogether free from Indiscretion or Mistake therein. Whatever passes betwixt God and the Soul, tho' according to our most imperfect Apprehensions of it, is a Subject of serious Consideration, and the very weakest of our Brethren, if well-meaning, are in this Case among those little ones whom we should not dare to offend. These things have been treated of late in a very unbecoming Manner, and it is high time to take Notice of it, and to rescue the Mysteries of the divine Life from the Mockery of profane Jesters. *Christianity* is too much considered by many as a Science only, but they who denied it to be experimental also, know nothing of it yet, as they ought to know, nor are qualified to speak with Propriety on any one Grace of the Gospel. The Soul has its Sensation as well as the Body, its Affections and Passions are confessedly such, nor is it easy to conceive, how we can be made Partakers of those Fruits of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, but by our spiritual Senses put into Exercise by a Principle of spiritual Life, unless it may also be affirmed, that we have no other way whereby to judge of our bodily Health and Soundness than by distinct Acts of Perception or Reflexion. What a strange kind of Divinity then must that be which would rob Faith of its substantial Comforts, and explain away the high Privileges of the *Christian* into ideal Nothings, whilst it allows to the animal Man a sensible Experience of his vain Loves and earthly Satisfaction!

Let thus much suffice under the Article of mixt Enthusiasm, considered as that State of the divine Life in which there is much of Infirmity and Mistake, and oftentimes of Deception, Prejudice of Education, Passions not thoroughly mortified, or wrong Habits not sufficiently

ufficiently subdued ; but notwithstanding this Mixture of Darknes and natural Corruption with the Light and Grace of God's good Spirit, still Holiness is the prevailing Principle, and divine Love keeps the Ascendant in the Soul, as a Flame never extinguished, tho' varying in Steadiness and Lustre from different Causes. We are furnished with many eminent Instances of Persons in this Character in every Church, all holy People, whatever outward Communion of *Christians* they belong to) being fellow Members of that Catholic Church for which we pray, and joint Associates in that blessed Communion of Saints of which *Christ Jesus*, God blessed for ever, is the only supreme Head.

It remains that something be said of pure Enthusiasm according to the proper Definition of the Word) as signifying that high State of Christian Perfection in which Men of purified Souls hold intimate Communion with God through the Fellowship of his Holy Spirit, having their Minds defecated from all heterogeneous Mixtures, irradiated with his divine Light, and tasting the ineffable Sweetness of that Love, Joy, and Peace, which constitute a self-evident glorious Display of the Kingdom of God within us. He that is come up hither, may well be compared to *Jacob's Ladder*; tho' he standeth upon the Earth, yet he reacheth unto the highest Heavens: He is in Possession of every Thing that is great and Excellent, for he is united to God; he hath attained to the End of all Ordinances, for Love fulfilleth all Things in him, and *Christ* giveth him to eat of spiritual Meat, and to drink of the Water of Life freely: He needeth not that one teach him, for he is taught of God, and that Wisdom which is a Breath of his Power taketh her Abode with him, and feedeth him with the Bread of Understanding: He is got above the Reach of Delusions arising from the Phantasms of an irregular Imagination, being reduced to entire Poverty of Spirit, denuded

denuded of all Self-hood, and mortified to natural Sensibilities, so that his Illuminations are clear as the Rivers of Paradise, and the divine Communications to his Soul pure as the shining Light. But how shall he particularize this State, who hath attained to no Experience of it? seeing those few who have, declare it to surpass Description: The great Dr. *More* before quoted (who in one Part of his Life seems to have been of this Number) calls it "a most joyous and lucid State of Mind, and such as is ineffable;" and in some Places, "a Union with the divine Celestial Principle:" "I am (speaking of himself in this State of glorious Liberty) *Incola Coeli*, an Inhabitant of Heaven; He that is come hither, God hath taken him to be his own familiar Friend, and tho' He speaks to others aloof off in outward Religions and Parables, yet He leads this Man by the Hand, speaks to him plainly in his own Language, sweetly insinuates himself into and possesses all his Faculties, Understanding, Reason, and Memory: This is the Darling of God, and a Prince amongst Men, far above the Dispensation of either Miracle or Prophecy. *"

The Doctor was well aware that the Relation of such high Experiences would meet with but a very indifferent Reception from those cold stiff Religionists, whose icy Hearts were unthawed by the Fervors of divine Love, and never tasted the Sweetness of an elevated Piety, and therefore in his Mystery of Godliness, Book VIII. Ch. xiv. intituled, *A Vindication of the true Members of Christ from Pharisaical Aspersions*, he obviates their Charge of Madness and Phrenzy upon the Children of God. The whole Chapter is so pat to the Purpose, that I had much ado to forbear transcribing the Whole; but I content myself with giving the Reader an Abstract of the xith Section. "It must needs be
" that

* Life of D. Hen. More by Ward.

that those who speak with much Zeal and Vigour Things true in themselves, yet to others unintelligible, must be by them reputed no better than Madmen; And hence it was that *Festus* told *Paul*, that much Learning had made him mad. Here probably may be the Ground of that ordinary Saying -- *Nullum magnum Ingenium sine Admixturâ Dementiae*; and according to Analogy it may well be said, that *nullus insignis Christianus, &c.* that there is no eminent Christian, that will not seem to have some Spice of Madness in him, especially if he be judged by the formal stiff Pharisee, whose Postures and Actions are always kept, as it were, in an outward wooden Frame, as a Child in a standing Stool; his Traditions and customary Opinions being as deeply scored and carved in his Memory, as the outward Shows of Things are scrawled out in the rude Furrows of an Idiot's Brain: And as the unskillful Rustic would suspect him scarce sound in his Senses, that should confidently speak any Thing that palpably crossed those gross Scrawlings written in his Imagination: So certainly would the formal Pharisee not stick to judge him mad, that should with Zeal and Boldness pronounce such Things, as were not parallel nor agreeable to the Prefigurations of his prejudiced Mind, but most of all, if they were such as are above the Reach of his Apprehension: Surely, the more earnest a true Member of *Christ* should be in such Points, the more mad he would appear in the Eyes of the cool, prudential Pharisee."

It is observed with Regard to this Dispensation by those who have been raised to it, that it is seldom of any long Duration, being rather a short Earnest or Pre-ibation of the beatific State afforded to pure and holy Souls, than any permanent Dispensation; and it is generally, if not always, followed by some humbling Trial; accordingly we read in the Case of *St. Paul's* being caught

up to the third Heaven, that immediately after this Rap-
 or Vision there was given him *a Thorn in the Flesh, the*
Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted
above Measure ; by which we cannot understand less than
 that he was exercised with some sharp bodily Affliction
 for his Humiliation : And this may help to explain what
 frequently happens to those who belong to an inferior
 State, according to their more remote or nearer Approa-
 ches to this respectively, who find their joyous and de-
 lectable Intervals succeeded by Fits of Heaviness and
 gloomy Overcasts, whence their Complaints of Aridities,
 Desertions, &c. which People of a moderate Experience
 in the divine Life cannot be unacquainted with, tho' ma-
 ny, for Want of Light into the Methods and Reasons of
 God's Dealings with Souls, are apt to be troubled above
 Measure upon these Occasions, as tho' some strange
 Thing happened unto them, not knowing or not con-
 sidering, that the same Afflictions are accomplished in
 their Brethren, and that they are sent, after they have suf-
 fered a while, to perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle them.

It will be proper to observe here, that the Way to
 any good Degree of Perfection in the divine Life, lies
 through great Mortification and Self - denial : Some
 think it enough to get Doctrines into the Head ; but
 till the Heart is in some Measure purified by Faith, no-
 thing is rightly done : And in Order to this the Chil-
 dren of *Anak*, those corrupt Passions and Inclinations
 that war against the Soul, must be driven out, the Per-
 verseness of the Will broken, the Understanding simpli-
 fied, the Pride of our Hearts pluckt up by the Roots,
 and all the Cords that bind us to the World and the
 Things of it untwisted ; in a Word, our Idols must be
 cast out, and every cursed Thing removed that separates
 betwixt God and us ; for the Pure in Heart and they
 only shall see God : It was by this Kind of holy Violence
 practised on themselves, that the Worthies both of the

Old and New Testament, in all Ages of the Church, have laid hold on the Kingdom of Heaven, been favoured with such rich Communications from God, and enabled to work such Wonders, as surpass the Belief of many in this degenerate incredulous Age : And that a preparatory Discipline of Strictness and Severity is necessary, in Order to qualify us for any extraordinary Vouchsafements of Illumination and Grace, we may learn from the Schools instituted among the *Jews* for the Training up of Persons for the prophetic Office, where they were educated in great Abstraction from the World, in the Government of their Passions and the Mortification of their natural Propensions, that being so disengaged from the common Impediments of a holy Life, they might be more at Liberty for Devotion and the Contemplation of heavenly Things, and by such previous Exercises become fit Instruments for the holy Spirit, and more receptive of heavenly Wisdom. Thus come they out holy Enthusiasts, Men of God furnished to every good Word and Work, Scribes well instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, and fearless of giving Offence in the Way of Duty, even before Kings, being no less qualified for Reproof and Correction than for Doctrine and Instruction in Righteousness, Patterns these for all Persons of a religious Character, whether they live in Colleges, or are in Kings Houses ; whether they attend on those who go clothed in Purple and fine Linnen, and fare sumptuously every Day, or are called forth to a more promiscuous Employment of their Office : For tho' the Dispensation of Prophecy as it respects the foretelling future Events, has of a long Time ceased in the Church, yet the Character of Prophets in the Capacity of Ex- pounders and Declarers of God's Word and Will, and Denouncers of his Judgments on all impenitent, even the most dignified, Offenders, is never to cease in it, neither is the Lord's Hand shortened, that it cannot ex-

tend Comfort and Courage, Light and Direction for these Purposes now as formerly : But alas ! Our Hearts are strained, that they cannot receive it as they ought, and we are so entangled, as to Many of us, with such an evil Covetousness after the Things of this Life, so studious to seek the Honour that cometh of Man more than the Honour that cometh of God, that we want Boldness to hold the Faith of our Lord *Jesus Christ* without Respect of Persons : For let Men be never so highly titled or characterized, let their Pretensions to Learning be what they will, and their Acquaintance with Creeds, Canons and Commentators never so extensive, yet so long as they continue Men of this World, and follow the Things of it, so long as their Affections are set on Things beneath, and their Hearts unsurrendered to God, they are no better than dry Bones as to the divine Life, without Marrow or Moisture ; and as they cannot in such a State receive the Things of the Spirit of God, not having spiritual Senses exercised thereto, so will these Things of Course appear Foolishness unto them in Others, and they will speak evil of that which they know not.

I am here led to say a Word concerning Inspiration, and to observe, that this best of God's Gifts to Men (however the Belief of this may be deemed Enthusiasm by Some) is the certain Priviledge, in one Degree or other, of every true Christian : for the Gospel - Faith is nothing less than a supernatural Light and Power communicated to the Soul from the Father of Lights ; and every saving Grace in us is, in its Measure, a real Participation of the divine Nature. The prevailing Prejudice against the Doctrine of Inspiration thus held, arises in Part from a gross Misconception, concerning some supposed physical Distance between God and the Soul, whereas nothing is nearer to God than the Soul of Man in the original Constitution of its Nature ; nor is it now separated from him by Distance of Place, but only by the Condition

Condition of its Existence in Sin. In Proportion then as it is purified by Faith from Sin, and gives itself up to the Drawings of the Father thro' his Spirit, so far it advances in its Union and Communion with God, and comes into Fellowship with the Father and the Son : So that the Light of divine Truth shining in our Hearts, and all holy Tempers and Dispositions of the Soul are by the Inspiration of God, and real Emanations from the Fountain of Light and Love. For this Inspiration we are taught to pray in the Service of the Church ; but few seem to mean any Thing by the Word, and the Learned by their false Glosses and Interpretations of the Scriptures on the one Hand, and by exalting the Sufficiency of human Reason on the other, have so explained away this important Doctrine of all Religion both natural and revealed, that we no longer wonder, that the Belief of all internal Operations of God in the Soul is treated as Enthusiasm or Fanaticism. It is by these superficial Dealers in the Letter, that we have seen the Life of the Letter taken away, the beggarly Elements of human Ideas set up in the Room of the Light of God in the Soul, and the Scriptures disgraced by opprobrious Comparisons drawn between them and heathenish Compositions, as if one main Excellency of the sacred Writings consisted in outdoing *Homer* in Imagery, or *Demosthenes* in Oratory : But such degrading Encomiasts would do well to remember, that he whose Character is that of being the Wisdom of God, and who in the Days of his fleshly Appearance spake as never Man spake, made no Account of human Eloquence ; and that the Authority with which he spake, consisted not in the Sublimity of Figures, or the Elegance of Diction, but in Demonstration of the Spirit and Power from on High.

A distinct Consideration of the Nature of Enthusiasm is at this Time the more requisite, inasmuch as the anonymous Author before referred to, in his Work on this

Subject, has not distinguished the different Kinds of it, but confounded Truth and Error, Light and Darknes in one promiscuous Huddle, that he might with a fuller Hand fling the Dirt of his Reproach upon experimental Religion, at the same Time ridiculing the Infirmities and aggravating the Blemishes of many pious *Christians* of different Communions, both among the Living and the Dead, in Order to form distorted Comparisons for the Sport of Buffoons and Infidels. To instance in what he says of those two different States of Mind, which christian People, who attend to what passes within them, make frequent Mention of, viz. As being at certain Times exercised with Doubts and Fears about the Condition of their Souls, and under a total Absence of spiritual Comfort, at others, highly transported with grateful Resentments of the divine Love and Favour, and filled with great Joy and Peace in believing. Now he can see nothing more in these than the common Effects resulting from the Mechanism of the animal Oeconomy: "The Force of Distemper and bodily Disorder, says he, will account for such dark and disconsolate Thoughts," (in the former Case) and as to the latter, he resolves it into Enthusiasm, "A Kind of Drunkenness (these are his Words) filling and intoxicating the Brain with the heated Fumes of spirituous Particles." And in Order to compleat his Parallel betwixt those two States of the Mind and a common Debauch, he adds: "No sooner do the Inebriation and Incalescence go off, but a Sinking of the Spirits, a Coldness and Dullness take Place, and the lower is the Depression in Proportion to the preceding Elevation!"

How shall we answer such Treatment of spiritual Things without Rebuke? What shall we say, when one, who owns himself a Minister, is not ashamed to reflect so disgracefully on religious Matters? Let us suppose then, (if such be his Character) that one under his

Charge,

charge should apply to him for Direction and Comfort under great Distress of Mind, complaining of uncommon abatements of the Love of God in his Soul, and of great heaviness in Prayer; that he took no Satisfaction in the Way of Ordinances and Duties as usual, but on the contrary found in himself a Backwardness to all religious Exercises, and a total Insensibility of Comfort from them: Would he tell such a one, that he ought to make no Account of these Things; that it was all owing to the Sinking of the animal Spirits, and that he might find his Relief from riding out, or cheerful Company, only taking in the Paroxysm of the Fit, (as he is pleased to express it) *q. s.* of Spirit of Harts-horn? Suppose again, that some such disconsolate Person were so happy as to receive Benefit of some of his Discourses, (if we may suppose him to have any suitable to such a Case) and should come to thank him as the Instrument of his Consolation, telling him withal, that the Cloud which before intercepted his Light and Comfort was removed, and that he no longer doubted his State of Acceptance, being strong in Faith and Hope, and his Soul invigorated with a refreshing Sense of the divine Love and Goodness. Now what would be his Reply upon this Occasion? Nay, what other Reply can we suppose him to make, upon his own Principles, than as follows? Neighbour! Do not deceive your self, by laying any Stress upon this Change of Mind that you talk of; for between you and me (if I deal plainly with you) it is nothing but a Fit of Enthusiasm, a Kind of Drunkenness, filling and intoxicating your Brain with the heated Fumes of spirituous Particles, and when the Inebriation and Incalescence are gone off, the following Depression will be in Proportion to your present Elevation."

Thus the Affections and States of the Soul, with regard to its spiritual Concerns, are resolved by him into

the Effects of Matter and Motion, and one great Part of *Christianity* subjected to the Laws of a mechanic Philosophy, and therefore no wonder that he treats the Belief of all supernatural Influences upon Man, whether Divine or Diabolical, with such an Air of Ridicule, as particularly where he banters the Belief of being possessed by evil Spirits, recommending a Dose of Physic to the Patient as the best Dæmonifuge. The Fathers of the Church held these Cases in more awful Consideration: They appealed to the Roman Court for the Truth of the Matter, * and challenged a Trial of their Power to cast evil Spirits out of the Possessed, not by Manna or Senna, but by the all powerful Name of *Christ*: And should this Author be ever so unhappy as to be troubled with so foul a Guest, he will know of a Truth, that his cleansing must be effected by a very different kind of Cathartic from that which he so ludicrously prescribes.

But he has found out the Secret whereby to account, as from a Principle, for all these Enthusiastic Irregularities and Variations in the Temper, and that is, from a complexional Melancholy; and he refers the Reader to *Dr. Henry More's* Treatise on Enthusiasm. Now the Doctor in that Work professedly treats of the false Enthusiasm, or that ranked here under the Distinction of Malignant, and distinguishes in the very same Work betwixt that Species of it, and what he there calls the approved and pious Enthusiasm of holy Souls, as observed before. * He allows a complexional Melancholy at the Bottom of both, fruitful of much Evil in the former, as of much Good in the latter Case, may he pass a great Encomium on this particular Temperament, as being greatly helpful to "rouse the Soul from
" its

* See *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and other Apologists.

* See Sect. Lxiv. as also his large Note on that Section in *Scholæ*, at the End of the Dissertation. *Latin Edition*.

its spiritual Lethargy, to put it upon suspecting its State of false Peace, to stir it up to Self-examination and Circumspection, to guard against Levity and foolish Festing, and to prepare faithful and obedient Souls for the Work of true Regeneration and the Influxes of the Holy Spirit." It is very plain, from the Quotations before given from the Doctor, that he was no Enemy to Enthusiasm, properly so called, nay, he freely confesses, that he had a Tincture of it himself: his Works shew it; and it was this divine Fire that gave Wings to his Soul, and Sublimity to his Sentiments, carrying him at times far above those little Exactnesses and Rules of Language, which suit much better those minute Critics who sit trimming their Phrases and turning their Periods, than Persons of his Elevation and Genius: And yet when we say, that this great Man at times fell short of himself, and that the Freedom of his Spirit in some Instances was contracted into something of a narrow Partiality, we only say, that he was a Man. I here take my Leave of this Author at present with referring the Reader to the lxiii^d and lxivth Sections of his *Scholia in Enthusiasmum Triumphatum*, for the Commendations which he there gives to a true Enthusiasm, and for Usefulness which he ascribes to a right Melancholy in the divine Life.

Melancholy is generally considered as a Distemper of the Mind, whereas it only becomes such through an Excess of it in the animal Oeconomy, it being one of those four Complexions which distinguish the human Constitution. The animal Body of Man is compounded of the four Elements answering to the four Complexions, and the animal Spirit may be called a Quintessence or fifth Essence. Now according as one or other of these four Elements predominates in Man, so is he denominated Choleric, Melancholy, Phlegmatic, or Sanguine; and from the particular Crasis or Mixture

of these Ingredient Principles arises his natural Disposition, Genius, &c. Thus he that has most of Fire in his Composition, which is the choleric Complexion, is more prone to Anger and Pride than others, impatient of Contradiction, &c. and if mistaken Apprehensions concerning Religion mix with this Temperament, it is apt to flame out in a furious persecuting Zeal, for, if it be not well qualified with the Water of Life, the Devil has great Power over it, and it is easily set on Fire of Hell, as the Words and Actions of People under the Dominion of passionate Anger too fully demonstrate. The phlegmatic Complexion is more inert and less susceptible of Impressions — The Melancholy is fixt, retentive, and circumspect — The Sanguin, active and cheerful, but inconstant. Hence proceed the different Tempers observable in Men, as also what we commonly call constitutional Virtues and Vices, (the Sin that so easily besets us) and where the Power of the Complexion is naturally strong, it stamps its Signatures oftentimes in the Lines and Configuration of the Features, so as to make them an Index to the Complexion, and herein is the true Ground of the Art of Physiognomy. Now Religion, tho' it lies deeper than the Complexion even in the Soul or immortal Spirit (which communicates with the spiritual World from whence it has its Birth) yet its Operations are tinged by the Complexion, as Light is tinged by the Colour of the Glass that transmits it: And this will account for that Variety of Appearances and Dispositions in which Religion manifests itself in the best of Men under a great Diversity of Talents, Inclinations and Tempers, as in the active and retired *Christian*, the meek and the courageous, the reserved and the communicative; for the religious Principle doth not so much alter and change the Complexion, (tho' it goes a great way towards it in some, by giving to it Consistency and Fixedness) as it qualifies, corrects, and purifies

purifies it; and perhaps this is what we are to understand by the Sanctification of our Bodies, not of the gross corruptible Flesh, but of the Complexion.

It is easy to believe, by what is said of *Paul's* breathing out Threatnings and Slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, and of his being exceedingly mad against them in persecuting them from City to City, that he was by Nature choleric; nor are we to suppose that his Conversion wrought a total Change in his Complexion, but sanctified it: His Zeal was ardent both before and after, but here lay the Difference: In the one Instance it was a natural Fire or blind Impetus, in the latter a holy Zeal for God and Souls, under the Direction and Influence of divine Light and Love: St *John* perhaps had all his Light and more than all his Love, but not so high a degree of fervent Zeal. Now what should we say of any one that should go about to explain the holy Zeal and Love of these great Apostles from a natural Elevation of the animal Spirits, or the heated Fumes of rarified Particles? We could not, I think, say less, than that such chemical Reasoning ill accounts for Christian Graces. Had the Author who says such Things been a mystic Writer, and spoken of spiritual Inebriation, after the Manner of those Authors we could well have borne with him, but it plainly appears that he had no Notion of that, any otherwise than as a fit Subject of Banter, and therefore could only speak of it in Derision. Let us hear the divine *Macarius* describing the Elevations and Depressions of spiritual Persons in a way becoming so serious a Subject, and like a Man thoroughly experienced in heavenly Mysteries, in the following Extract from his xviiith Homily, where he ascribes them to the Operations of the spirit of God in holy Souls.

“ At certain Times they are elated as at a Royal Banquet, and rejoice with Gladness and Joy unspeakable: at others, as the Angels, light and agil, and as it were
 “ free

“ free from all Incumbrance of these material Vehicles
 “ And at other Times, like Men overcome with Drink
 “ exhilarated and even intoxicated with the Spirit. A
 “ other Seasons they are sunk into Grief and Lamenta
 “ tion for all Mankind, interceding for the whole Stock
 “ of *Adam*, and taking up a wailing and weeping for it
 “ Then again so inflamed with the Joy and Love of the
 “ Spirit, that if it were possible, they would snatch up
 “ every Man into their Bosom. Sometimes they are
 “ humbled so far below every other Person in Self
 “ abasement, that they thing themselves inferior to an
 “ less than all: At others, they resemble a strong Man
 “ who comes forth in Royal Armour to the Battle, and
 “ valiantly overcomes his Enemies, &c. So very vari
 “ ous is the Way of the Spirit in conducting the Sou
 “ to God, sometimes refreshing her, and sometimes try
 “ ing and exercising her, that so she may be presente
 “ pure and perfect to our heavenly Father.”

In a word --- To go about to explain and account
 for spiritual Effects from the sole Agency of materia
 and mechanical Causes, and thereby to exclude the
 divine Spirit from the Work of Religion in Man, ar
 gues great Ignorance in the true Nature of things, nay
 it is more than *Cartesian* Infidelity, and borders upon
 Atheism. If therefore we would speak philosophically
 upon Religious Subjects, we must know something of
 of the spiritual World, that so we may be able in part
 to conceive, how the Good or the Evil Spirit in Con
 junction with the Soul acts in and through Man's Ani
 mal Nature, according to the Law of his material Sy
 stem: And this Knowledge, as far as it goes, will help
 to explain the Connexion of the Soul with the Body
 through the Mediation of the Animal Spirit, and also
 account for a great Variety of Matters in experimental
 Divinity: But this must be from the same Light which
 gives us the spiritual Knowledge of the Scriptures, and

ven in the most illuminated will be knowing but in
 art, and seeing as through a Glass darkly in this State
 of great Imperfection; however, it may well be called
 Day-light if compared to the Darkness of the natural
 unenlightened Man, who, as such, cannot know the
 Things of the Spirit of God, but will account them
 Foolishness. Thro' want of some degree of Knowledge
 as to the Communication betwixt spiritual and material
 Nature it is, that our Systems of Philosophy in general
 are so very defective, and rather leaning to Infidelity;
 and hence probably may have proceeded that well
 known Reproach cast upon Physicians, for that being
 led by the Study of their Profession into a more inti-
 mate Acquaintance with the physical Causes and Opera-
 tions of the Animal Oeconomy, many of them, either
 through want of Faith, or want of Knowledge in spiri-
 tual Nature, have mistaken second Causes for the first,
 and so by resting there, have stopt short of God. Sure
 it is, that true Divinity and true Philosophy are never
 in variance, but on the contrary, when rightly under-
 stood, are mutually helpful to each other: And yet af-
 ter all we must allow, that the nearest way to God is
 by Faith, Hope, and Charity, and that these far surpass,
 and will do more for us, than the Knowledge of the
 highest Mysteries. But to return to the subject of
 Melancholy.

This of all the Complexions is best fitted for receiving
 and retaining religious Impressions, as being the most
 stable and serious, and, if properly qualified with the
 sanguine, is perhaps the most perfect and amiable of
 the four: Yet this, like the others, has its Danger and
 Temptations, for by Reason of original natural Corrup-
 tion the evil Spirit has Access to the Soul through this
 likewise, none but the Lord of Life having ever been
 able to say --- "He hath no Part in me." That Melan-
 choly will operate very powerfully in Persons of this
 Complexion

Complexion in the Religious as well as any other Character, sometimes driving them to Despair, and in some Instances ending in Madness, stands confessed: Hence the Undiscerning are apt to ascribe it to Excess in Religion, or to what Dr. *Trapp* calls *being Righteous over much*, whereas the true Cause is some radical Evil, or vicious Excess in the Complexion, and therefore Madness in this Case is to be accounted for in the same way that we account for Phrenzy, Lunacy, or Idiocy in any other of the four Temperaments: and we may with as good Reason blame the Sun for producing noxious Weeds and poisonous Plants, as attribute these Effects to Religion, which is well calculated to correct all Disorder of the Passions, and to settle the Mind in Tranquillity, Peace, and Comfort. The primary and fundamental Doctrines of the Gospel are, first, that of Original Sin, or our lost, undone State by Nature; but this Disease mortal and universal as it is in itself, finds its Remedy in that Redemption which is by *Jesus Christ*. Secondly, the Impossibility of our being justified before God by any Works or Deservings of our own: But then here we are relieved from our Impotence and Misery by the free Offer of that Faith and Grace, which are abundantly sufficient for us. Thirdly, the Necessity of a spiritual Birth of a divine Life in the very Essence of our Souls, in order to which there is no help to be found in Man, for there is no Medicine for such spiritual Health in us: But here the Almighty Saviour stands engaged by his sacred Promise, that "to as many as will receive him He will give Power to become the Sons of God." Here is no other Ground of Despair in these Doctrines than that of being able to become our own Saviours, and such kind of Despairing must be allowed a necessary Step to right Believing.

Let us now Briefly consider what Effect these, and the like evangelical Doctrines, when powerfully urged,

re likely to have on different Persons, according to the Difference of their State and Disposition: The hardened Sinner and the impenetrable Infidel will mock and deride with the *Athenians*, or oppose and blaspheme with the *Fews*, whilst those of a more pliable Temper, and whose Hearts lye open to the Stroke of Conviction will be rouzed from their Lethargy, and made to cry out, "What shall I do to be saved"? The Formulist, if his Ears be open to Instruction, will be taught, that the Kingdom of God standeth not in external Forms and Modes of Religion, but in Power, and that the true Worshipers are those that worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth; And the Legalist, if he can be moved from his false Foundations, will here learn the Vanity of going about to establish his own Righteousness, and be driven to seek and sue for that Righteousness which is of God by Faith: Or, where these Doctrines prove insufficient to persuade, the Terrors of the Lord, as held forth in the Law, may be powerful to convince both the outward Sinner and the Pharisee, and compel them to give up both their Unrighteousness and their Self-Righteousness; and this by breaking open the whited Sepulchre, and discovering the Rotteness and Corruption that are within; by making manifest the Purity and Holiness of God's Nature, and the Impurity and Sinfulness of Man's Nature; by shewing the Perfection of God's Law, and the Imperfection of Man's best Obedience, and by laying open to the Conscience the Sins of the Heart and the Sins of the Life, and so bringing into Judgment. Now it may so happen, that the same Terrors and Denunciations which are needful to pluck some as Fire-brands out of the Burning, may be turned by others of a deep complexional Melancholy into the Matter of their Despair, nay into such a kind of it as may prove incurable, notwithstanding the most skilful Applications both of the bodily and spiritu-

al Physician; but this we cannot prevent, any more than some other obstinate Distempers incident to the human Mind; the Law and the Gospel must be enforced according to God's Appointment, and the Event be left with him who can save by Fire as well as by Water and is not obliged to give an account of these his Matters. But after all, these are to be considered as particular Instances, and therefore making no Part of general Rule, for it is far otherwise, for the most Part with Persons who are exercised with strong Fears concerning their spiritual Condition, and who under such Circumstances, are not only curable, but in the right way of their Cure, this Sickness being not unto Death but for the Glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified hereby in the Salvation of their Souls.

Convictions on Account of Sin, (which is the preparative Work for the Gospel State, or the Kingdom of God within us) may not improperly be termed the Physic of the Soul, and in Order to operate efficaciously, it must act powerfully; for that sorrowing after a godly Sort which it produces, works great *Carefulness, Indignation, vehement Desire* and *Self-Revenge*: it penetrates deep, even to the very Foundations, and sometimes, for a while, spreads a horrible Gloominess over the Mind, the Party feeling the Sentence of Death in himself and subscribing to the Justice of his own Condemnation. This was certainly the Case of *David*. "in that Day of his Complaint, when " the Arrows of " the Lord stuck fast in his Soul, and his Flesh trembled for fear of his Judgments; when he had no Rest " in his Bones by Reason of his Sin, and all God's Storms " went over him" The same is well understood in one degree or other by every experienced *Christian*; and Others would do well to beware, how they ridicule or speak lightly of such distressing Perplexities --- far better would it be for them that they were in the same Condition

dition. Too many there are, who being entirely ignorant in this Way of God's Dealing with Souls, take upon them the Office of Advisers, and so are apt in Cases of this Nature to prescribe improper Reliefs and false Comforts ; they are for healing the Wound before it is searched and cleansed, which causes it to ulcerate the more, not considering that this is not a Disease which is to be got rid of at any Rate, and the sooner the better, but a State which is to be passed through, figured by the Journeying of the *Israelites* through the Wilderness from *Ægypt* to *Canaan*. The Soul is here in its right Way of Discipline, and placed on the Foot of *Mount Sinai* under Thundrings, Darknes and Fire, to make it sensible of its Sin, and of the terrible Majesty of a Sin-avenging God, that so the Law may do its Office upon it, as a Ministraton of Condemnation, and act the Part of a Schoolmaster to lead it to *Christ*, as its only propitiatory Sacrifice, Righteousness and Salvation. Thus the Way to *Sion* lies by the burning Mountain of *Sinai*, and *Moses* with his correcting Rod conducts us to *Christ* through *John's* Baptism of Repentance, as this prepares us for the Baptism of Regeneration. These Persons then are not mad, as the World supposes, but returning Sinners coming to their right Mind, as the prodigal Son is said to have come to himself, when he became sensible of his Folly and was brought to Repentance : They are under the Leadings of the Father to the Son, that the Son may present them to his Father cleansed and redeemed by his Blood, and that the holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, may sanctifie them, and make them a peculiar People holy in all Manner of Conversation, and zealous of good Works.

Or if this must be called Madness, let it at least be allowed a less dangerous Kind of it than Presumption and Madness in sinning, as a wounded Conscience affords more Hope than a benumbed or seared one. But do you

herein shew that your Minds are set upon Righteousness, and that you judge the Thing that is right, O ye Sons of Men! Turn your Eyes to the great Bedlam of the World, where its Votaries are running mad at such a Rate after Folly and Riot, where Invention is racked to lull Conscience asleep, and where Millions are rocking themselves to spiritual Slumber in the Cradle of Death, and treat every faithful Watchman that sounds the Alarm to rouse them from their false Peace, as the Enemy of their Repose: Cast your Eyes, I say, on this Theatre of Vice and Frolick, this Fair of Vanity, where Prince *Abaddon* holds his perpetual Jubilee, and say, which of these two Schools, *Christianity* or the World, turns out the greater Number of mad Folks. Which would an Angel pronounce most rational and sound in Mind? The sordid Race of Mammonists, the giddy Tribe of Pleasure-seekers, and the fantastic Crowd of Fashion-Followers, or the poor broken-hearted *Christian* lamenting his Sin and Misery, and in the Power of divine Grace working out his Salvation with Fear and Trembling, and following a despised *Jesus* through Mockery and Derision to eternal Blessedness and Glory? If you are not of the Number of the infatuated, you cannot hesitate a Moment to resolve the Question aright; for Wisdom is justified of her Children.

I have the longer insisted on the Subject of Experiences, as well because all true Religion must both begin and end here, as because very few of our Theological Writers touch upon these Matters; and therefore whilst Some lay down excellent Rules for the practical Life, enforce the Obligations to a regular and decent Discharge of all the Parts of external Worship, or imbue the Mind with sound and wholesome Doctrines, let others be permitted, according to the Length of their Line, to launch out farther into the Deep, and there let down their Net for a Draught: Thus, whilst Some are instructed

ed in the Principles or Rudiments of the Doctrine of *Christ*, and others are led on unto Perfection: Whilst we deal out Milk to Babes, strong Meat to those that are of riper Age, and speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery to them that are perfect, the whole Body is edified in Love, and every Man hath Praise of God.

It is very certain, that the greatest Part in every Age and Place have stopt short of the Truth and Substance, by resting in the Outside of Things; and therefore St. *Paul*, that great Preacher of inward and spiritual Religion, takes much Pains both with *Jew* and *Gentile*, to convince them of their gross Ignorance and Error in his Particular; for if the latter were in general ignorant of the true God, the former worshiped Him not in Spirit, and in Truth; if the latter bowed down to Stocks and Stones, the former idolized their Forms of Worship instead of Worshipping God, through their Forms; and so all had sinned and come short of the Glory of God. The *Jews* esteemed themselves the Chosen, the Temple of the Lord, and the Seed of the Covenant, and they pleaded their Circumcision, their Priesthood, their Temple-Services and their Ordinances of divine Institution as the Marks of their Election: And a peculiar People they certainly were, and chosen to distinguished Favours and Privileges, but no otherwise elected to Salvation, than as they continued in the Grace and walked in the Light and Love of God; "for he was not a *Jew* which was one outwardly, neither was that Circumcision which was outward in the Flesh; but he was a *Jew* which was one inwardly, and Circumcision was that of the Heart, in the Spirit and not in the Letter;" the outward Ordinance representing to them that Corruption of our Nature by original Sin, which was to be cut off and renounced, and that they were to be a spiritual People, holy to the Lord, and born again, not of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God. And

And here we cannot but lament among the many far Effects of the Fall, its having introduced such Grossness and Darkeness into the Mind of Man, that it so hardly elevates itself to the Consideration of heavenly Things. From this Propensity to Matter and Sense Idolatry first took its Rise --- Men wanted Objects of Worship, that they could see with their bodily Eyes, & so adored the Hosts of Heaven, or Images of their own making : And hence it is, that among those who profess to worship the true God, so many are wholly taken up with what is external in Religion : “ See what Manner of Stones and great Buildings are here ! ” said one of the Disciples to our Lord : “ And *Jesus* answering said unto him : See [admirest] thou these great Buildings ; There shall not be left one Stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. ”

And as there is an outside Worship void of the Spirit of Devotion, which availeth not, so likewise there is an outside Knowledge in Religion, without the Spirit of Wisdom that profiteth not ; for it is not a literal or historical Understanding of the Scriptures that makes way unto Salvation : The Art of Criticism and Skill in Languages may make a fair Show in the Flesh, and procure us the Reputation of learned Men, but unless the Spirit give an affecting and edifying Interpretation of them, they will be but as a sealed Book to us in Things pertaining to God. *St. Paul* disclaims all human Knowledge and Self-Ability, considered separately from the divine Teachings of the Spirit, as insufficient for the Work of the Ministry --- “ Our Sufficiency, says he, is of God who has made us able Ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit. ” These Things rightly considered, there will be little need of an Apology for insisting, and that strenuously, upon the Necessity of the inward and spiritual Life, the Kingdom of God within us, as that divine Source from which alone

alone all holy Desires, all good Counsels and all just Works can proceed ; as that heavenly Light which alone giveth true Wisdom, and makes all our other Knowledge and Learning of any real Benefit to us in the christian Life ; and as that Principle of Holiness which sanctifies all our Morality and religious Services, and without which they are nothing worth.

It is further evident, that nothing less than calling People to the Spirit and Power of Godliness, can be sufficient at this Time to bring about a Reformation both of Principles and Practice amongst us ; and most serious People think, that this was never more needed. That the best Things when corrupted, become the worst, is a proverbial Truth, and if so, bad *Christians* must be the worst of Men. Corruption did perhaps never spread wider nor sink deeper than at present ; and the Want of Truth and Justice in the Words and Dealings of *Christians* is become our Reproach in the Mouths of *Turks* and Infidels : Nay, are not the Provisions made by publick Appointment for the Redress of Injustice become, some how, so slow in Execution, so vexatious and burdensome oftentimes in their Process, that to suffer Oppression in many Cases is a less Evil than the tedious and expensive Operation of its Remedy ? What shall we say of the Sophistication of Wares and Merchandise, the abominable Adulteration of medicinal Drugs and Liquors, and other Frauds in Trade commonly practised, nay Frauds supported by customary Perjury : And lastly, what shall we say of a Depravation of Manners so horrid and worse than heathenish, that the very savage *Indians* of *America* are afraid to suffer their Children to converse with *certain Europeans*, lest they should be corrupted by them* . Must not that be a false Charity, that casts its Mantle over such nation-

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* See the late Bishop *Berkeley's* Tracts, and Dr. *Hales's* Advice to Dr am - Drinkers.

nal Sins as these? Must not that Zeal for Religion have lost both its Name and Nature that can be silent here?

Lastly. It is from a Revival of the Spirit of true *Christianity* in the Hearts of Men alone, that we can hope to see Peace restored on Earth among the divided Churches of *Christendom*. Whilst Religion resides only in the reasoning Part of Man, it is tinged with all the Prejudices and Passions of his Nature, and his Reason will be ready to plead for or against the Truth, as Interest or Education sways the Man, it being little better than that hired Kind of Logic that wrangles at the Bar, whether it rails in the Pulpit, harangues in the Synod, or weilds the Club of Controversy. Much of political and polemical Divinity is of this Sort. But the Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, full of Mercy and without Partiality; for the same good Spirit that enlightens the Understanding, cleanses the Heart from all Bitterness, Malice and Hypocrisy, and therefore operates by Pureness, by Knowledge, by Love unfeigned. A Party-Spirit, whether it be in Religion or Politics, proceeds from Littleness of Mind and Narrowness of Heart, and it puts out both the Eye of the Judgment and the Eye of Charity, and so hinders us from seeing the brightest Excellence in our Neighbour that is not just as high or low as ourselves, as I heard a Man of Learning once say, that he could not allow *Milton's Paradise lost* to be a good Book, because written by an *Oliverian*. But the *Christian* knows no such Straitness; for his Bowels are enlarged towards all that will come within the Embrace of his Charity, which is as wide as the East is from the West. He cannot wrangle and hate about Differences of Opinion, for he is got above them: his Call, his universal Call is to Love, and he has adopted for his Motto that Saying of *Luther* -- *In quo aliquis Christi video, illum diligo* -- "In whomsoever I see any Thing of *Christ*, him I love." In this Man, where-
soever

soever he lives, and by what Name soever he is called, the Kingdom of *Christ* is come ; and of such heavenly Men and Women it will consist in that enlarged glorious State of it which we are given to look for : And what if it be already begun on Earth ?

I cannot conclude this preliminary Discourse better than with an Extract from Dr. *More's* Preface to *the Mystery of Godliness*. After he had before asserted, that the End which all Parts of the christian Mystery point at, is the Advancement and Triumph of the divine Life in the Soul, in the Exaltation of which God is most highly glorified, he declares his Belief of a future happy State of the Church, when the Spirit and Power of the everlasting Gospel shall prevail in the Hearts of Men :

“ There shall be, there shall be, most certainly, a
 “ Time, when the Sun of Righteousness being risen,
 “ *Ægyptian* Mists and Darkness shall be dispersed : When
 “ all the Filth and Dross of the Church shall be consum-
 “ ed. and purged away by the Ardor of divine Love :
 “ When all Barbarity of Manners, and filthy Superstiti-
 “ ons and Idolatries shall be sent into the Lake of Fire
 “ and Brimstone : When finally, *Calvinism*, *Luthe-
 “ rianism*, *Popery*, and whatever other Distinctions, shall
 “ be melted down into one (which shall be instead of
 “ all) truly Catholic and Apostolic *Philadelphianism* :
 “ Which Times that God would hasten, and thereto in-
 “ cline the Hearts of christian Princes and People, ought
 “ to be the fervent Desire and Prayer of all good Men.”

F I N I S.

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Christ's SPIRIT,

A

Christian's Strength.

O R,

A Plain Discovery of the Mighty and Invincible Power, that all Believers receive through the Gift of the Spirit,

First held forth in Two SERMONS, on *Acts* I. viii. and after Published for the Instruction and Use of those that are Spiritual, *Anno* MDCXLV.

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1. *Cor.* iv. 19, 20. *I will come unto you shortly if the Lord will, and will know not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the Power. For the Kingdom of God is not in Word but in Power.*
 2. *Tim.* iii. 5. *Having a form of Godliness, but denying the Power of it; from such turn away.*
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GERMANTOWN.

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THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

The history of the United States is a story of a young nation that grew from a small colony to a global superpower. It is a story of struggle, of triumph, and of the pursuit of the American dream. From the first settlers to the present day, the United States has shaped the world and been shaped by it.

The story begins with the arrival of European settlers in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. These settlers, seeking new lands and opportunities, established colonies along the eastern coast. Over time, these colonies grew into a powerful nation, fighting for independence from British rule in 1776. The American Revolution was a pivotal moment in the nation's history, as it established the United States as a sovereign state.

In the years following independence, the United States experienced rapid growth and expansion. The westward movement of settlers, known as the frontier expansion, led to the discovery of gold and other resources in the West. This expansion also led to the displacement of Native American populations, a dark chapter in the nation's history.

The mid-19th century was a time of great change and conflict. The Civil War, fought between 1861 and 1865, was a defining moment in the nation's history, as it resolved the issue of slavery and preserved the Union. The war led to the Reconstruction era, a period of rebuilding and reform that sought to integrate African Americans into the nation's political and social life.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were a time of industrial revolution and progress. The United States emerged as a global superpower, leading the world in technological and economic innovation. However, this progress was not without its costs, as the nation grappled with issues of social inequality and environmental degradation.

The 20th century was a time of global conflict and change. The United States played a leading role in World War II, emerging as a superpower alongside the Soviet Union. The Cold War era was a period of tension and competition between the two superpowers, as they vied for global dominance.

The late 20th and early 21st centuries have seen significant changes in the United States, including the rise of the internet, the globalization of the economy, and the challenges of climate change. The nation continues to evolve and shape the world, as it seeks to address the challenges of the future.

Christ's SPIRIT,

A

Christian's Strength.

Acts. 1. 8. *But ye shall receive Power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, &c. Or,*
You shall receive the Power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.

THESE Words are the more Remarkable, because the very last Words in the Conference between the Son of God, and his Beloved Apostles, immediately before his Ascension into Heaven. Now, you know, when dear and intimate Friends are ready to part, as their Love then runs strongest, and their Affections are most intire and vehement, so then also they especially discourse of those Things, wherein most of all they desire to be satisfied and resolved. Thus was it between Christ and his Apostles; never was there such dear and intimate Friendship, and such sincere and burning Love between any, as between them. The Apostles, all of them loved Christ most truly, and passionately; and *Peter*, who had three times denied him, three times professed his Love to him; and being sorry that Christ should question his Love the third time, he thus answered: *Lord, thou knowest all Things, thou knowest that I love thee.* Joh. 21, 17. And Christ also loved them dearly; yea, he loved them first, *and having loved his own, he loved them to the End.* Joh. 13, 1. and so he was not discontented with them, for their leaving, and forsaking him, through Humane Infirmary, when he was led away to Judgment, and to Death: For though
Death

Death quite puts out all natural Love, yet spiritual Love is not extinguished, but enlarged by Death. Now when such loving Friends as these, were even now ready to take their last leave of one another, in regard of bodily Presence, who would not most willingly have been present, to have heard what Discourse pass'd between Christ and his Disciples, at this their last parting.

Now *Luke* acquaints us with the whole Sum and Substance of Christ's Discourse with his Apostles, all the Time he lived together with them, after his Resurrection, till the Day wherein he ascended into Heaven: in the third Verse of this Chapter, he saith, he did discourse with them, touching the Kingdom of God, That is, not only touching his spiritual Kingdom, which he sets up in each particular Christian, and which begins at our Regeneration, and is consummate in Glorification: But also touching his Mediatory and Monarchical Kingdom; which, in the Time appointed of his Father, he should set up in the World; *When he should have the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the utmost Ends of the Earth for his Possession, and all People, and Nations, and Languages should serve him; and he should reign from Sea to Sea, and from the River to the Worlds End.* Psal. 2, 8. Dan. 7, 14. Psal. 72, 8. This was the Sum of Christ's Discourse with them, and the Apostles, were fully satisfied touching the Thing, only they were unsatisfied touching the Time. For besides, that the setting up of this Kingdom of the *Messias* in the Power, Beauty, and Glory of it, was at that Time the common Discourse and expectation of all *Israel*; the Apostles themselves remembred many Prophecies and Promises of the Old Testament, for the Restoring the Kingdom of *David*; and this they thought Christ would have done, in the Days of his Flesh: But presently, all their hopes were blasted by his Death. But when they saw him risen again from the dead, then presently their hearts were revived

revived, into their former hopes; but yet again, seeing nothing done, all the Time he conversed with them after the Resurrection, when now he was ready to ascend into Heaven, they desire him, first, to resolve them this Question, whether or no he would at that Time, restore the Kingdom to *Israel*; *Lord* (say they) *wilt thou at this Time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?* Now Christ doth not deny the restoring of the Kingdom to *Israel*, but denies to acquaint them with the Time when it should be done. He tells them, *it was not for them to know the Times and Seasons, which the Father had put in his own Power*, Act. 1, 7.

The like Answer to the like Demand, *Daniel* received in his Time; for when the Angel had represented to *Daniel*, the total Destruction of the Image of worldly Monarchy, together with the rise and reign, and ruine of Antichrist, and the setting up of Christs Kingdom in the World in the stead of the two former, *Daniel* said, Chap. 12, 8. 9. *And I heard, but I understood not; then said I. O my Lord, what shall be the End of these Things? And he said, go thy Way Daniel, for the Words are closed up and sealed till the Time of the End.* So that the Angel, who discovered the Things themselves to *Daniel*, refused do discover to him plainly and expressly the Time when they should be done; but that was to be closed and sealed up till the Time of the End. And so here in like Manner, Christ who had discoursed largely and clearly to the Disciples touching the Kingdom of God, yet denies to discover to them the Time when it should be set up in the World. And the reason why he denied this to them, to whom he had not denied himself, was not for want of Love, but because the Father had kept the Time and season, wherein all this should be done, in his own Power. Had this been placed in Christs Power, he had no doubt made it known to them, as well as he did those other Things, which

which he had heard from his Father; but the Father had not placed this in his Sons Power, but had reserved it in his own; and the Apostles were not to pry after, that which was hidden with God, but were to content themselves with what he had revealed.

But though the Son did not reveal to them what the Father had kept in his own Power, yet he tells them, what the Father had promised unto them, and what he had also put into his Power, and what he would certainly perform e'er long, and that was *the Gift of the Spirit of Power*, saying: *But ye shall receive Power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me, &c.* As if he should have said: Do not you trouble your selves about secret Things, which shall not be accomplish'd in the World, till many Years after you are fallen asleep; but do you mind your present Business, wherein you are to serve God, in your Generation; your present task is to be witnesses unto me, in *Jerusalem*, and all *Judea*, and in *Samaria*, and to the utmost Parts of the Earth; to declare and make known, what you have heard, and seen with your Eyes, and looked upon; and your Hands have handled of the Word of Life: You are to testify to the World my Incarnation, Doctrine, Miracles, Life, Death, Resurrection and my Kingdom and Glory, that is to come: You are to make known to the World, the high and deep, the great and glorious Mystery of Christ and of the Gospel; and that you may be fit for this great and weighty Work, you shall receive the Power of the Holy Ghost: *You shall receive Power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, &c.*

Which Words also may be an Answer to another Question which the Disciples did, or might make, after this Manner:

Our dear Lord and Master, why wilt thou leave us, thy poor Disciples, among so many Evils and Enemies in

in the World, which our weakness must of necessity sink under? We well remember how fearful and foolish we have been, whilst thou wast yet with us; but how much more timorous and trembling shall we be, when thou art gone from us? When thou wast apprehended by the armed Power of the Magistrates, thou knowest how we all forsook thee and fled; and I, said *Peter*, denied thee, and forswore thee, at the Voice of a simple Maid. And therefore if thou now quite leave us, what Witnesses are we like to be unto thee, and what Preachers of thy Name, among the obstinate Jews, among the angry and enraged Rulers, and People, who will be ready, for thy Names sake, every Day to deliver us up to a new death? And how shall we be able to stand amidst so many difficulties, troubles, distresses, oppositions and persecutions when thou hast left us? Surely, we are such weak and infirm Creatures, that we shall never be able to hold out, but shall lie down both in shame and sorrow.

To this Christ answers in these Words: *Accipietis virtutem, You shall receive the Power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.* As if he should have said, you have a hard Task indeed, but you shall be furnished with proportionable Power. The Business you are to undertake, is not Humane, but Divine; the Things that you are to teach, are not carnal, but spiritual; the Work that you are to set upon, is not Mans Work, but God's: You are to act among Men for God; you are to act in the World, against the World; you are to act against the Devil, in the very midst of the Devils Kingdom. You are to convert Infidels; to make of Heathens Christians; to bring them near unto God, who are now without God in the World; to carry the Light of Heaven up and down this dark World, among the people that sit in darkness, and shadow of death, to shew them the Way to Life and Salvation; you are to turn the
World

World upside down; to change the manners and customs of the People, to bring them off from the Idolatry of their forefathers to worship the true God in Spirit and Truth; you are to reduce the Earth into conformity with heaven, and set up God's Kingdom, here in this present World. And all this you shall not do, in ease and quietness, and prosperity, and pleasure; but whilst you are thus imployed and busied, you shall have the whole World rise up against you, and the Devil persecuting you with his utmost Power through wicked Men, and you shall not only be hated of all Men, for my names sake, but you shall be even overwhelmed with reproaches, obloquies, slanders, oppositions, persecutions, prisons, torments, deaths. And therefore that you may be able both to do and to suffer all these Things, *You shall receive the Power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.*

Now from these Words we shall note something generally, and something more particularly.

In general three Things. The first is this:

1. That as Christ will not suffer his Disciples to be tempted above their Power, so neither to be imployed above their Power; but he furnishes them with Power sufficient, both for their Temptations, and for their Employments; for their Sufferings, and for their Doings. And as Soldiers, that are under a wise and careful Commander, when they are near an Engagement, are not suffered to run rashly upon the Enemy, nor permitted to go forth to the Battle till they are armed, and mounted; so Christ would not suffer his Disciples to go forth in his warfare, to encounter so many evils, and Oppositions, and persecutions, and the whole Power of the World, and of the Devil, till first he had armed them with the Power of the *Holy Spirit*; *Ye shall receive Power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, &c.*

Christ always gives unto all those whom he sends forth
and

and employs of his own Power, for his own Works; heavenly Power for heavenly Works, spiritual Power for spiritual Works, the Power of God, to do the Works of God. Indeed Christ gives unto Some greater Measure of Power, and to some a lesser, according as he intends to use Some in greater Works and Difficulties, and some in lesser; but still they have of Christs Power, whether more or less, who are employed by Christ; and a little of that Power that is communicated by Christ, will enable a Man to do great Things, far greater than the World suspects, or imagines.

So that we may judge of our calling to any Business, and of our Employment in it, by the Power we have received from Christ for it. If we have none of the Power of Christ, we were never set on Work by Christ; for Christ never sets any on his Work, without communicating unto them of his Power. And hereby we may certainly know and conclude, that those in the Ministry that are loose and vicious, and idle, and negligent, and insufficient for that Work, were never called to it, nor employ'd in it by Christ, but they run of their own Heads, when they were not sent, and minister in the Church for the Gain of Money, and preach only that they might live: Whereas if Christ had employed them in that Calling, he would have furnished them with Abilities for it; and they being destitute of such Abilities, it is most evident, they were not sent by Christ.

Judge then what a Kind of Reformation this Church were like to have, if some Men might have their Minds, who would have Ignorant and insufficient Men, yea those and prophane Men, tolerated in the Ministry, under pretence of keeping up Ordinances; when yet such Men were never employed by Christ, nor supplied with any Power from him: Yea and what Ordinances (I pray) are those like to be, which are kept up by Men

that are Carnal, not having the Spirit? But you see here that Christ's Way and Wisdom was different from this; for he first gives the Apostles the Power of the Spirit, and then sent them to preach, when he had first enabled them to preach.

2. You see here, that Christ being to leave his Disciples, in Regard of his bodily Presence, yet leaves behind him the promise of the Spirit of Power; and this was some Establishment to them, who before had their Hearts filled with Sorrow.

Christ, though some Time he leave his People in Regard of Sense, yet he never leaves them without a promise. The Soul sometimes in the Hours of Temptation and Desertion, may want the Sense and feeling of Christ, but it never wants a Promise from Christ; and the Promise makes Christ present, in his Absence: For Christ himself is spiritually present in the Promise, and not Christ only, but the Holy Spirit also; for Christ and the Spirit are never asunder, but as the Father and the Son are one, so is Christ and the Spirit one, and all are in the Promise. And so the Promise is able to uphold the Soul in any Condition, not because of its own Nature, but because God and Christ and the Spirit are present in the Promise, and they are infinitely able to support the Soul through the Promise, under the greatest evils either of Earth or Hell. Now this Enjoyment of God in the Promise, is the Enjoyment of Faith, and not of Sense; and this Enjoyment of Faith, is the most excellent and intimate Enjoyment of Christ. And thus may the Soul enjoy Christ's presence in his Absence; his presence according to Faith, in his Absence according to Sense. And therefore Christ departing from his Disciples in Regard of his bodily Presence, leaves with them the Promise of the Holy Spirit, and in that Promise, his spiritual Presence. And this is the worst Condition that Christ ever leaves his true Church in; he

leaves

leaves them his Presence in a Promise, when in Regard
Sense he forsakes them.

3. Note that *Luke* being to speak in this Book of the
Acts of the Apostles, of the propagating and enlarging,
and governing the Christian Church, doth first make
Mention of the pouring forth of the Spirit, and that
both upon the Apostles, and afterwards upon the Dis-
ciples: Signifying hereby, that there is nothing so ne-
cessary, for the increase and well ordering of the true
Church of Christ, as the pouring forth of the Spirit.
And therefore they are altogether deceived, and walk
in the Light of Nature, and not of God, who think
the increase, and propagation, and preservation, and
establishment, and order, and ordering of the Church
of God, depend especially upon the Councils, and De-
crees and Constitutions of Men; and that without these,
the Church of God would soon come to woful disorder,
and to utter Ruine and Confusion; as if Christ and his
Spirit sat idle in Heaven, and had left the whole Bu-
siness of his Church to Men, and the sacred Power
confirmed with the Secular, were abundantly sufficient
for the increase and well ordering of the Church. In
the mean Time, not regarding the Promise of the Fa-
ther, or the pouring out of the Spirit by the Son. And
this is the very Mystery of the Mystery of iniquity
among us, and the very Head of Antichrist, which is
not to be broken. And therefore let us know that as
the Psalmist saith: *Except the Lord build the House, they
labour in vain that build it; and except the Lord keep the
City, the Watchman watcheth but in vain; so also except
the Lord through his Word, pour forth the Promise
of the Spirit, and by that Spirit of his, in and through
the Word enlarge and govern the Church they labour
in vain that undertake these Things of themselves.
For it is the Spirit alone, that through the faithful Mi-
nistry of the Word, makes the increase of the Church;*

and lays hold on all the Elect, and brings them through Faith, into the Unity of the Son and of the Father, and teaches them, and orders them, and governs them, and preserves them. And therefore you see here, that the Promise of the Spirit is first performed, before the Church of God hath any Enlargement, or Government.

And now from these general Things we proceed to the Words more particularly. *You shall receive Power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you.*

And here we may note two Things.

1. What he promises them, and that is Power, *you shall receive Power.*
2. How they should be made Partakers of that Power, and that was, by the Holy Spirit's coming upon them.

The Point we will insist on from both, is this:

That the receiving of the Spirit, is the receiving of Power; till we receive the Spirit, we are altogether without Power; and when we receive the Spirit, then first of all, do we receive Power; Power from on high.

By Nature, we are all without strength, weak, impotent Creatures, utterly unable to do any Thing that is truly and spiritually righteous and good; for by Nature, we are nothing but Flesh, *for that which is born of Flesh is Flesh, and all Flesh is Grass*, a fading, withering and decaying Thing, together with all the Flower of it, that is, the Perfections and Excellencies of it. So that by Nature, we are all without Power, because we are nothing but Flesh, of which, weakness is an inseparable adjunct.

But when we receive the Spirit, we receive Power; for Power is an inseparable Adjunct of the Spirit, as weakness is of Flesh; yea the Spirit it self which is given us, is Power, and that both essentially and operatively, in it self, and in us.

1. The Spirit is Power essentially in it self; for it is one

ne God with the Father and the Son, co-essential, co-qual, co-eternal; and so as Christ is the Power of God, so also is the Spirit, the Power of God; yea the Spirit is the God of Power, as well as the Power of God. So that the Spirit is Power in himself essentially, and he that partakes of the Power of the Spirit, partakes of that Power, which is God, and no Creature.

2. The Spirit is Power operatively in us, by being in us.

1. A Spirit of Knowledge; for the Holy Spirit teaches us to know the Things that are freely given to us of God; yea he teaches us to know, what Sin is, and what Righteousness; what Death is, and what Life; what Heaven is, and what Hell; what our Selves are, and what God is, and these Things he teaches us to know, otherwise than other Men know them. In a Word, the Spirit teaches a Christian to know all Things, that is, to know God, and the Kingdom of God, and all the Things of both, all other Things being nothing in comparison of these. Thus the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Knowledge in us, and so of Power; for Knowledge is the strength of a Man. Whereas an ignorant Man is a weak Man, you may carry him whither you will; but knowledge renders a Man strong and unmoveable. And in all Things, wherein the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Knowledge in us, he is also a Spirit of Strength.

The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Power in us, by being in us a Spirit of Truth. And so the Spirit is, because it doth not only lead us unto the Truth (that is unto the Word which is the only Truth, as it is written: *Sanctifie them through the Truth, thy Word is Truth*, but also the Spirit leads us into the Truth; it leads us into the Truth, and the Truth into us, till we and it, become one by an inseparable Union, The Holy Spirit takes a Believer, and leads him into one Truth after another,

till at last it leads him into all Truth. Now where the Spirit, is a Spirit of Truth to us, it is a Spirit of Power; for through the Truth we learn from the Spirit of Truth, we are altogether stedfast and unmoveable among variety of different and contrary Winds of Doctrine. And this is the very Cause, that among so many Divisions, and Factions, and Errors, and Heresies which wofully prevail in these present Times of our the People of God are not seduced and overcome, but stand firm, because they are all taught of God, of God and not of Men, and have the Spirit of Truth, to lead them into Truth; the Spirit I say, and not Men; and so it is impossible that they should fully and finally be deceived. For wherein we are taught by the Spirit of God, it is impossible we should be perverted by Men: Where on the contrary, the true Ground why so many are seduced and overcome by the Errors and Heresies of this Age, is because they have taken up their Religion only from Mans teaching, and have received their Opinions or Doctrine from Men; and so what one Man hath taught us, another Man can unteach; yea if we be led to the Truth it self, only by Man, Man can again lead us from it. For all the World cannot lead any Man into the Truth, till the Spirit lead him into it; and when the Spirit doth lead us into the Truth, all the World cannot lead us out of it; but we are so sure of those Things. wherein the Spirit hath been a Teacher to us, that if all the Councils and Churches in the World, yea all the Angels of Heaven should teach us contrary, we would hold them accursed. But a Man that hath not been taught of the Spirit, every Day you may win him into new Opinions, by the Power and Authority of Men, together with the strength of other Advantages: But he that hath been led into the Truth, is unmoveable and invincible among all Doctrines. And thus also the Holy Spirit by being a Spirit of Truth, is also a Spirit of Power in us.

3. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Power in us, by being in us a Spirit of Wisdom; and so it is, because it makes us wise with the Wisdom of God, wise upon Earth, after the rate of Heaven, wise to Sa^l----- There is no Man wise without the Spirit of God, for the Wisdom of carnal Men is but foolishness before God, yea before Angels and Saints; but the Wisdom of the Spirit is most gracious and heavenly Wisdom. And this Wisdom of the Spirit, is the Strength of a Christian; the more he hath of it, the more mighty he is, both in all his Doings and Indurings. It is said, Eccles. 9. 15. *That there was a poor wise Man, delivered a small City from the Power of a mighty King*, and therefore Solomon concludes that *Wisdom is better than Strength*, for it can do greater Things than Strength can. When *David* carried himself wisely, *Saul* a great King was afraid of him; he thought himself too weak to deal with *David*, and *David* too mighty to deal with him, because of his Wisdom; and *Solomon* asked Wisdom of God above all Things, for the Strength of his Government; all Government without this, being but weak and brittle. Thus Wisdom contributes Strength to us, whereas we say of a Man that wants Wisdom, he is a weak Man; and so the Holy Spirit being a Spirit of Wisdom in us, is also a Spirit of Power.

4. The Holy Spirit, is a Spirit of Power in us, by being in us a Spirit of Faith: For Faith is a Work of the Spirit of Power; and no less Power would work Faith in us, then that which raised up Christ from the Dead, when he lay under all the Sin of Man, and all the Wrath of God, and all the Sorrows of Death, and all the Pains of Hell, it must be a mighty Power indeed, that must raise Christ then, and that Power was the Power of the Spirit; and no less Power will work Faith. So that whoever truly believes by this Faith, of the Operation of God, is sensible in his own Soul, of the

self same Power, that raised Christ up from the Dead. And thus the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Faith in us, and so of Power. For Unbelief keeps a Man in himself, but Faith carries a Man out to Christ; now there is no Man weaker than he that rests on himself, and there is no Man stronger, than he that forsakes himself, and rests on Christ. And so a Man through the Power of Faith is able both to do and endure the self same Things which himself did and endured.

1. He is able to do the same Things that Christ himself did, and therefore saith Christ, *all Things are possible to him that believeth*; so that a Believer hath a Kind of Omnipotency, and all Things are possible to him, because by Faith he lays hold upon the Power of God, and all Things are possible to the Power of God, and so all Things are possible to a Believer, who is Partaker of that Power of God. And hence Paul saith: *I can do all Things through Christ that strengthneth me* Phil. 4, 13. this Christ that strengthened him, was the Power of God, and this Power of God, is not a finite Power, but an infinite, not a particular Power, but an universal; and so can do, not some Things only, but all Things; and so also can all they, who are truly Partakers of it by Faith. Yea Christ himself hath a greater expression than this, yea such an one, that I never durst have spoken, if Christ himself had not first spoken it, and that is this, John. 14, 12. *He that believeth in me, the Works that I do, shall he do, and greater Works than these, because I go to the Father.* Where Christ saith, a Believer shall not only do the same Works with himself, (which also had been a great Thing) but also greater Works than himself; and this indeed is altogether admirable and wonderful, that a Believer shall do greater Works than Christ: But how is this made good? Why thus? Christ he overcame the Law, and Sin, and Death, and Hell, and the whole Power of the Devil in a Body and Soul.

Soul free from Sin; (his humane Nature being the immediate Formation of the Holy Spirit in the Womb of the Virgin Mary, and so had not the least Spot of Sin in it.) but now Believers overcome the same Evils, even the Law, Sin, Death, Hell, and the whole Power of the Devil, in corrupted and polluted Nature, in Bodies and Souls, at the first full of Sin, and afterwards defiled through many Corruptions. The Devil came to Christ, and found nothing in him, and so he overcame; but he comes to a Believer and finds much in him, and yet he overcomes. And this truly is a greater Work than Christ did, and these Works we do, but not through our own Power, but through Christ's, of which we truly partake, through Faith.

2. A Christian, through the Power of Faith, is able not only to do, but also to suffer the same Things that Christ himself suffered. Now the Sufferings of Christ were the most grievous and intolerable to Nature, that ever were. For how did Christ for the present, as it were, lay aside his divine Nature, that he might suffer in his humane! And how did he suffer in this, the whole Weight and Condemnation of Sin, to the very utmost, and the whole Wrath of God to the utmost, and all the Sorrows of Death, and the Pains of Hell, to the very utmost! And among all the Sufferings had not the least Drop of Comfort either from Heaven or Earth; and yet through the Power of the Spirit he endured and overcame all. And so each Christian is able to endure and overcome the same Evils, by the same Power; and therefore *Paul Phil. 3, 10.* desired to know Christ truly, and not only the Power of his Resurrection, which any one would desire to know, but also the Fellowship of his sufferings, which Flesh and Blood trembles at, yea and to be made conformable to his very Death. Yea I add yet further, that if a Christian should chance to fall down into Hell, (as we believe Christ descended into Hell,

and so also many of his Saints have done, as *David* and *Hezekiah*, &c.) yet a Christian through the Power of the Spirit, were able to overcome both the Sins and the Pains of Hell ; and therefore saith *Solomon Cant. 8,* (*Love* (which is the Power of the Spirit) *is too strong for Death, and too hard or cruel for Hell ;* as is evident in that godly Woman, (for I will name but one Instance of Many) who thinking of the Torments of Hell, and of the Hatred and Blasphemy of God, which reigned in the Damned, did earnestly entreat God, *ut etiamsi damnaretur, tamen Deum diligeret : that though she were damned, yet still she might love God.* Here Love was too hard for Hell indeed. And thus a Believer through Faith enabled, both to do and endure the self same Thing which Christ himself did and endured ; and the Holy Spirit, by being a Spirit of Faith, is a Spirit of Power in us.

5. The holy Spirit is a Spirit of Power in us, by being in us a Spirit of Righteousness ; and so he is two Ways

1. In Regard of mortifying Sin ; for the Spirit of God dwelling in us, is not idle in us, but continually active and so from Day to Day mortifies Sin. And this is the proper Work of the Spirit in our Flesh, to destroy out of us, whatsoever is contrary to it self ; and that is every Sin, Lust and Corruption. Now our Sins are our Weakness, a Man's Pride and Passion, Envy, Covetousness, Lust, Intemperance, and every Sin is his Weakness. Now the holy Spirit, by being in us a Spirit of Righteousness, mortifies and destroys all our Sins, and it takes away our Weakness.

2. Again, as the holy Spirit is a Spirit of Righteousness in us, in Regard of mortifying Sin, so also in Regard of imparting Grace to us ; for all Grace is the Fruit and Operation of the Spirit in our Flesh ; and as all Light is from the Sun, so is all Grace from the Spirit ; now every Grace is so much Strength in the Soul ; Faith so much Strength, Hope so much Strength, Love so much Strength

Strength

Strength; and so Humility, Patience, Temperance, Godliness, brotherly Kindness, and all other Graces, are so much Strength; and according to each Man's Measure of Grace, so is his Measure of Strength; and according to each Man's Measure of the Spirit, so is his Measure of Grace. And thus the holy Spirit, being a spirit of Righteousness, is also in us a spirit of Power.

6. The holy Spirit is a Spirit of Power in us, by being in us a Spirit *of the Fear of the Lord*; and so he is by representing God to us in his Glory and Majesty, according as he hath revealed himself to us in his Word; from which Knowledge of God springs his Fear: For what is the Reason, that the Men of the World fear not God, but sin securely against the great and glorious God every Day? Why? The Reason is, because they know not the Lord. Now, the spirit comes and reveals the Father in the Son, and presents God to the Soul through his Word, in his infinite and eternal Power, Justice, Wisdom, Truth, Faithfulness, Love, Mercy and Goodness, &c. and shines to the Soul in each Attribute of God: And now, when a Man sees God by his own Light, and knows him by his own Teaching, then first doth he begin truly to fear God, and the Fear of God is his strength; for he that fears God, is free from all other Fear: He fears not Men of high Degree, nor Men of low Degree, nor the united Power of all the Creatures; he fears not the Fear of other Men in their Evils, but in the Midst of all fearful Things he is without Fear, because *he sanctifies the Lord of Hosts in himself, in his Heart, and makes Him his Fear and his Dread*. And by this Means, amidst all Evils, he hath admirable Confidence and Assurance; because he knows, that no Evil can befall him from any Man, or from any Creature, till first it be the Will of God; and also, that whatever Evil befalls him according to the Will of God, it shall work for good unto him in the End. Thus the Fear of the Lord is a Christian's Confidence

Confidence, and a Believer's strength; whereas he that fears not God, fears every Thing, yea, not only real but imaginary Evils: And as Evils multiply his Fears: so his Fears again multiply his Evils, till at last he be swallowed up of both. But the holy Spirit being in us a Spirit of the Fear of the Lord, is also in us a Spirit of strength.

7. The holy Spirit is a Spirit of Power in us, by being in us a Spirit of Love and Unity. The holy Spirit is a Spirit of Love and Unity in the Godhead; for the Father loves the Son with the Spirit, and the Son loves the Father with the Spirit; and the Father is one with the Son in the Spirit, and the Son is one with the Father in the Spirit; and the Spirit is both the Bond of Love and Unity between the Father and the Son; and God being most Love and most one, is also most strong. Now, what the Spirit is in the Godhead, he is the same in the Church of God which is the true Temple and Habitation of the Godhead, and that is a Spirit of Love and Unity: For why is there such constant Love and Unity between the Members of the same Body, but because one Spirit runs through them all? And so there is such constant Love and Unity between all Believers, because one holy Spirit runs through them all. And hence we may take Notice of a remarkable Difference between Nature and Grace, for Nature, of one makes many; for we all, who are many among our selves, even a whole World of Men, were but one in *Adam*, *omnes eramus ille unus Homo*; but Grace, of many makes one; for the holy Spirit which is as Fire, melts all the Faithful into one Mass or Lump, and makes of many one Body, one Thing, yea, it makes them one, in the Unity of God, according to that of Christ *John 17, 21. that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us*; mark the Words, for they are wonderful; *that they all may be one*, that is, that all Believers who are many among themselves,

themselves, may be all made one ; one ? How one ?
As thou Father art in me, and I in thee ; that is, as thou
 and I, being two Persons, are yet but one God ; after
 this highest Example of Uniry let them be made one in
 us, as long as they remain in themselves, they are many ;
 and how much they remain in themselves, they are ma-
 ny ; for their Uniry is not in themselves, but they are
 one in us who are one ; that is, how much the Saints
 by the Spirit are carried into the Father and the Son who
 are one, so much also are they made one, not only with
 the Father and the Son, but also with one another. You
 may see in the *Acts*, how the Multitude of Believers, af-
 ter they had received the Spirit, so far forth as they had
 received the Spirit, *were of one Heart and of one Mind.*
 And this Uniry of Believers is their Strength ; and when
 God shall take away all those Prejudices, Suspicions, Jea-
 lousies, and particular Ends and Interests, and Divisions,
 Separations and Schisms, that are among his own Peo-
 ple, and the People of God shall be reduced into this
 blessed Uniry among themselves, and the Lord be one,
 and his Name one among them all, then shall the Church
 also be of admirable and invincible Power : *So that all*
they that strive with it, shall perish ; and all they that war
against it, shall be as nothing ; yea then shall the Lord make
the Church as a new sharp threshing Instrument, having Teeth,
and it shall thresh the Mountains, (that is the Kingdoms of
the World) and shall beat them small, and shall make the
Hills, (that is, the lesser Commonwealths) as Chaff, Isa:
 41, 11. 12. 15. But till the Church of God attain to this
 Uniry, it shall not do any excellent Thing, it shall not
 work any notable Deliverance in the Earth, neither shall
 the Inhabitants of the World fall. When the Spirit of
 God shall be a Spirit of Uniry in the Faithful, and shall
 heal all the sad Differences and Dissentions that are now
 between them, then also shall it be a Spirit of admirable
 Power in them. And thus much for the Explication of
 the Point. The Use is twofold. 1. The

1. The first is, to exhort all Men every where, to endeavour to partake of this supernatural, spiritual and divine Power of the holy Spirit, which is certainly communicated to all the Faithful and Elect in Christ Jesus. And let no Man think it is a Thing indifferent, whether he have this power or no, but know, that the Having of this Power of the Spirit, is of absolute Necessity, and that both for Ministers, and for all other Christians.

First. There is a Necessity of this Power of the holy Spirit for Ministers, and to them this present Place doth chiefly relate.

1. For first, if they have not this Power of the holy Spirit, they have no Power at all ; for Christ sent them, only as his Father sent him ; and so Christ never gave unto them any earthly or human or secular Power, no Power of Swords or Prisons, no Power of outward Constraint and Violence. Christ gave them no such outward worldly Power for the Enlargement of his Kingdom, as not being at all suitable to it ; for his Kingdom is spiritual, and what can carnal Power do in a spiritual Kingdom ? His Kingdom is heavenly, and what can earthly Power do in a heavenly Kingdom ? His Kingdom is not of this World, and what can worldly Power do in a Kingdom that is not of the World ? and though Antichrist and his Ministers have arrogated and usurped such a carnal, earthly and worldly Power to themselves, in their pretended managing the Kingdom of Christ, yet the faithful Ministers of Christ cannot.

And therefore seeing the Ministers of the Gospel have no Power from beneath, they must needs have Power from on high ; seeing they have no fleshly power, they must needs have spiritual power ; seeing they have no power from Earth and from Men, they must needs have power from Heaven and from God, that is, the power of the holy Spirit coming on them, or else they have no power at all.

2. The Ministers of the Gospel must needs have his power of the holy Spirit, because *otherwise they are not sufficient for the Ministry*; for no Man is sufficient for the Work of the Ministry, by any natural Parts and Abilities of his own, nor yet by any acquired Parts of humane Learning and Knowledge, but only by this power of the holy Spirit; and till he be endowed with his, notwithstanding all his other Accomplishments, he is altogether insufficient. And therefore the very Apostles were to keep Silence, till they were indued with his power; they were to wait at *Jerusalem*, till they had received the *Promise of the Spirit*, and not to preach till then. Yea, Christ himself did not betake himself to the Work of the Ministry, till first the Spirit of God came upon him, and anointed him to preach; and therefore for 30 Years together he did not preach publicly and ordinarily, till at *John's Baptism* he received this power of the Spirit coming on him. Now if Christ himself and his Apostles were not sufficient for the Ministry, till they had received this power from on high, no more are any other Ministers whatsoever: For as I said, it is not natural Parts and Abilities, Gifts, Learning, Eloquence and Accomplishments, that make any Man sufficient for the Ministry, but only the power of the holy Spirit coming upon him; so that whoever is destitute of the Spirit of power, is insufficient for the Work of the Ministry, and that in these Regards:

1. Without this power of the Spirit, Ministers are utterly unable to preach the Word; that is, the true, spiritual and living Word of God; for to preach this Word of God, requires the power of God. One may speak the Word of Man by the power of Man, but he cannot speak the Word of God, but by the power of God. And Christ himself in all his Ministry, spake nothing of himself in the Strength of his humane Nature, but he spake all he spake, by the power of God; and
without

without this power of God, he could not have spoke one Word of God. And so in like Manner, no Man is able to preach Christ but by the holy Spirit, which is the power of God ; for Christ is the power of God and can never be represented but by the holy Spirit which is the power of God. For as we see Light in his Light, that is, the Father who is Light, in the Son who is Light ; or else the Son who is Light, in the holy Spirit who is Light ; so we know power in his power, that is, the Son who is power, in the holy Spirit who is power. And Christ who is the power of God, can never be made known to the Church, but by the ministratio of the Spirit, which is the power of God : So that it is not an easy Thing to preach Christ the power of God yea none can do it aright, but by the holy Spirit coming upon him.

2. Without this power of the Spirit, Ministers are unable to preach the Word powerfully. They may, it may be, happen upon the outward Word, yet there is no power in their Ministry, till they have received the power of the Spirit coming upon them : Otherwise their Ministry is cold, and there is no Heat in it; it is weak, and there is no Strength in it.

1. It is cold and there is no Heat in it. Without Men have received the power of the Spirit, there is no Fire in their preaching. Their Ministry is unlike the Ministry of *Elias*, whose Ministry was as Fire ; and unlike *John Baptist's*, who in his Ministry was a burning and shining Light ; and unlike Christ's, whose Ministry made the Disciples Hearts burn within them ; and unlike the Apostles, who having received this Spirit, were as Men made all of Fire, running through the World and burning it up. Without this Spirit a Man's Ministry is cold, it warms the Hearts of none, it inflames the Spirit of none, but leaves Men still frozen in their Sins.

2. It is weak and hath no Might in it. There is no strength

strength in a Ministry where there is no Spirit. Whereas when Men have received the Spirit, then their Ministry is a powerful Ministry, as *Paul*, 1 *Thes.* 1, 5. *The Gospel came to you not in word only, but in Power and in the Holy Ghost*; and therefore in Power, because in the Holy Spirit. And again, 1 *Cor.* 2, 4. *My speech and preaching was not with the enticing Words of Mans Wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and Power.* Where you see the Spirit and Power in the Work of the Ministry, are always conjoyned, as the Sun and Light are; and that Ministry that is in the Spirit, is always in Power. And being in Power, it is always effectual, either to convert Men, or to inrage them; and the Inraging of Men, is as evident a sign of the Spirit of Power in a Man's Ministry, as the Conversion of Men. Whereas a cold and dead Ministry, that is destitute of this Power, doth (as we use to say) neither Good nor Harm, neither converts nor inrages, neither brings in Righteousness, nor destroys Sin, neither kills nor quickens any, but leaves Men in their old Temper, for many Years together, and never stirs them: But the ministrations of the Spirit and Power, is operative and mighty, and carries all before it. And though evil and carnal Men will ever be murmuring and wrangling, and opposing; and contending against such a Ministry, yet they are never able to resist the Wisdom and Spirit of it; as the Libertines, Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, were not able to resist the Wisdom and the Spirit by which *Stephen* spake. And therefore let them that will needs be striving against such a Ministry, know, that they strive against more than a meer Man, they strive against Power from on high, against the greatest Power that ever God put forth; against the Power of Christ himself, and his eternal Spirit, and so they shall never be able to prevail against this Power, but shall surely sink under it. But to return from whence we have a little digressed.

3. Without this Power of the Spirit, as Ministers are not able to preach the Word, nor to preach it powerfully, so neither are they able to hold out in their Ministry, and to carry it on strongly against all Opposition and Contradiction. *Peter and John* preached the Gospel, but presently the Rulers and Elders and Scribes convented them; and straightly threatned them, and commanded them, not to speak at all, nor to teach in the Name of Jesus. And now if the Apostles had wanted this Power of the Spirit, they would presently have been nib'd and awed, and would have sneaked away, and you should have heard no more of them. But they having received this Power, all the threatnings and scornings of the Rulers and Magistrates could not deter them from the discharge of their Office, and Ministry they had received from Christ. But though before, they were fearful, and trembling, and daunted at the apprehension at the least danger, yet now having received this Power, they are altogether undaunted, and said to the Rulers and Elders, *whether it be right in the Sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye.* Acts. 4, 19. As if they should have said: O ye Rulers and Elders of the People, our Case is a plain Case, wherein we are most willing that even your own selves should be Judges. For we have received a Command from God, to preach the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, and you forbid us to do that, which God hath commanded us. Now do you your selves be Judges, who is fittest to be obeyed, God or you? the great and glorious God of Heaven and Earth, or poor wretched Men such as your selves? Nay, what God hath commanded us, we must and will obey, against all your threatnings and Punishments, and what ever you can say or do. We cannot conceal, but must publish what we have seen and known of our Lord Jesus Christ, of his Incarnation, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Kingdom,

Kingdom, Glory, and of that great Redemption and Salvation, which he hath wrought and purchased for all the Elect of God.

Now I would to God, that the unjust Commands of all Magistrates, and Secular Powers whatsoever, might be no otherwise obeyed, than this unjust Command of the Rulers was by *Peter* and *John*; and that no Man would dare to yield more obedience to the Creature, than to the Lord of all.

For no Princes or Magistrates in the World, have any Power to forbid the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, which God hath commanded, should be published to all Nations for the obedience of Faith. I say, they have no Power at all to forbid the preaching of this Gospel, or of any one truth of it, though never so cross to their designs. And if they should, yet herein ought we to know no more obedience, than *Peter* and *John* did here. We ought to obey God, and not them, and to make known the whole mind of God, though it be never so contrary to their mind; after the example of *Peter* and *John*, who having received this Power of the Holy Spirit, held on their Ministry against all the countermands, and threatnings, and punishments of the Magistrates: Whereas, without this Power, they had soon fainted and failed, and had never been able to have gone through with it.

4. Without this Power of the Holy Spirit, Ministers are not able to reprove the World. For every Man by Nature seeks the amity of the World, and no Man by his good Will, would provoke the enmity of it against himself. And therefore Flesh and Blood will never reprove the World of Sin, but allows it, and countenances it in Sin. But now the Spirit when he is come, he will reprove the World of Sin. When a Man hath this Power of the Spirit in him, then presently he reproves and argues the World of Sin, and so by

his Ministry, bids defiance to the whole World, and provokes the whole World against himself. And this no Man either can do, or dares do, except he be first indued with this Power of the Spirit coming on him. And therefore saith *Micah*, Ch. 3, v. 8. *I am full of Power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of Judgment and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his Sin,*

The World, of all other Things, cannot endure the reproof of Sin, and the declaration of its evil Ways. And therefore it is exceedingly offended, yea, and extremely rages against the faithful Teachers of the Word, with all sorts of punishments and persecutions, as the Examples of all the Prophets, Apostles and faithful Teachers of the Word of God in all Ages do declare. Yea, and Christ himself, testifies touching himself, *therefore the World hates me, because I testify of it, that the Works thereof are evil.* But now, they that will connive at Sin, and flatter the World in its own Ways, these are the only Men of Reckoning, and live in all Worldly Honour and Prosperity. And all Ages can witness, that all Teachers are not of that strength and resolution, to contemn the Hatred and Fury of the World: Nay, the most are quite overcome with the Prosperity of this present Life, and with the Desire of Friends, and Riches, and Preferment, and so wink at the Sins of the World, and are Ministers in whose Mouths are no reproofs, though the whole World lie in Wickedness. For, thus they escape the rage and violence, and obtain the favour and love of the Men of this World. And thus weak and unworthy are those Men, who are only indued with their own Spirits. But now (saith *Micah*) *I am full of Power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of Judgment and of Might, to declare unto Jacob his Transgression, and to Israel his Sin.*

As if he should have said, the Power of the Spirit of the Lord dwelling in me, puts forth it self two ways, in Judgment, and in Fortitude.

1. In Judgment; and this signifies the reprovng and the condemning Sin and Wickedness, as the Prophet himself explicates, saying, that I might declare unto Jacob his Transgression, and to Israel his Sin. But seeing their being full of Judgment doth not want Danger, but exposes a Man to a thousand Evils, in as much as the World can endure nothing less than the reproof of Sin, therefore I am, by the Power of the Spirit, not only full of Judgment, but also

Secondly, full of Might; and as the Spirit of Judgment exposes me to Danger, so the Spirit of Might enables me to condemn those Dangers. So that though the World, because of the Spirit of Judgment, threatens never so many Evils, yet the Prophet is not frightened from his Office, but thro' the Spirit of Might, discharges it faithfully, in despite of all those Threatnings.

And whatever Ministers want this Spirit of Might, though out of Danger, they may be confident, yet at the very first Encounter of Evil, they will bend and yield, and speak and do all Things for the Favour of the World, rather than for the Truths sake, they will expose themselves to the Hatred and Opposition of the World,

5. Without this Power of the Spirit, they are unable to wrestle with, and overcome the Devil, whose Subtilty, Wrath, Malice and Power, they must needs encounter with, in the Work of the Ministry. Christ as soon as he was indued with this Power, and anointed by the Spirit to preach, was immediately led into the Wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil, who would fain have taken him off from the Work of the Ministry, if it had been possible: But Christ being indued with this Power, overcame the Devil. And Christ, before he sent his Apostles to preach the Kingdom of God, as you may see *Luk. 9, 1.* called them together, *and gave them Power and Authority over all Devils;* and when they returned

they told him, that the Devils themselves, were subject to them. But now the seven Sons of *Sceva*, who were destitute of this Power, when they took upon them, to call over one who had an evil Spirit, the Name of the Lord Jesus, and to say, we adjure you by Jesus whom *Paul* preacheth: The evil Spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and *Paul* I know, but who are ye? and so, the Man in whom the evil Spirit was, leaped upon them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, and they fled away, naked and wounded, Acts. 19. So that they being destitute of this Power from on high, the Devil was presently too hard for them, and they were overcome by the Devil. But now, they that are invested with this Power of the Holy Spirit, are able to wrestle with principalities and Powers, and the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, and to outwrestle them, and to tread Satan himself under their feet.

Sixthly, without this Power of the Holy Spirit, they are unable to suffer Persecution for the Word; but the least touch of evil, causes them to pull in their Horns, and each Reproach, and Opposition, and Persecution shakes them down: Whereas this Power, makes them confident, couragious, comfortable, and invincible, in the midst of all Evils. See this in some Examples. Our Lord Jesus Christ being anointed with the Holy Spirit and with Power, did not only preach the Truth in his Life; but also witnessed a good Confession before *Pontius Pilate*, and sealed to the Truth with his Death. *Paul*, who was indued with the same Power, when *Agabus* foretold him by the Holy Spirit his Bonds at *Jerusalem*; and the Brethren hearing it, came weeping to *Paul*; and besought him to keep himself out of Bonds, by not going up thither; *Paul* reprov'd them, and told them that he *was ready not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem for the Lord Jesus*. *Cbrystostome* was indued with the same Power, and so resolved to preach the Truth,

Truth, and not to depart from the Truth, though the whole World should wage War against him alone; and professed, that he desired nothing more, than to suffer for the Cause of Christ; and that if it were offered to him of God, whether he would immediately go to Heaven, or stay on Earth and suffer for Christ, he would a thousand Times rather chuse this Latter, than the Former. Because in going immediately to Heaven, he should seek himself; but in staying on Earth to suffer for Christ, he should wholly deny himself, and seek his Honour alone. *Luther* was indued with the same Spirit of Power, and so when he was call'd to *Wormes* before the Emperor *Charles* the fifth, and before all the Estates of the Empire, to render a Reason of his Doctrine, and some of his Friends (perceiving undue dealing among his Adversaries) perswaded him not to go to expose himself to Danger; but he answered with a mighty Spirit: *I have decreed and am resolved, because I am called, to go into the City in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, though I knew there were so many Devils to oppose me, as there are Tiles on all the Houses of the City.* And when he was called to return to *Wittenberge* by the People, which he could not do without most evident and apparent Danger, he being already condemned by the Edicts and Authority both of the Pope and Emperor, and so in Regard of them, could expect no less than a violent Death every Day, yet for all this, he was resolved to return to his Charge; and upon this Occasion hath this Passage to the Duke of *Saxony*: *But what shall I do? unavoidable Causes urge me, God himself calls and compells me, and here I will turn my Back to no Creature. Go to then, let me do it in the Name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord both of Life and Death.* Again, in his Answer to the Dialogue of *Sylvester Prierias*, who had threatned him, he saith, *I have nothing that I can lose, I am the Lord's, and if I am lost, I am lost to the Lord.*

that is, I am found. And therefore seek some Body else to fright, for me you cannot. Again in his Answer to Ambrosius Catharinus, he saith of the Pope and his Instruments: They seek not to overcome me with Scriptures, but to destroy me out of the Earth, but I know and am sure that Christ our Lord lives and reigns. And being even filled with this Knowledge and Confidence, I will not fear many thousands of Popes: For greater is he that is in us, then he that is in the World. And again, in his Epistle to his Father, he hath this remarkable Passage: What if the Pope shall kill me, or condemn me below Hell? he cannot raise me up again when I am slain, and kill me a second and third Time. And having once condemned me, I would never have him absolve me. For I am confident that the Day is at hand, wherein that Kingdom of abomination and Destruction, shall be it self destroyed. But would I might first be counted worthy either to be burned or slain by him, that so my Blood might cry the louder, and urge his Judgment to be the more hastned. But if I am not worthy to testifie with my Blood, let me at least intreat and implore this Mercy, that I may testifie by my Life and Doctrine, that Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, and God blessed for ever and ever.

Calm Melancton was indued with the same Spirit of Power, and so when his Enemies threatned him not to leave him a Place in all Germany whereon to set his Foot, he said, *avido & tranquillo animo expecto exilia.* I expect Banishment with a Desirous and peaceable Mind.

Many more Examples might be produced, to shew that when Ministers are indued with the Power of the Spirit coming on them, then they are stronger than all Opposition and Persecution whatsoever; otherwise, when these Evils encounter them, they with Demas leave the Work, and embrace the World.

And thus you see, what Necessity all the faithful Ministers of the Gospel have of the Power of the Holy Spirit

Spirit coming upon them; and without this Power, tho' they be called Ministers, yet they are none. For without this Power, they are unable to preach the Word, to preach it powerfully, and to persevere and hold out in the course of the Ministry; they are unable to reprove the World, to wrestle with and overcome the Devil, and to suffer that Persecution which necessarily attends that calling. And so without this Power, they may minister to themselves, but cannot minister to others, the manifold graces of God; they may do their own Work, but they cannot do God's Work; they may feed themselves, but not the Flock of Christ; they may domineer over the Sheep, but cannot drive away the Wolf, they may build up their own Houses, but cannot build up God's House.

Secondly, as the Holy Spirit and the Power of it is Necessary for Ministers, so also for all other Christians whatsoever.

But some here will be ready to say, yea, but do all Believers receive the Spirit of God, and the Power of the Spirit, as Ministers do?

Yes, Equally and alike with them, without any Difference. This is evident, *Acts. 11, 15.* where *Peter* tells the Jews, who contended with him for conversing and eating with the Gentiles, that when *he began to speak the Word to them, the Holy Spirit fell on them* (saith he) *as on us at the Beginning.* And again, ver. 17. *For as much then as God gave unto them the like Gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God.* So that God gave the Holy Spirit to as many Gentiles as believed, in like Manner as he did unto the Apostles themselves, and they received the same Power of the Holy Spirit coming on them, as the Apostles did. Whereby you may perceive that not Ministers only are spiritual Men, and all others Temporal, as the Papists have taught, and

many ignorant People among our selves are still persuaded; but all true Believers are spiritual, as well as they, being born of the Spirit, and baptized with the Spirit, equally as they are.

And so all true Believers as well as Ministers being indued with the Spirit, are also indued with the Power of the Spirit, and so have more than an Earthly Power in them. They have all of them Power of another Nature, than the Power of the World; they partake of spiritual, heavenly and divine Power, even of the very Power of Christ himself, which infinitely transcends all the Power of the Creature.

You see then clearly, that all faithful Christians have the Spirit of Power, and the Power of the Spirit coming on them, as well as Ministers. And they stand in need of both these, for these Causes,

1. They stand in need of the Spirit of Power to difference and distinguish them from Reprobates and Devils; for without the Gift of the Spirit, there is no Difference between us and them. For *Michael* doth not differ from the Devil, nor *Gabriel* from Belzebub, but only by the Spirit. And *Moses* differs not from *Pharaoh*, nor *Abel* from *Cain*; nor *Jacob* from *Esau*, nor *Peter* from *Judas*, in Regard of their Substance, but in Regard of the Spirit, which the one received, and the other were counted unworthy of.

2. To advance them above the Condition of Flesh and Blood, and above all those, in whom is none of God's Spirit. The excellency of each Creature is, according to its Spirit; for the more excellent the Spirit of the Creature is, the more excellent is the Creature itself; and each Creature, is valued and rated according to the Spirit of it, How excellent then must they be above all the World, who have received the Spirit that is of God! Surely these are People of the most excellent Spirit; and hence it is, that the Righteous is

more

more excellent than his Neighbour, because his Spirit is more excellent than his Neighbour's.

3. To unite them unto Christ. The Spirit is the Bond of Union between the Father and the Son in the Godhead; and the Father and the Son, are one in the Spirit (as we speake before.) And now, the same Spirit, is our Bond of Union with Christ, and makes us one with Christ, as Christ is one with God, and unites us unto Christ, in the unity of God; for as Christ is one with the Father, in the Spirit, so are we one with Christ in the Spirit: For he that is joyned to the Lord, is one Spirit; and he that is not one Spirit with the Lord, is not joyned to him.

4. All faithful Christians stand in need of the Power of the Spirit, as well as of the Spirit of Power.

1. To change their Nature, which is impossible to all Power, but the Power of the Spirit. It would be a great Power, to change Clay into Gold, and a pebble into a Diamond, but it is a greater Change that is wrought in a Christian, and requires a greater Power. For the Power of the Spirit, when it comes into our Flesh, changes the Nature of it. For it finds a Man carnal, it makes him spiritual; it finds him earthly, it makes him heavenly; it finds him a Drunkard, it makes him Sober; an Adulterer, it makes him Chast; a Swearer, it makes him fear an Oath; Proud, it makes him Humble; it finds him Darknes, it makes him Light in the Lord; in a Word, it finds him nothing but a Lump of Sin, and makes him the Rightousness of God in Christ. Thus the Power of the Spirit changes our whole corrupt Nature, and makes it conformable to the divine Nature; as Fire makes the Iron in which it prevails, like unto it self, communicating its own Nature to it. After this sort, the Power of the Spirit changes our Nature, and our Nature cannot be changed without it: But without this Power of the Spirit, we shall always remain

main the same we were born, without any Change at all. Yea, our Corruption will by daily Use and Exercise, encrease in us, till at last it quite eat out that common natural Good, which God hath given to every one of us, for the common benefit of mankind.

2. All Christians have need of the Power of the Spirit to work Grace in them. For our Natures are wholly carnal and corrupt; and nothing can implant Grace in them, but the mighty Power of God's Spirit. And it is as great a Miracle, to see the Grace of God dwelling in the corrupt Nature of Man, as to see the Stars grow upon the Earth. And yet the Power of the Spirit doth this, as it is written, Psal. 85, 11. *Truth shall spring out of the Earth*; and 2 Pet. 1, 4. *great and precious promises are made to us, that we should be Partakers of the divine Nature*; and again, Rom. 8, 29. *He hath predestinated us that we should be conformable to the Image of his Son*. That is, as in other Things, so also in all his Vertues. So that the Power of the Spirit, implants Grace in our Nature; and each Grace, is so much of the Power of the Spirit in our Flesh, as was said before. Wherefore we must needs learn to know, whose Power, the Power of Grace is. For though Grace be a Power in our Flesh, it is not the Power of our Flesh; for Paul saith, *in me, that is in my Flesh, dwells no good Thing*; but and if any Good be in my Flesh, it dwells not in my Flesh, but in God's Spirit, which dwells in me. As Light, is in the Air, but dwells in the Sun, so when Men are regenerate, good is in the Flesh, but dwells in the Spirit. For Grace in the Soul, is nothing but so much of the Power of the Spirit immediately dwelling and working in us; and when the Spirit is gone, all grace goes along with him, as all Light with the Sun; but it dwells in him, and is inseparable from him.

3. All Christians stand in need of the Power of the Spirit,

pirit, to enable them to mortifie and destroy Sin. There is no Power in our Flesh against Sin, but all the Power of our Flesh is for it; and therefore it must be another Power, than the Power of our Flesh that must destroy Sin, and that can be no other, than the Power of God's Spirit. And the Power of the Spirit destroys the whole Body of Sin, and each particular strong Corruption.

1. The whole Body of Sin, in all the Parts and Members and Branches of it: Each several Influence and Operation of the Spirit, being a several Destruction of some Sin or other. For as the Spirit that is in us, lusts after Envy, or Pride, or vain Glory, or Covetousness, or Uncleanness, or the like; so the Spirit we have of God, according to its mighty Power, destroys all those sinful Works of our corrupt Spirit, and mortifies all the Deeds of our Flesh, according to that of *Paul*, *if ye mortifie the Deeds of the Flesh by the Spirit, ye shall live*; the Flesh will never mortifie its own Deeds, but the Spirit must mortifie the Deeds of the Flesh; and this will mortifie them, according to the whole Latitude of them.

2. Again, as the Power of the Spirit subdues the whole Body of Sin, so also it over-powers each particular strong Corruption, and keeps a Christian straight and upright in the Ways of God. Every Man hath some one Corruption, to which by Nature he is more inclined than another, and this is the byas of a Man; but the strength of the Spirit will over-power this. A Bowl, if be thrown with strength, knows not its byas, but is carried on straight, as if it had no byas at all. So the Godly have still some Flesh in them which is their byas, and carries them from God to themselves and the World, but the strength of the Spirit takes away this byas, and makes us take straight Steps to God,

4. All Christians stand in need of the Power of the Spirit, to enable them to perform Duties, to perform them

them aright, that is, spiritually. For spiritual Duty may be performed, for the outward Work carnally, and in such Duties there is no Strength but Weakness, because there is none of the Spirit in them. For there is no power in any Duty, except there be something of the Spirit in the Duty. There is no more Power in praying, nor in preaching, nor in hearing, nor in meditation, nor in reading; nor in resisting Evil, nor in doing Good, nor in any Duty of Sanctification, or Mortification, than there is of the Spirit in them.

And according to the Measure of the Spirit, in each Duty, is the Measure of Power in the Duty. If there be none of the Spirit in a Man's Duties, there is no Power at all in them, but only Weakness and deadness, and coldness, and unprofitableness. If a little of the Spirit there is a little Power; and that Duty, that is most spiritual, is the most powerful. And therefore saith *Paul*, *I will pray with the Spirit, and I will sing with the Spirit*, and all the Worship of the faithful is in the Spirit. *Phil. 3. 3. We are the Circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and have no Confidence in the Flesh.* So that there is no more Power in any Duty, than there is of the Spirit in it; and there is no more acceptance of any Duty with God, than there is of Power in it.

Fifthly, all Christians stand in need of the Power of the Spirit, to enable them to the Use of the Word, and that both in private; and in publick, as Occasion serves.

1. In private, for no Man can say, *that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Spirit.* No Man can speak of Christ spiritually, but by the Spirit; and without this Spirit, which searches the deep Things of God, and reveals them to us, Christians are unable to give the Sense of the Word of God in their Families, and among their Friends, and Acquaintance, and are also ashamed to do it. Whereas the Spirit of God gives both Ability and Boldness; as *Aquila* and *Priscilla* his Wife, did

not only speak the Word in their Family, but also took *Apollos* a Minister home, when they perceived him somewhat ignorant in the Mystery of Christ, and instructed him in the Way of God more perfectly.

2. They have need of the Power of the Spirit to enable them to speak the Word of God in publick, as every Christian may do, if he come where People are ignorant of God's Word, and there be no Minister to do it. This I say in such a Case he may do by vertue of his anointing with the Spirit; and for this you may see the Practise of *Stephen* and *Philip*, who were but Deacons, and not Elders or Ministers, and yet published the Word, where the People were ignorant; yea you may see Acts. 8. how all the Disciples except the Apostles, were by Reason of a great Persecution scattered throughout the Regions of *Judea* and *Samaria*, and they that were so scattered, went every where preaching the Word, because the People among which they were, were ignorant, and there was no Body else to do it, and God having made known Christ unto them, they could not but declare him unto others; the Love both of Christ, and of their Brethren constraining them. But this is in Case of Necessity, and where other faithful Christians are absent; otherwise when Christians are present, no Man can take that to himself, without the Consent of all, which belongs to all.

Sixthly, all Christians stand in need of this Power of the Spirit, to enable them to confess the Word before Kings, and Rulers, and Magistrates, when they are called thereunto: Whereas without this Power they could tremble, and bite in the Truth. In the 10th Chap. of *Math.* Christ tells his Disciples, *that they should be brought before Governors and Kings for his Names sake.* But saith he, ver. 19. *When they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak. For it shall be given you in that same Hour, what ye shall speak: For it is not ye that speak,*
but

but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. Here Christ tells his Disciples that they should be brought before great Men, yea, before the greatest in the World, to give Testimony to his Truth, And surely, it is a very hard Thing for a Man not to be daunted there, but to be unmoveable, before all worldly power and Glory, and all the terrible frowns and threats of mighty Men. Now saith Christ at such a Time, when you are to speak before the armed Power of the World, be not troubled beforehand, how, or what to say: For if you have Christ and his Spirit in your Hearts, you cannot want Words in your Mouths. And the Truth which you profess is most glorious, when it is most naked, and destitute of the garnishings of humane Eloquence and Wisdom. And therefore be not fearful beforehand, no nor yet careful, touching what you shall say; for it shall be *given to you in that same Hour*, in that same Moment; you shall have most present Help. How so? *For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that dwells in you.* The Spirit of Truth that dwells in you, shall enable you, to speak the Word of Truth, when you are called to it. And though you it may be, are plain and mean Men, and your Lips would tremble, and be quite closed up before such an Assembly of Power and Majesty, yet God's Spirit shall give you a Mouth to speak, even then. And because if you were only supplied with a Mouth to speak at such a Time, you would be ready to speak rashly, and foolishly, to the great prejudice and Disadvantage of the Truth; therefore will he give you not only a Mouth, but Wisdom too, and he himself will manage his own Cause with your Mouths. And you shall so speak, that all your Adversaries shall not be able to resist the Truth that you speak, but shall be so convinced in their Consciences, that their Tongues shall not know what to say. You shall have a Mouth, and Wisdom, and they shall want both.

And thus have many poor mean simple Christians, when brought before Rulers and Magistrates, been able to carry out the Truth in that strength, that all their Adversaries have been put to silence and shame, as you may see in a Multitude of Examples, in the Book of Martyrs. And all this they did, by the Power of the Spirit coming upon them.

Seventhly, and lastly, all Christians stand in need of the Power of the Spirit to overcome Afflictions and Persecutions, from which it is impossible they should be free in this World, they being contrary to the World, and the whole World to them. A natural Man, who hath no strength in himself, but his own strength, faints and fails under Affliction and Persecution; but the faithful have in them Strength above natural Strength of Men, even the Strength of the Spirit coming on them, and so they indure and overcome. Our Spirits are weak Spirits, and are conquered by every Evil; but when they are strengthened by the Power of God's Spirit, they are over all Evils, more than Conquerors. And this is one Thing observable, between natural and spiritual Strength, in the overcoming of Evil. Natural Strength seeks always to throw off the Evil, and so it prevails; but spiritual Strength never seeks the removing of the Evil, but let the Evil be what it will, stands to it, and overcomes it. For the Strength of the Spirit is easily able to overcome all Evils that can happen to Flesh and Blood, whether they arise from earth or Hell. And thus those blessed Martyrs, mention'd *Heb. 11.* and thousands and ten thousands of their Consorts since, have overcome cruel mockings and scourgings, and bonds, and imprisonment, and stoning, and sawing in sunder, and slaying with the sword, and all the woes of poverty, and want, and banishment, and of living in wildernesses and caves, and dens of the earth; these and all other Evils, they have mightily

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Overcome,

overcome, by this only Power of the Spirit coming upon them. Thus we stand in need of the Power of the Spirit, to overcome Affliction and Persecution; and how much Power we have in Affliction and Persecution, to indure them and overcome them, just so much of the Power of the Spirit we have, and no more.

And thus also, have I declared unto you, what Necessity all Christians have, of the Power of the Spirit coming on them as well as Ministers. And this was to strengthen the Use of Exhortation.

2. The second Use is for Information and Instruction after this Manner. If the receiving of the Spirit be the receiving of Power, then it clearly informs us, that the Way to partake of this Power, is to obtain this Spirit; and the Way to increase this Power, is to increase this Spirit. I shall endeavour to speak to both these Things, and so shall conclude.

1. The Way to obtain this Power, is to obtain the Spirit.

And that we may obtain the Spirit, we must first prepare our selves to receive the Spirit.

Now this Preparation doth not stand (as Papists teach, and many ignorant Persons among our selves think) in sweeping the Soul from Sin, and then strewing it with Graces, that so we may be fit to receive the Spirit.

For first, the sweeping of the Soul from Sin, is not a Work of our own, before the coming of the Spirit, but a Work of the Spirit it self, after it is come. For no Flesh can clear the Soul of one Sin, it is the Spirit must do that.

And secondly, for the strewing of the Soul with Grace, neither is this a Work of our own, but a Work of the Spirit it self, after it is come. For the Spirit it self brings all Grace with it, and before the coming of the Spirit, there is no Grace at all.

So that we cannot, by any Acts of our own, prepare our selves to receive the Spirit; but only by the Spirit we prepare our selves to receive the Spirit: For it is not any Work of our own, upon our selves, but the immediate Work of the Holy Spirit upon us, that can make us fit to receive himself. It lies wholly in his own Power and Goodness, first to prepare in us a Place for himself, and then after to receive and entertain himself in that Place he hath so prepared. Now the Works of the Spirit, whereby he first prepares us for himself, and then entertains himself in us, are these two especially:

1. He empties us; and 2. he fills us with himself, whom he hath made empty.

1. He empties us: And this emptying; is the first and chief Work of the Spirit upon the Elect, whereby he prepares them to receive himself. For the more empty a Man is of other Things, the more capable he is of the Spirit. If you would fill a Vessel with any other Liquor than it holds, you must first empty it, of all that is in it before; if you would fill it with Wine, you must first empty it of all that is in it before; if you would fill it with Wine, you must empty it of Beer or Water, if any such Liquor be in it. For two material Things cannot possibly subsist in the same Place, at the same Time, the Substances of each being safe and sound. And so if the Holy Spirit who is God, must come into us, all mortal and unstable Creatures; together with Sin and our selves, and whatever else is in us, must go forth. Humane Reason, and humane Wisdom, and Righteousness and Power and Knowledge, cannot receive the Holy Spirit; but we must be emptied of these, if ever we would receive him.

We must thus suffer our selves to be prepared by the Spirit, to receive the Spirit; but with this Caution; that when the Spirit of God hath wrought this in us,

we do not attribute it to our selves, as our own Work nor think any Thing of our selves, but descend into our own meer nothing. Otherwise we shall be hinderance to the Spirit, that he cannot work in us after a more excellent manner.

And when a Man is thus empty of himself, and of other Things, then he becomes Poor in Spirit, and such the Spirit always fills, and descends into with a wonderful and unresistible Power, and fills the outer and inner Man, and all the superior and inferior faculties of the Soul with himself, and all the Things of God,

And this is the second Work of the Spirit, to fill those whom he hath emptied. Now the usual and ordinary means, through which the Spirit doth this, are these three:

1. The hearing of the Word preached. But here we must distinguish of the Word: For the Law is the Word of God, but St. *Paul* saith, that by that Word the Spirit is not given, but by the Word of the Gospel. And therefore how beautiful are the Feet of them that bring the Gospel of Peace! For nothing is so sweet and precious as the Word of the Gospel, which brings with it the Holy Spirit. This you may see *Acts* 10, 44 where it is said, *that whilst Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the Word.* And therefore also the Gospel is called the ministratiō of the Spirit, because as it proceeds from the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit gives utterance, so it also conveys the Spirit to the faithful. Now the gift of Tongues and Miracles, and other such like gifts are at the present ceased in the Church; but the Gift of the Spirit is not ceased; and thus the Lord still joyns with the Ministry of the Gospel, that he may keep up in our Hearts the due Respect of this ordinance, and may preserve us from the Ways of those Men, who seek for the Spirit without the Word.

2. Means is Faith in the Word heard. For it is not every one that hears the Word, that receives the Spirit, but only they, that hear with the hearing of Faith. For if thou hear the Word of the Gospel a thousand times, and wantest Faith, thou shalt never receive the Spirit; for unbelief shuts up the heart against the Spirit, and ever opposes and resists the Spirit, and never receives it. But Faith opens the Heart to receive the Spirit.

By Faith, we lay hold on Christ in the Word; and through our Union with Christ, we obtain the Spirit. For we have not the Spirit immediately in it self, but in the Flesh of Christ. And when we by Faith are made the Flesh of Christ, then we partake of that Spirit, that dwells in the Flesh of Christ.

Now through these two Things, the Word and Faith, the Spirit communicates to us a new birth, it begets us unto God; and so we partaking of the Nature of God, partake also of the Spirit of God. They that are born of Men, have nothing in them but the Spirit of Men, but they that are born of God, have the Spirit of God. *That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh, and hath no Spirit in it; but that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, and hath Spirit in it.* So that there is no means to partake of the Spirit of God, but by being born of God; and the means by which we are born of God, are the Word and Faith.

3. Means is Prayer. For Christ hath said, the Spirit is given to them that ask. And the Disciples when they were to receive the promise of the Spirit, continued with one accord in Prayer and Supplication, Acts. 1, 14. For God who hath promised to give us his Spirit, hath commanded us to ask it; and when God hath a mind to give us the Spirit, he puts us in mind to ask it; yea God gives us the Spirit, that by it we may ask the Spirit, seeing no Man can ask the Spirit,

but by the Spirit. Now in asking the Spirit, there no Difference, whether we ask it of the Father or of the Son, seeing the Spirit proceeds from both, and is the Spirit of both. And therefore Christ promiseth the sending of the Spirit from both. From the Father, Joh. 14. *The Spirit which the Father will send in my Name.* From himself, Joh. 16. *Except I go, the Comforter will not come; but if I go, I will send him to you.* So that both the Father and the Son give the Spirit, and it is no matter whether we ask him, either of the Father, or of the Son, so we ask him of the Father in the Son, or of the Son in the Father.

And thus you see the Way to obtain this Power, is to obtain the Spirit, and also by what means this is done.

2. The Way to increase this Power, is to increase the Spirit, And therefore it is as needful for us, to know the means to increase the Spirit, as to receive it. And they among others, are these:

1. To continue in the use of the Word. As the Spirit is first given by the Word, so by the same Word it is increased; and the more any Christian is in the use of the Word, the stronger and more vigorous and mighty is the Spirit in him; but the neglect of the Word, is the quenching of the Spirit. Let a Christian that is strong in the Spirit, neglect the Word a while and he will soon become weak, and as a Man without strength. For the Spirit is not bestowed on us, but through the Word, neither doth it dwell in us, but by the Word; and the more the Word dwells in our Hearts by Faith, the more the Spirit dwells in our Hearts by the Word. And according to the Measure of the Word in us, is the Measure of the Spirit.

2. To increase Faith. For the more we believe, the more we receive of Christ; and the more we receive of the Spirit in Christ. For Faith doth not apprehend

bare Christ, but Christ with his Spirit, because these are inseparable. Now always according to the Measure of Christ in us, is the Measure of the Spirit; and according to the Measure of Faith, is the Measure of Christ in us.

3. To be much in Prayer. For the Prayer of the Spirit, increases the Spirit. The more we pray, the more we receive Spirit. So that when we have the Spirit in Truth, we shall have daily a greater and greater increase of it, till we be filled with the Spirit. For the Spirit comes from Christ, in whom is the fulness of the Spirit, and carries us back again to Christ, that we may receive still more of the Spirit. And so by the Spirit that is in our Hearts, we lay hold on the Spirit that is in Christ, and receive more and more of it.

4. To turn our selves daily from the Creature to God. For the more we enlarge our Hearts towards the Creature, the less capable are we of the Spirit of God. For to live much upon the Creature, is to live much according to the Flesh, and this quenches and straitens the Spirit in us. And therefore we must live abstractedly from the Creatures, and so use them, as if we did not use them; and so mind them, as if we did not mind them; and abandon the contents and satisfactions of Flesh and Blood, and wean our selves from all Things but the Necessities of Nature. And the more free and loose we are from the Creature, the more capable are we of Gods Spirit, and the Operations of it. He that lives at greatest distance from the World, and hath least communion with the Things of it, hath always the greatest Proportion of God's Spirit. For as the Apostle saith, *If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father* (that is, the Holy Spirit) *is not in him*; so, if any Man love the Father, the Love of the World is not in him; now the more any one loves the Father, the less he loves the World; and the less he loves the World, the more the Spirit dwells in him. 5.

5. To cease daily from our own Works. The more we act our selves, the less doth the Spirit act in us. And therefore we must from Day to Day, cease from our own Works, from the Operations of our own Minds, and Understandings, and Wills, and Affections, and must not be the Authors of our own Actions. For we being Flesh our selves, whatever we do is fleshly, seeing the Effect cannot be better than the Cause. And if we mingle the Works of our Flesh with the Works of God's Spirit, he will cease from working in us. But the less we act in our selves, according to the Principles of our corrupt Nature, the more will the Spirit act in us, according to the Principle of the divine Nature. But our own Works, are always a mighty Impediment to the Operations of the Spirit.

6. To increase the Spirit in us, we must give up our selves to the Spirit, that he only may work in us, without the least Opposition and Resistance from us. That as the Soul acts all in the Body, and the Body doth nothing of it self, but is subject to the Soul in all Things, so the Spirit may do all in us, and we may do nothing of our selves without the Spirit, but be subject to the Spirit in all its Operations. For the Spirit of God cannot work excellently in us, except it work all in all in us. And in such a Man, in whom the Spirit hath full Power, the Spirit works many wonderful Things, that he according to humane sense is ignorant of. For as the Soul doth secretly nourish, and cherish and refresh the Body, and disperses Life and Spirits through it, even when the Body is asleep, and neither feels it, nor knows it, so the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Soul, by a secret Kind of Operation, works many Things in it, for the quickning and renewing it, whilst it oftentimes for the present, is not so much as sensible of it.

7. The seventh means to increase the Spirit, is to attribute the Works of the Spirit to the Spirit, and not

to our selves. For if we attribute to the Flesh, the Works of the Spirit; and take from the Spirit the Glory of his own Works, he will work no longer in us. Wherefore we must ascribe unto the Spirit, the whole Glory of his own Works; and acknowledge that we our selves are nothing, and can do nothing; and it is he only, that is all in all; and we our selves, among all the excellent Works of the Spirit in us, must so remain, as if we were and wrought nothing at all; that so all that is of Flesh and Blood, may be laid low in us, and the Spirit alone may be exalted; first to do all in us; and then, to have all the Glory, of all that is done.

And thus you see the means to encrease the Spirit, and so consequently strength, as well as to get it. And by the daily Use and Improvement of these means, we may attain to a great Degree of spiritual Strength, that we may walk and not be weary, and may run and not faint, and may mount up as Eagles, yea and may walk as Angels among Men, and as the Powers of Heaven upon Earth, to his Praise and Honour, who first communicates to us his own Strength, and then by that Strength of his own, works all our Works in us: And thus is he glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe.

Stumbling-Stone.

Wherein the Univerſity is reprov'd. By *W. Dell*

Math. II. ver. 6. *And bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.*

THESE Words are the Conclusion of Chriſt's Answer to that Queſtion which *John* the Baptiſt propounded to him by two of his Diſciples, himſelf being in Priſon: The Queſtion was this, *Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we look for another?*

Now it is much diſputed, whether *John* himſelf did at this Time doubt of Chriſt or no? and ſeveral Men give in ſeveral Opinions, which I ſhall not now ſtand to recite; but all almoſt, both Ancient and Modern, do conclude, that *John* propounded this Queſtion to Chriſt; not that he himſelf did now doubt whether Chriſt were the true Meſſias or no, ſeeing he had before given ſo clear a Teſtimony to Chriſt, that he was the Lamb of God that takes away the Sins of the World, and had alſo baptized him with Water, and had ſeen at that Time the Heavens opening, and the Spirit of God as a Dove deſcending and reſting on Chriſt, and had heard the Father's own Voice, ſaying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed: Wherefore they ſay, that *John* himſelf could not poſſibly after all this doubt of Chriſt; and therefore that he did not propound

propound this Question to him by his Disciples for his own sake, but for theirs, that they who before had envied Christ for their Master's sake, and would rather have had *John* to have been the *Messias* than him, might now be assured and fully instructed touching Christ, from Christ himself: Thus they.

But for my Part, I do conceive that *John* did propound this Question to Christ for his own sake rather than for his Disciples: For though when he lived in Peace and Freedom, he had a clear Revelation from the Father touching the Son by the Spirit, and had accordingly, clearly spoken of Christ to others, yet now being in Prison and Bonds, and near unto death, he is brought by great Tribulation, to doubt of all that Truth which before he had been taught of God, and even to Question whether Christ were the true Christ or no? For thought he, if he be the true Christ, why doth he not send Redemption to me, who suffer for his sake, but suffer me thus to perish, whilst he might help me, if he be the Christ? and if he work Miracles for others, (as I hear he doth) why doth he wholly neglect me, who have given such an honourable Testimony to the World of him?

And truly (Brethren) we know not, what Place or Power the Gospel of our Saviour hath in us, till Tribulation come; and so much of the true Knowledge of Christ, and of true Faith in Christ we have indeed, as we have strength in such Hours. That Truth which we confess freely in Prosperity, we are fain to begin to learn it again in Tribulation; and Tribulation makes us learn the Truth over again the second Time; it makes us to learn that in Experience, which before we had learned only in Doctrine.

And how hard a Matter it is to hold fast in Trouble, that Truth which we well know and freely profess in Prosperity, we may see, not only in *John* the Baptist, (who

(who being in Prison, doubted whether Christ were the true Christ, after he had been so clearly taught him, by God and his Spirit, and had so plainly confessed him) but also in the Disciples of Christ, who thought they had heard all his Doctrine, and seen all his Works and had confessed him to be Christ the Son of the living God, yet when the High-Priests were enraged, and the People in an uproar, and when they beheld the Swords and the Staves, and Christ was apprehended, and themselves in Danger, they were all offended at him and fled. Yea, we may see it in Christ himself, who though the Father had testified touching him three times from Heaven; saying, this is my beloved Son, &c. Yet when his Suffering grew near, he exceedingly feared, and was amazed and astonished, and on the Cross cried out aloud, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?

My Brethren, no Man knows the grievousness and efficacy of Tribulation, and the Weakness and frailty of humane Nature, but they who have had Experience of both ; but this is the Comfort of the faithful, that that Knowledge of Christ, and the Gospel, which God hath taught us, and we have heard and learned from him, will certainly endure and hold out throughout all the greatest and longest Storms of Tribulation and Temptation, though with much striving and Difficulty ; but they who have had much Knowledge of the Truth, and have made a glorious profession of it before Men, and yet have wanted the true teaching of God, and true Faith through that teaching, such when Tribulations and Difficulties have risen up, have quite departed from the Truth, and have often renounced it.

We know not Brethren, (I say again) what we do believe aright, touching Christ and his Gospel, touching the Love of God to us, and the Remission of our sin, &c till Distress, and Tribulation, and death come ; and

what

what are we then, we are that indeed; yea, at such times we are to be judged according to our Faith, and not according to our sense and feeling.

Luther was wont to say, that in Temptation he could hardly make use at all of that Doctrine of the free Grace of God to Sinners, and of Faith in Christ crucified, &c. which at other Times he did preach in much Knowledge and Utterance. And he said another Time, that if he were addicted to God's Word at all Times alike, and could find such Love and desire thereto in his Heart always, as he did sometimes, he should reckon himself the happiest Man in the World.

Now from all these Things I conclude, that *John* being in Prison, and being fallen into many Tribulations and Temptations, did send these two Disciples unto Christ for his own Cause, and for his own Confirmation, as it is said, *ver. 2. and 3.*

Ver. 2. When John had heard in Prison the Works of Christ, he sent two of his Disciples.

Ver. 3. And said unto him, art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Whence we are further to observe:

That *John* in his doubting sends to Christ himself, and would not turn aside to the Scribes and Pharisees, to take advice from them, or to demand their Judgment.

For true Faith, in all doubtings touching Christ, goes to Christ himself for Resolution, and will be satisfied from none but Christ.

And Christ is as ready to satisfy *John*, as *John* to inquire and ask; and so he returns him this Answer by his Disciples:

Ver. 4. Go and shew John again those Things you see and hear.

Ver. 5. The blind receive their Sight, and the Lame walk; the Lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are

are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them: And now let *John* himself resolve his own Question, whether I am the true Christ or no.

Go shew John the Things you see and hear.

Where you see that Christ doth not say in plain Terms that he was the Christ; yea he often forbade Men to say so; but he woud have his Works and his Word declare what he was, that our Faith might have a sure Foundation.

1. Christ would be known by his Works.

The blind receive their Sight, the lame walk, &c. and so every where in the Gospel, Christ would be known to be what he was, by his Works; particularly in *John. 10, 24.* when the Jews came round about him, and said, *How long dost thou make us doubt? if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.*

Jesus thus answered them, ver. 25. *I told you, and ye believed not; the Works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear Witness of me.*

And ver. 37, 38. He saith to them, *If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you believe not me, believe the Works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.*

Thus you see, that Christ will be known to be what he is, by his Works.

For Christ, the Power, Wisdom and Righteousness of God, is a most lively and active Principle, and cannot lie hid where he is present and dwells; but when this Word was made Flesh, i. e. came into Flesh, it did manifest it self to be in that Flesh, by doing the Works of God; and without the Works of God, the Presence of the eternal Word in the Flesh of Christ had not been known. Wherefore Christ is called God manifested in the Flesh, and not hidden; and he was manifest to be God in the Flesh, by doing the Works of God.

And

And as Christ is known by his Works, in himself the Head, so also in the Church his Body: For wherever Christ's Presence is, there also are his Works; and where his Works are not, there neither is his Presence.

If Christ be present in our Hearts by Faith, his Works will be undoubtedly manifest in our Lives.

Now if any shall say, but it is not necessary for every Christian to do the Works of Christ here mentioned, to wit, to cause the Blind to see, and the Lame to walk, &c.

I answer, yet however there are other Works of Christ besides these, which are inseparable from his Presence, as the Work of Faith, and labour of Love, and Patience of Hope, together with the self-denial of Christ, the Meekness, Lowliness, Goodness, long Suffering, heavenly Mindedness of Christ; as also his readiness and diligence to do the Will of God, and his cheerfulness to suffer it; these Works (I say) every one ought to perform, that is a Christian, that so Christ may still be known by his Works, as the Apostle saith, shew me thy Faith by thy Works, that is, let me know the Presence of Christ in thee, by the Works of Christ.

And thus is Christ known by his Works, both in Himself and in his Members. And thus much touching the Works of Christ in general.

2. Now for the kind of the Works which Christ did, as, to give Eyes to the Blind, and Strength to the Lame &c. it is to be noted, that they all are such Works as the Prophets had foretold the Messiah should perform when he came into the World, as *Isai. 35. ver. 5.* Behold God will come and save you; *Then the Eyes of the Blind shall be opened, and the Ears of the Deaf shall be untopped; then shall the lame Man leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb sing:* And he that did these Things, thus foretold by the Spirit must needs be the true Christ: and these Works were a demonstration of the efficacy of his Unction.

And

And thus Christ doth here describe himself by his own proper Works, as one whose Business, imployment and Kingdom lies with the Poor, Lame, Blind, and all Sorts of Diseased, Afflicted, Sorrowful and distressed persons; and those poor Creatures he doth not neglect and despise, but his proper Office is among these, and these he comprehends in the greatest Love, and pitties with the tenderest bowels, and minds and tends with the greatest care and diligence, and relieves, and helps, and saves them perfectly.

Whence first we learn, that Christs Kingdom brings good to all, but it receives nothing from any body; For it carries in it all the unsearchable Riches of God, and stands in need of nothing that Man can do. Wherefore it entertains not the Rich, and full, and noble, and honourable of the World and such as abound already, and have enough in themselves and the Creatures; but only the poor and needy, and afflicted, and desolate, and it supplies these freely and richly, and sends the other empty away. And this is the true Nature of Christ's Kingdom.

Secondly, seeing Christ in his proper Office hath only to do with the poor and afflicted People, we may learn to make a right Judgment of Christ, that is, that our Lord Christ is such a sweet Saviour, that in him is nothing but Love, and Mercy, and Goodness, and Compassion, and Kindness to such as are in distress, and grievous fears and agonies from the sense of Sin and Wrath, and from the Presence of Death and Hell working in them. And we must believe Christ to be such an one as the Gospel represents him, that we may come to him with Comfort, and put our whole trust in him, in all Times of Sin and Sorrow, and in all Hours of Darkness, and Temptation: And let us never entertain any other Thoughts of Christ than these, but let us hold him unchangeable for such an one as the

Gospel reveals him, what ever the Law, or our evil Consciences, or the Devil shall suggest to the contrary; and then in all our distresses we shall not be affraid of Christ as of a severe Lawgiver, and an unexorable Judge, but may run to him as to our merciful and powerful Saviour, whose proper Office is among the afflicted.

And thus we see that Christ is known by his Works, and what kind of works they are.

Secondly, *Christ would be known by his Word.*

And as Christ is known by his Works, so also by his Word, and therefore he saith: Go shew John the things you see and hear; and the things you hear as well as the things you see, and that is, that the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

For Christs Works and Christs Word do always go together. Christ's Life is always accompanied with Christ's Doctrine, and his Works with his Word.

The best Works that any Man can do, without the Word of the Gospel accompanying them, are not Christ's Works; and the most glorious Word that any Man can hold forth, without the Works of Christ accompanying it, is not Christ's Word: But Christ's works and Christ's word go always together, both in himself the Head, and in the true Church his Body: Wherefore Christ saith, go shew to John the things you see, and hear: The things you see; the blind receive their sight, &c. The things you hear; and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

Now the Gospel is the free promise of God, in which nothing but meer love, mercy and grace is offered in Jesus Christ to them that believe, though they be never so great and grievous Sinners in themselves. And nothing is more joyful than this to the Soul that is under the sense of sin and wrath: And he that receives this Word of Grace by true faith, doth not weigh a feather:

all the terrors of the Law, Sin, Death and Hell. So that all the outward works of Christ are a small matter if compared to the Gospel.

Now this Gospel is preached to the Poor, that is, to the Poor in Spirit; and these are such, who do not love nor desire, nor delight in present things, but are afflicted and oppressed in their Hearts and Conscience with the sense of sin and wrath, that they regard not the World, nor the Riches, pleasures, and Honours of it, but all they mind, or care for, is Jesus Christ, and in Him, the love of God, and the Remission of Sin and the gift of the Spirit. These are the Poor to whom Christ preaches the Gospel, and they only regard and entertain the Gospel, whilst the Lovers of this World and the Lovers of themselves and this present life, care not for it.

And thus is Christ known, by preaching the Gospel to the Poor. *Moses* his Ministry was full of wrath, terror, and death to the sinners; but Christ's ministry holds forth nothing to the greatest sinners in the world that are sensible of sin, but the free Grace and Mercy of God to them, even to them, in pardoning their sin and giving them Righteousness; and by this Word Christ is well known, to the whole true Church of God.

And as Christ is known by his Word in himself the Head, so also in the Church his Body; for where-ever Christ is present, there is his Word, as well as his works; and where Christ's true Word is not, neither is his presence there. Wherefore all the faithful; they have received the Gospel themselves, so they hold forth the same Gospel to Others, upon all opportunities, according to the Covenant which God made with Christ touching his Seed, which is mentioned *Ic. 51, 21.* *As for me, this is my Covenant with thee, saith the Lord; my Spirit which is upon thee, and the word which*

which I have put into thy mouth (that is, the Gospel) shall never depart out of thy Mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds seed, from henceforth and for ever. By which Scripture we may learn, that the Ministry of the New-Testament is a common Ministry, belonging equally and alike to all the seed of Christ, that is, to all true Believers: For when Christ dwells in their Hearts by Faith, who shall hinder Christ in them, from speaking the Word of God by them?

For God doth not consider men as the World doth, to wit, as they are Tradefmen, or Gentlemen, or Scholars, or Clergy-men, but he considers men as Believers, or Unbelievers. And if they be Unbelievers, then are they destitute of the true presence of Christ, of the true Word of Christ, whatever their outward condition be in the World, yea though they be Scholars and Clergymen; and if they are Believers, then have they Christ's true presence and Word with them, whatever their outward condition is in the World, yea though they be Gentlemen or Tradefmen; and every one of them saith with *David* and with *Paul*, *I believed, therefore have I spoken.*

So that we are not to conceive of the spiritual Church according to any outward state or condition in the World, but according to Faith, through which Christ dwells in the Hearts of Believers, and if Christ the living word of God, dwell in them, he will not keep silence,

And this confession of the Word before the World, Christ requires of all Believers alike, saying, *he that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father, and before his Angels;* and there is no true and right confessing Christ without holding forth the word and Doctrine of the Gospel.

So then, every one that is of God, speaks God's word; and he that speaks it not, is not of God; for in

all the true Children of God, the Spirit of their Father speaks in them. And thus the true presence of Christ is known by the Word of the Gospel in the Church his Body, and in every one of his Members, as well as in himself the Head. This Doctrine, the carnal Church is a great Enemy to, and will not suffer Christ to speak by whom he pleaseth, that so all men be necessitated to bear its Clergy, whether they speak the word of Christ or no: But of this more hereafter.

And thus you have seen, how Christ gives forth himself to be known by his Works and by his Word; and without these two we can have no certain Testimony of him in the World.

Now Christ having returned this full and satisfactory Answer to *John*, to declare to him who he was adds this in the Conclusion:

And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.

For notwithstanding the Works and Word of Christ, which are the Works and Words of God in the flesh, yet the Wisdom and Prudence of the flesh and the Religion and Righteousness of the World which do not much regard those things, do find much matter of scandal and offence in Jesus Christ; wherefore Christ saith, *blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

Now in discoursing touching the offence which is taken against Christ by men, I shall observe this Order; I shall shew:

1. Who they are that are offended at Christ.
2. What those things are whereat they are offended and why they are offended at them.
3. What a great evil it is to be so offended.
4. What a great blessedness it is, not to be so offended, and,
5. Make some Use of all.

1. Point.

Who they are that are offended at Christ.

And here I affirm, first that the whole World in general is offended at Christ; for they living without the word and Spirit of Faith, must needs be offended at Christ, by all those scandals which are raised up against Christ, by the Devil and men; and they all having a false apprehension of Christ, do suck in as readily as a Spring doth water, whatever aspersions and reproaches are raised against him, and so must needs be offended at him: And therefore saith Christ, *Mat. 18, 7. Wo be to the World because of offences; for offences must needs come, and the world will needs receive them, and therefore wo be to the World.*

So that the whole World, that is, whosoever are not true Believers, and born of God, are all offended at Christ and his Gospel; and all the Children of the first *Adam*, are offended at the second *Adam* who is wholly unlike to them, yea and in all things most contrary to them.

2. Yea secondly, Not only the common People of the World, vulgar and contemptible men, are offended at Christ, but also all the chief and choice men of the world, Kings of the Earth, and Rulers, and Judges, and Magistrates, as in *Psalms 2.* and all the best and learnedest, and wisest, and greatest, and most honourable men, these are all offended at Christ, *1 Cor. 2, 8. which none of the Princes of this world knew; he means it of Philosophers as well as of Secular Powers; and not knowing him, they crucified him.*

2. Not the world only are offended at Christ, but also the worldly and carnal Church, the outward, visible, national Church, this is very much offended at him. This we see in Christ's time, that the only visible Church of God in the World, the Church of the Jews, (for the Church of the Old Testament, was a

visible Church, but the Church of the New Testament is a spiritual Church, and not visible) I say, the Jewish Church, which had the Law of *Moses*, the Prophets, and the Psalms, and observed all the outward Ordinances of God exactly, they were all offended at Christ, and made an Order, that whosoever acknowledged him, should be excommunicated and cast out of the Synagogue.

And this Offence was foretold by *Isaiab* 8, 14. where he saith of Christ, *and he shall be for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both Houses of Israel, for a ginn, and for a snare to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem.* So that not *Babylon* only, but *Jerusalem*; and not the Heathen only, but both the Houses of Israel were offended at Christ; and this makes the evil yet more grievous.

And yet this is not all; but secondly, and not only the carnal Christians, but the carnal Clergy are offended at Christ; and not only the common People of the national Church, but the chief Rulers, the most eminent, and in appearance most Godly and Holy and Orthodox of the Clergy, are above all others most grievously offended at Christ. This also we see done in Christ's time, when the Scribes, and Pharisees, and Rulers of the People, Men of great Reputation and Renown, for Religion, and Righteousness, these were chiefly, and above the rest of the Church, offended at Christ; and as Christ every where was most sharp against them, and did most reprove them; so they did most bitterly oppose Christ. And this also was foretold by the Spirit of Prophecie, *Pf. 118, 22. The stone which the Builders refused, is become the Head of the corner;* this rejected Stone, is Christ himself, and these Builders were the chief Rulers and Governours of the Church, and accordingly both Christ and the Apostles applied this Scripture to them, as you may see *Mat. 21, 42. and Acts. 4, 11.* So

So that the Builders, that teach, and instruct, and govern the Church, and are reputed the best, and most profitable and necessary men in it, yea the very Pillars of the Church, so that all would come to naught, and to ruine without them, these are the men that are most offended at Christ.

These are the Husbandmen mentioned by Christ, *Mat. 21.* that conspired against the Son of the Lord of the Vineyard, and killed him; and these have been, and still are, the chief and great outward Antichrist in the World.

Now when the People see the Rulers and Governors of the Church, who are thought to have more Knowledge, Learning, Light, and Religion than others, offended at Christ, this exceedingly increases their Offence; and when they see the Builders rejecting and throwing away this Stone, this causes them to reject him also with the greater indignation.

And thus you see that this offence at Christ, is a great and a large evil, and is spread over all the World and worldly Church, and very few there are who do escape it.

And this for the first thing.

2. Point.

At what things in Christ they are offended, and why they are offended at them.

Now the World and worldly Church are offended,

1. At Christ Himself.
2. At his true Word.
3. At his true Worship.
4. At his true Church.
5. At his true Ministry.
6. At his true Government.

Of these things I shall speak in Order, according to the good Hand of God with me, and shall desire to be so faithful to Christ, as not to depart one hairs

breadth from his truth, though it may be, it will come to pass that all or the greatest part of you, will be grievously offended at it.

I begin with the first, and will shew, that the World and worldly Church are offended.

1. At Christ Himself.

And they are offended at him in many regards, of which, I shall mention these five.

1. They are offended at the meanness of his outward Condition in the World. For indeed he was in a very low, plain, simple, and contemptible Condition, in the days of his Flesh, as any ordinary Tradesmen in this Town, and lived with *Joseph* in his Trade of a Carpenter. Wherefore *Paul* saith of him, *Phil. 2. That he made himself of no account, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in outward appearance as any other Man.* That is, he was in the outward Condition of any ordinary Man in the World.

Now this mean Condition of Christ, did much offend them; for thought they, is this the Christ, of whom all the Prophets have spoken such glorious things? whom all the Jews expect, and who is the desire of all Nations? Is this He whose Name is *wonderful, Councillor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, of the increase of whose Government and Peace there should be no end, upon the Throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to stablish it with Justice and Judgment from henceforth and for ever?* Is this plain ordinary Man the Messias? How can this thing be? For they thought that the true Christ, of whom such excellent things were spoken, should be some great Prince, or learned Priest; and that, that form of a Servant, and mean Condition in which he was, could in no measure agree or be suitable to the true Christ; And for this Cause, they were greatly offended at him, and thought him not worthy to be in any Place of reckoning.

2. They

2. They were offended that he being in so mean an outward Condition, *John* baptist should yet speak such high things of Him, and He of himself. *John* Baptist testified of him, that he was the *only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father; the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the World; the fountain of the fulness of all the Saints; the beloved Son* unto whose hands the Father had given all things; and that *he that did believe in him, had everlasting life; and he that did not, should not see life, but the wrath of God should abide on him, &c.* And these all were wonderful things, to be spoken of one whose outward Condition in the World was so plain and contemptible

And as *John* had spoken these things of Christ, so Christ everywhere gives forth himself as the Son of God, and said. *He and his Father were one.* And this exceedingly offended the Jews, as you may see *John. 5, 18. The Jews sought to kill him, not only because he had broken the Sabbath, but also because he had said, God was his Father, making himself equal with God.* And *John. 10, 31. The Jews took up Stones to stone him, and said, we stone thee not for a good Work, but for blasphemy, and because thou being a Man makest thy self God.* And so they were all offended at this Mystery, *God manifest in the Flesh*, in the Flesh of so mean and despicable a Person in the eye of the World.

3. They were offended at Christ, because in him was no humane or wordly thing, which any Natural or carnal Man could possibly like of, or delight in; He exercised no worldly wit, Wisdom, Reason, Learning, parts, nor any thing that might commend him to the World; neither did he live in any outward forms of Religion or Worship which might commend him to the carnal Church. There was nothing in him but the presence and manifestation of God, the Word of God, the Righteousness of God, the Nature of God,

the Spirit of God, the Works of God, and God was all in all in Christ; and God is wholly contrary to the World, and the World to God; And so the World and worldly Church were wholly offended at Christ, he being altogether in the Father, and the Father in him, in such sort that the Father in him spake all the words, and did all the works, and he could neither do nor speak any thing of himself, he was taken up, unto so near Union and Communion with God.

4. They were offended at the reproaches and mis-reports that went commonly abroad touching Christ, raised for the most part by the Scribes, and Pharisees, and Rulers of the Church, because they knew and were assured that Christ's prevailing would be their undoing; Therefore they gave out that he was a Sabbath-breaker, a Blasphemer, an unlearned and ignorant man, and that made him err, a Vicious Man, a Glutton and Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners, and that he had a Devil, and was mad; these were the common reports that were commonly divulged abroad touching Christ, and that by the Teachers of the best repute in the Church; and the common-people reckoned them to be very true, and thereupon were horribly offended both at Christ's Doctrine and Works.

And thus was Christ a very sign to be spoken against, which *Isaiab* foreseeing in the Spirit, speaks thus in the Person of the offended Jewish Church, *Isai. 63, 3. He is despised and rejected of Men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid (as it were) our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not.* And Christ himself by the Prophet complains of this usage, saying, they laid to my charge the things that I knew not; But yet these false reports so far prevailed, that he became a Stranger to his Brethren, and an Alien to his Mothers own Children.

5. They were offended at him because of his bitter and shameful Cross and sufferings; and herein lay the height, and depth of that offence for which the World and worldly Church look at Christ. For the Ecclesiastical Power condemned him as a deceiver, and blasphemer, and they also prevailed with the secular Power to condemn him as a Seditious Person, an Enemy to Cæsar, and a Rebel; and so after all the works of God which he had done, and works of God which he taught, they at last crucified him between two Thieves by the common consent of all the People, and destroyed the Son of God, as if he had been the Son of Perdition: And in all this bitter suffering no Body afforded him the least pity or compassion, but the common People mocked him, and said, *he saved others but cannot save himself; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.*

And this usage Christ complains of to his Father, *Psal. 22, 6.* where he saith, that he by his Cries had no deliverance, which yet Others who had trusted in God obtained, but (saith he) *I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the People; all they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shout out the lip, they shake the head, saying, he trusted in God, that he would deliver him, let him deliver him if he delight in him.* And *Isaiah* saith, that by reason of this strange suffering of Christ, *many were astonished at him, his visage was marr'd more than any man's, and his face more than the Sons of men;* and through this suffering of Christ, all the World were so extremely offended, that *Christ crucified* was to the *Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.*

And thus was and is the World and worldly Church offended at the true Christ, whom the Scriptures hold forth. Indeed the false Church have fancied to themselves such a Christ as flesh and blood can like of well enough, a Christ, fashioned after the mind and will, and
 Wisdom,

Wisdom, and Prudence, and Righteousness of man, and such a Christ they extol and magnifie, to wit for their own worldly advantage sake, as the Papists have fancied the poor Virgin his Mother, who kept *Josephs* House, and provided his diet, and laid her Hands to the performance of his ordinary household affairs, to be a gallant Lady, and have clothed her in Silk, and Sattin, and rich attire; and such a Mother of Christ they do highly esteem; whereas the poor Virgin, the true believer, who lived in the plain and laborious employment of a Family, they would even scorn to regard such an one: No more will the carnal Church regard or value the true Christ in his mean condition and married Village.

And thus much for their Offence at Christ himself.

2. *The World and Worldly Church are offended at Christ's true Word:*

Because Christ under the New Testament, hath given forth a New Word, which is the Word of the Gospel; and this also they are offended at, in many regards; as,

1. Because it is the word of Faith; the word of Faith, and not of Sense; the Word of Faith, and not of Works. For this Word of Faith is wholly a spiritual Word, and hath nothing in it that is suitable to flesh and blood; Nothing in it, that pleaseth the Fancy, or Reason, or Understanding of man; it hath nothing in it wherein a natural or carnal heart can take pleasure, but is throughout a Word of Faith,

2. They are offended at the New word of the New Testament, because it exalts Christ alone, & in him the Power of God, the Wisdom and Righteousness of God, the Things of God; and cries down all the Things of the World in which men trust and delight, and all the common Religion and Righteousness of the World, and makes Christ all in all, and God in Christ, and all other things nothing. So *Paul* 1 Cor. 1, preached to them that

that did believe; *Christ the Power of God, and Christ the Wisdom of God, and nothing else.*

3. They are offended at this Word, because it cannot be learned as humane Arts and Sciences can, to wit by the teaching of Man, together with their own pains and endeavours, but only by the teaching of God and his Spirit, as it is written, they (that is, the true Children of the spiritual Church) *shall be all taught of God; he therefore that hath heard and learned of my Father, cometh to me. All my divinity, (said Luther) consisteth in this, that I believe that Christ only is the Lord touching whom the Scriptures speak, and neither my Grammar nor Hebrew tongue taught me this, but it is the work of the holy Spirit.*

Now when God teacheth us his word Himself, we have another understanding of it than other men who hear and read the same outward words, and yet want that inward Teaching; for then have we the spiritual meaning of the Word, and the very mind of Christ in it, which others want, that are not so taught; and this offends the carnal Christians grievously, that the spiritual Christians have another knowledge and understanding of the Word than they; whereupon they thus break out, what (say they) are you the only men who have the word of God, and is all wisdom and knowledge comprehended in your breasts? and do you know more of the Mystery of Christ than the grave and learned men who have studied the Scriptures all their life? and will you with your pretended teaching overthrow that Orthodox sense of the Scriptures that we have had so many years? and thus they are greatly offended.

4. They are offended at this word, because it discovers the wickedness of the world and worldly Church at a very high rate. The world doth not seem the thousand part so wicked any where, as it doth where the Gospel comes. For where this clear light of God shines,

shines, and the word comes in any degree of truth and Power, there not only the wickedness of the world appears out of measure wicked, but also the Religion, and Righteousness, and Works, and Duties of the carnal Christians, are manifested to be gross hypocrisie, and the deceivableness of unrighteousness, and wholly contrary to Christ, the righteousness of God, and so nothing else but a more plausible way to Death and Hell.

Where the Word of Christ, or the Gospel of God comes in Power, there many who before seemed very godly and Religious People, and very good Christians, and very quiet and peaceable men, do presently become full of wrath, and rage, and cursed enmity against it, and call it Error, and Heresie, and Blasphemy, and so do no less than spit in the very face of the Truth and Gospel of Christ, which he hath manifested above all his name: And no man could ever have imagined they had been such Children of the Devil, before the word came.

And thus by the coming of the Word in the spiritual Sense and Doctrine of it, many that did once seem to be Christ's Friends, are manifested to be his utter Enemies. And this also was foretold by *Simeon*, Luke 2. Where he saith, that by the coming of Christ in his word, *the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed*, and then that unbelief and enmity against Christ, that before lay hid, is discovered and brought forth by the Preaching of the Word, as we have seen heretofore, and still see by daily experience; and for this Cause also they are offended.

5. They are offended at the true Word, because every where so few entertain it, and embrace it: As when Christ himself preached, there were very few in all *Judea* and *Jerusalem* that entertained his Doctrine; and though sometimes many thronged to hear him,
yet

yet at another time they were so offended at his Doctrine, that they all forsook him; so that Christ said to the twelve, John. 6. *Will ye also go away?*

Now this makes many to be offended at the true Word, that when it comes to any Town or People, the far greater part should reject it, and speak evil of it; and they for the most part, the greatest, wisest, and learnedst men, and that only a few poor and contemptible People should receive it; this also exceedingly offends.

6. And lastly, they are offended, because the true Word of Christ, where it comes in any evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, brings Troubles, Tumults, Stirs, and Uproars in the World, according to that of Christ, Mat. 10, 34. *I came not to send peace but a sword; for I am come to set a man at variance against his Father, and the Daughter against her Mother, and the Daughter-in-law against her Mother-in-law.* For the true word of Christ, is such a sword as cuts in sunder all Natural and Civil Relations, and takes away the Peace of any Place where it comes in Power. Christ saith also, Luke 12, 49. *I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled?* This fire that Christ sends in the word, in the ministration of the Spirit, of which the Lord saith by the Prophet, *is not my word as fire?* and this word comes to burn up all the corrupt Manners, Fashions, Customs, yea all the Lusts and Sins of the World, and all the Antichristian Doctrine, and form of worship in the outward Church. And when this fire begins to burn any where, presently all the People are in an uproar, and lay all their heads, and use all their hands together to quench it.

So that where-ever the true Word comes, the *Heathen rage, and the People imagine a vain thing; the Kings of the earth set themselves, and the Rulers take council together against it, and say: Let us break these bonds in sunder, and cast away these cords from us, which no flesh and blood,*
especially

especially the Rich, Wise, Learned, Honourable, would endure to be bound in.

Now this exceedingly offends; For say they, before this kind of word came in, all things were better and more quiet: Under Episcopacy all things were well, and in good order; But since this new Doctrine came in, all things are full of trouble, mischief, wars, and death; and therefore they reckon this word the cause of all the evils we have and do endure.

But yet the cause of all these Tumults, are not truly in the Word, but in the World, and in the Devil. Christ he will have his Christians to publish his word, and thereby to gather together his Elect unto him. Now the World, and the Devil, the Prince of it, will not suffer this to be done quietly, and hence arise all tumults. The Devil, who hath the first possession of the World, would have all things quiet, that he might keep his possession; but Christ will not suffer it to be so, but he will have all those whom his Father hath given him, out of the Devil's possession, by the might and efficacy of his word; but the Devil will not endure that this should be done quietly, but stirs up all the World against the Word.

And so where ever the word comes in truth, there is always troubles and uproars; but where the word is preached, and the world is quiet, that for certain is not the true word of God.

Wherefore the dull and drousie Divinity of Synods, and Schools, cannot be the true word of Christ, for that meets with no Opposition and contradiction at all from the world, or worldly Church; it meets with no enemies, and avengers amongst them, but it is rather praised and embraced, and honoured with degrees and Scarlet, and the Professors and Publishers of it are in credit with men, and worldly Powers, and receive from them, riches, honour, and quiet life; whereas the true

Doctrine

Doctrine of Christ can never be published without the offence of the world.

And thus much for their offence at the true word of Christ.

3. *They are offended at his true Worship.*

For Christ under the New-Testament hath instituted a New Worship, and this the world and worldly Church are also greatly offended at.

Because this worship is wholly Spiritual, and hath nothing carnal in it, but consists altogether of Grace and Truth, according to that of Christ, Joh. 4, 23. *The hour cometh (saith he) and now is, that the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit, and in Truth; For the Father seeketh such to worship him; God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit, and in Truth; and there is no worship in truth, but that which is in Spirit. And Paul saith of true Believers, Phil. 3, 2. we are the Circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

Now this spiritual Worship, stands in Faith, Hope and Love, whereby our old Nature is mortified, and we bring forth spiritual Fruit unto God, and to our Brother. And this Worship of the New Testament being wholly Spiritual, is free from Time, Place, and Person, as all spiritual Things are; and so at all Times, and in all Places alike, this Worship may be performed by all Persons alike, who are true Believers: And so accordingly do all true Believers, at all Times, and in all Places alike believe in God, and trust in him, and fear him, and love him, and delight in him, and speak good of his Name, and also do good to their Brother, in Instructing, Teaching, Exhorting, Comforting him, and Helping him as freely as Christ hath helped them: And this is the chief and indeed the only true Worship of the New-Testament.

For the Gospel hath taught us that Christ is the true
(K) Temple

Temple, wherein the Church of the New Testament, which is a Kingdom of Priests, are all alike to worship God without any Difference, or Distinction of Persons: And also that Christ is our Rest as well as our Righteousness; and it is as great a Sin to make another Rest than Christ, as it is to make another Righteousness than Christ; for in him alone we are compleat and furnished, to all Things that appertain to the Kingdom of God; and stand in need of nothing out of him: Wherefore it is said, *Heb. 4, 3. He which hath believed is entred into the Rest*, that is, into Christ and his Righteousness, and so *hath ceased from his own Works, as God from his.*

Now the World and worldly Church are greatly offended at this spiritual Worship; and that first, because it makes no great shew, nor presents no glorious outside to the World, to win their Favour and Applause, and so they despise it as a notional or melancholick Thing.

And secondly, because this is wholly out of the Reach and Power of the natural Man, and no Man by his free Will, or natural Abilities can attain thereunto. Wherefore they are offended at this kind of Worship, and would have a Worship in the Days of the Gospel, after the Manner of the Worship of the Law, a Worship standing in outward Works, and Duties, and Ceremonies, and in Observation of Days, Times, Places, Persons; and are much scandalized at that Worship, which stands only in Faith, and Love, and makes void all other Things.

4. *They are offended at the true Church of Christ.*

Because Christ under the New Testament hath set up a New Church, which is not outward and visible, as the Church of the Old Testament was; neither carries in it any worldly Pomp, Power, and Glory, as the Church of Antichrist doth, but it is wholly spiritual and invisible, and as utterly unknown to the World as Christ himself.

The true Church under the New Law, is the Congregation of spiritual Men, gathered together, not in one outward Place, but in one Faith, Hope, and Love, in one Spirit, in one Christ, in one God.

It is the Company of the Faithful, and Elect, which have Christ for their Head.

And this Church is not known by any outward Orders, or Forms, or Ceremonies, or Manner of Life, but only by the Word of Faith; seeing this true spiritual Church is conceived and formed, is brought forth, and brought up, is fed and clothed, is strengthened and adorned, is protected and perfected by this Word of Faith alone; Yea the whole Nature, and Life, and Being, and Action of this Church, is in the Word of Faith.

2. They are offended at this Church, because it is the Habitation of God, and his very Kingdom, wherein he himself is present, is manifested, speaks, works, reigns, is glorified, and is all in all in it; and so it will not receive unto it self any Thing of the Power, Wisdom and Righteousness of Man. They are much offended to hear, that this Church is the Temple of the living God, and that God hath said it himself, that he will dwell in them and walk in them; and that God is in them of a Truth, and not by fancied Habits of created Grace; and that they are filled with all the Fulness of God; and that they are living Stones in that Building, wherein Christ himself is the chief Corner-stone; and that they are all built together by the Spirit, to be the Habitation of God: This doth so exceedingly offend them, that is, causeth them to blaspheme, in crying out against this Doctrine of the Spirit of God as Blasphemy.

3. They are offended at this New-Church of the New-Testament, because it will be the Church of God alone, and will not acknowledge any to be of it, but such as are born of God, and have obtained like precious

faith with them, and so will have no constant Communion with any, (how skilfull soever in the Letter of the Word, and how eminent soever in outward forms of Religion) but only with such who have true fellowship with the Father and the Son in the Spirit.

4. They are offended at this Church, because usually God calls unto it, not the Great, and Honourable, and Wise, and Learned, but mean, plain, and simple People, according to that of *Paul*, 1 Cor. 1, 26. *You see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the mighty, and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen; Yea and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are.* So that this true Church consists of a small company of poor, mean, simple, base, and despised men in the Eyes of the World and worldly Church; yea of such, who in their Judgment deserve to have no Place nor being in the World; And who now out of their own choice would willingly joyn themselves to such a Congregation?

5. The great and worldly wise People are much offended at this Church, because of its outward afflicted Condition in the World, it having fellowship with Christ in all his sufferings; And so is always reproached, despised, slandered, torn, spit on, buffeted, crucified, and mocked; And from all, most, or some of these sufferings, the spiritual Church is never priviledged in the World: And by reason of these Things, the Visage of the true Church seems foul, deformed, and offensive in the Eyes of Men, whilst the national and carnal Church is highly favoured, esteemed, and preferred it self, and hath its chief Teachers honoured with Scarlet, and Furr; so that if Christ were on the Earth again, in his mean and plain Condition, he would be ashamed

to own them, and they would be as much ashamed to own him. And thus much for their offence at the true Church.

5. *They are offended at the true Government of this Church.*

Because Christ under the New Testament, as he hath set up a New Church, so also he hath set up a New Government of this Church; and this also offends in many regards:

1. In that Christ will have none brought to his Church, by outward violence, and compulsion, though he have all Power in Heaven and in Earth; but in the Day of his Power, (that is, of the Gospel) he only entertains the willing People, and compells no Body against their Wills; seeing he seeks not his own profit, but ours. Our Lord Jesus Christ gathers his true Church on Earth, according to the Council and Mind of his Father in Heaven, and so will entertain none but whom his Father draws, because he will have his Church not one jot larger than the the Election of Grace.

2. They are offended at his Government, in that in his true Church he makes an Equality between all Christians through Faith; and will have none over one another, but will have all to serve one another in Love: And so he will have him that would be the greatest, to be the least of all; and him that would be the chief, to be the Servant of all, as himself came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his Life a ransom for many: And he was greater than all the Children of God, not through any worldly Greatness, Lordlines, or Dominion, but through his teaching, and instructing them, and loving them, and serving them, and suffering, and dying for them: And besides this Greatness, there is nothing but Equality in his Church.

3. They are offended at his Government, in that Christ doth nothing in his Church, by the Decrees or
 Constitution

Constitutions of Ecclesiastical Men, or by the secular Arm, and Power of the Magistrate, but he doth all by his Word, and Spirit, and nothing else: And these alone, without the Addition of any Thing else, are infinitely sufficient, to do all that Christ would have done in his Kingdom.

4. In that he will have us to love our Enemies, and to do good to them that do evil to us, and to pray for them that persecute us, and despitefully use us; he will not have us to be Enemies to any, or to do evil to any, or to persecute and use despite to any: He will have us to beware of false Prophets, but not to destroy them; And to avoid Hereticks, but not to kill them; And will have neither of them burnt with any Fire, but the Fire of Love.

5. In that he will have all Things in his Kingdom ordered and done only by the Law of Love, and nothing by any Law of Violence or Compulsion.

Now this kind of Government of the true Church, doth grievously offend the World and worldly Church, and the Governors of both; because they know no Government of the Church at all, but of the Ecclesiastical and Civil Power intermingled, and if this be made void, they can do nothing at all in the Government of the Church, but think according to their unbelief, all Things presently will come to Confusion; For they want Faith to commit the Government of Christs own Church to his own care; by his Word and Spirit. And thus they are offended at this true Government also.

6. And lastly (for I will name no more particulars at this Time.)

They are offended at Christ's true Ministry.

Because Christ under the New Testament, hath erected and constituted a New Ministry, not through any Ecclesiastical Ordination, but meerly through the unction of his Spirit, without any Regard at all to a
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mans outward calling or Condition in the World, but whether (as I said before) a Man be a Scholar, or Clergy Man, or Gentleman, or Tradesman, if Christ call him, and pour forth his Spirit on him, that, and that only makes him a true Minister of the New Testament.

And of this New and offensive Ministry to the World and worldly Church Christ himself was the first, for he was not of the Tribe of Levi; as the Apostle saith, *Heb. 7.* but of the Tribe of *Judah*, of which *Moses* speaks nothing touching Priesthood: How then did Christ become the first and chief Minister of the New Testament? The Spirit of Christ tells us by *Isaiab*, Chap. 61. and Christ himself tells us *Luke 4.* saying: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; for he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, &c.* So that our Lord Jesus Christ, being (according to the Dialect of Antichrist) a Lay-Man, and having never learned Letters, nor been brought up a Scholar, but being brought up with *Joseph* in the trade of a Carpenter, and not ordained neither by the Church of the Jews, nor allowed by them, was yet the first and chief Minister of the New Testament, through the Unction of the Spirit only.

Now the worldly Church were extremely offended at this very thing, as you may see in the Gospel, *Mat. 13, 54. 55.* *Jesus came into his own country, and taught them in the Synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, (for no Man spake like him, for he taught with Authority, and not as the Scribes) but they said, whence hath this Man (this Mechanick Man) this wisdom, and these mighty works? is not this the Carpenters Son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brethren and Sisters all with us? And they were offended in him:* That such a Man that had no Degrees, nor Ordination, should yet be a Minister.

And as Christ himself was the first Minister of this

fort, so he chose in the same Manner: He chose Fishermen, and Tentmakers, and Publicans, plain Men, and of ordinary Employment in the World, and only put his Spirit on them, and this was their sufficient Unction to the Ministry: And thus it was foretold by *Joel*, Chap. 2, 28. *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, that I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesie.* There needs nothing to the Ministry of the New Testament, but only God's pouring out his Spirit: Wherefore Christ bids his Disciples stay at Jerusalem till they should receive the Promise of the Spirit, and then they should go forth and teach.

And so after, as Believers received the Spirit, so they became Ministers of the New Testament, as we see in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the first 300 Years after Christ. For there is but one only Ministry of the New Testament, which is common to all Men alike who have received the Spirit of God, and to none else, though never so excellently qualified with natural Abilities and Humane Learning.

For the Things of the Gospel are altogether invisible Things, and cannot be known but by the reaching of the Spirit, though a Man have all the Wisdom, and Knowledge, in the World, as *Paul* declares 1 Cor. 2, ver. 8. 9. 10. *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor the Heart of man understood the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them to us (Believers) by the Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the Spirit of a Man that is in him? even so the Things of God knoweth no Man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the Spirit of the World, (which for its highest perfection hath only humane Wisdom and Knowledge) but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the Things that are freely given to us of God.* Where

Where we learn that the things of the Gospel and of the Kingdom of God are not known at all, nor discerned in the least measure, but by God's Spirit; which Spirit is given to all that believe, and this Spirit alone is sufficient, both to enable us to know clearly and certainly the Things of God, and also to publish them unto others, and nothing of Man or the Creature can add to it.

Wherefore when Christ chose his Ministers according to his Fathers Council, he chose not the Wise and Learned, but plain, simple Men; that it might appear to all the World, throughout all Ages, how infinitely able the Unction of his Spirit alone is, without any Addition of any thing else, for the Ministry of the New Testament: And Christ upon the serious Consideration of this strange Choice of God by him, breaks forth into this Thanksgiving, Mat. 11, 25. *I thank thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things* (that is the Word of Faith and Mystery of Christ and his Kingdom) *from the Wise and Prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; even so Father, because it pleased thee.* And David admiring this wonderful Dispensation, speaks thus in the joy of his Heart, *Psal. 8, 1. 2. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the World, who hast set thy Glory above the Heavens!* And then showing wherein this high Glory of God appears, saith, *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.* God useth no other Instrument to overcome the greatest Enemies and Avengers, that arise in the World and worldly Church, than the strength he ordains out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, that is true Believers, who live only on the sincere Milk of the Word.

The Lord had all the World before him, to have chosen out of it whom he pleased to be the Instruments

by whom he would hold forth his Word and Gospel to all Nations; Yet in his infinite Wisdom, and gracious Council, and good Pleasure, he would pass by the wise and learned Men, and great Philosophers, and subtile Disputants, as *Paul* affirms, 1 Cor. 1, 19. that God hath said, *I will destroy the Wisdom of the Wise, and bring to nothing the Understanding of the Prudent.* God is so far from making use of humane Wisdom, and Prudence in the Gospel of his Son, that he quite destroys it, and brings it to nothing: Wherefore *Paul* adds ver. 20. *Where is the wise? where is the learned, or lettered Man? where is the Disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? for after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* By the foolishness of preaching, that is, by the Word of Faith out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings, which the World reckons Foolishness; by this alone, doth God bring about the Salvation of the Elect.

Now, at these Things, how grievously are the worldly-wise and deep learned ones (as they esteem themselves) offended, that God's Spirit alone should be a sufficient Unction for the Ministry of the New Testament, and that God should (on set purpose) lay aside the Wise and Prudent Men, and choose Babes, and out of their Mouth ordain his great strength to set up Christ's Kingdom in the world, and to destroy Antichrist's! Yea this Doctrine will chiefly offend the University.

For you will say; if this be so, what need is there then of our Philosophy, and of our Arts and Sciences to the Ministry of the New Testament? And what need is there of our Acts and Clerums? And what need is there of our Scarlet, and Tippetts? And what need is there of our Hoods and Caps, &c. If the Unction of the Spirit alone be sufficient for the right Ministry,

try, and Christ do perfect his praise by the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, then what need is there of all these Things?

I Answer, no need at all, as to Christ's Kingdom, and the Ministry of that: For it is one of the grossest errors that ever reigned under Antichrist's Kingdom, to affirm that Universities are the fountain of the Ministers of the Gospel, which do only proceed out of Christ's flock.

And because you will be greatly offended at me for speaking thus, you shall hear what *Luther* saith to this Matter on 2 Pet. 2, 1. upon these words: *But there were false Prophets among the People, as there shall be false Teachers among you;* the Word *Peter* uses here, is false Doctors, or false Masters; and *Luther* saith: 'It came to pass by the singular Council of God, that our Teachers should be called Doctors and Masters, that it may appear to all, whom *Peter* here means., And he farther saith, 'that *Peter* hereby doth undoubtedly tax the Universities, in which such Men are created, and out of which have proceeded all the Preachers in the World, so that there is no Town or City under the whole Kingdom of Antichrist, which hath not such Doctors and Masters as are created in the Universities. For the whole world (*saith he*) is of this Opinion, that the Universities are the Fountains whence they should flow who ought to teach the People. Now this (*saith he*) is a most horrible and abominable error, so that nothing hath proceeded in all the World, out of any Thing, so much to be opposed, as out of Universities: Wherefore (*saith he*) *Peter* saith that all these are false Masters, and false Doctors., Thus *Luther*.

Now if any say, this Doctrine being commonly taught and received, will throw down the Universities.

I answer. If the Universities will stand upon an Humane and Civil account, as Schools of good Learning for the instructing and educating Youth in the Knowledge

Knowledge of the Tongues, and of the liberal Arts and Sciences, thereby to make them useful and serviceable to the Commonwealth, if they will stand upon this account, which is the surest and safest Account, they can stand on, and will be content to shake Hands with their Ecclesiastical and Antichristian Interest, then let them stand, during the good Pleasure of God; but if they will still exalt themselves above themselves, and place themselves on Christ's very Throne, as if they had ascended upon high to lead captivity captive, and to give Gifts to Men for the Work of the Ministry, and so will presume to darken the Glory of Jesus Christ and his true Ministry which he sends forth, as his Father sent him, then let them in the Name of Christ descend into that darkness out of which they first sprang, that the Glory of Christ may fill the World.

And thus have I declared how the World and worldly Church are offended at Christ and his Word, and Worship, and Church, and Government, and Ministry, and so consequently at all his Things.

And now I proceed to the third General I propounded; to wit, to shew:

3. Point.

How great an evil it is, to be thus offended at Christ and his Things.

And this appears in many particulars.

1. One evil is, that to be offended at Christ and his Things, is a certain Evidence that Men are wholly Ignorant of Christ and of God, though they be called Christians, and have the Name of God always in their Mouths; For if Men knew Christ aright, and God in Christ, it were impossible they should be offended at him; and inasmuch as they are offended, it is certain they do not know him by any Revelation from the Father. Wherefore Christ tells his Disciples, *John. 16, 3.* that the chief Ground of that offence which the World and worldly

worldly Church should take against them who are his true Members, and have received the same Word and Spirit with him through true Faith, is, because they have not known the Father nor Him. For he that knows Christ in Christians, is not offended at them; and he that knows God in Christ, is not offended at Him: But they that are offended at Christians, know not Christ; and they that are offended at Christ, know not God.

2. When Men are offended at Christ and his Things, it is a sign they are real Unbelievers, whatever form of Godliness they may live under, and though it may be they have been old Professors: For *Peter* saith, Christ is precious to them that believe; wherefore they that are offended, are destitute of Faith.

3. They that are offended at Christ, lose all that spiritual and eternal advantage that comes by Christ to true Believers, and so fall short of the Love of God in Christ, of Reconciliation with God in Christ, of the Righteousness, Wisdom, and Power, and of all the fullness of God in Christ, of eternal Redemption from the Law, Sin, Death, and Hell by Christ, and of all that great Salvation that is in and by Him; And Jesus Christ is wholly in vain to them.

4. When Men are fully and irreconcilably offended at Christ and his Things, it is a Sign they are of the wicked one, of the Seed of the Serpent, and very Reprobates; as Christ told such offended Jews; *Ye are of your Father the Devil; and my Sheeep hear my Voice; but you hear it not* (but are offended) *and therefore you are none of my Sheep*, that is, none of the Elect: And again saith Christ, *all that my Father giveth me, shall come to me*; Wherefore they that come not to Christ, but are offended at him, are not given to him of God, and consequently are Reprobates.

5. They that are offended at Christ, are utterly ruined through

through such offence: Wherefore Christ is called a Stone of stumbling, and Rock of offence to them that are disobedient and stumble at the Word; and he is said to be set for the Fall and Ruine of many in Israel; and Mat. 21, 44. Christ saith: *Whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.*

For whoever stumbles, or dashes against this Stone, dashes against God himself in the Nature of Man: He dashes against the Council and Decree of God, against the Wisdom and Understanding of God, against the Love, Mercy, Righteousness, Truth, and Power of God; against the eternal Word and Spirit of God; and no Man perishes like that Man: For he incurs all that Wrath, Vengeance, Destruction, Damnation, which the Lord God himself in all his infinite Wisdom, Knowledge, Righteousness, Justice, and Power, can inflict on him to all eternity, and so he is indeed ground to Powder.

Yea farther, that Man that stumbles against Christ, is not only ruined by such offence, but ruined without all Means or Hope of Recovery: They that are broken against him, and by him, are broken in Pieces like a Potters Vessel, which can never be made up again; they that fall against Him, never rise again; they that are ruined by him, are never repaired again. If a Man were dashed in Pieces by *Moses*, he might be repaired again by Christ; but he that is destroyed by the Saviour, by whom shall he be saved? He that was condemned by the Justice of God for Sin, might recover again by the Love and Mercy of God in Christ; but he that is destroyed by the Love and Mercy of God, is past all Hope and Remedy.

Wherefore I intreat you to consider this thing with all your Hearts: For nothing makes such ruines in the World as this Sin, Mens being offended against Christ
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and his Gospel. This is the Sin that ruined *Jerusalem* of old, and *Germany* of late; and if any thing undo this Commonwealth, this will undo it, the offence that is taken by mean Men, and by Men in Place and Authority against Christ and his Gospel.

And this is the Sin also that is like to undo and ruine the University, and to race it down to the very Ground, even your horrible Envy, Enmity, and Opposition to the Truth of the Gospel: When Christ's Word, or the Truth as it is in Jesus, is hated, opposed, derided and scoffed at in your Colledges, in your Schools, in your Meerings, yea sometimes in your Pulpits, this Sin will dash you in Pieces, that you shall find none to recover you. This Sin will engage against you the Son of the living God; and when his Wrath is kindled against you not a little, but to the very utmost, for so great wickedness, shall then, *Thomas*, and *Scotus*, and other Schoolmen with their cold, vain, and Antichristian Divinity help you? Or shall the Secular Arm, and worldly Power (whom you have seduced for many Ages) be able to shelter you in such an Hour? No certainly; but if you continue in your bitter Enmity against the true and spiritual Word and Gospel of Christ, Christ lives and reigns to bring you down wonderfully, and to make your Name a shame and a Curse to the whole true Church of God.

And this poor contemptible Doctrine of the Gospel which you hear to Day, and (it may be) most of you despise and esteem of no more than a straw for strength, this very Word shall prevail against you, and triumph over you: And the poor People of God, that small handful of believers that are amongst you, whom you despise in your Hearts, and reckon but as the filth and off-scouring of the Place, even they shall see your downfall, and shall say: *Thou art Righteous O Lord, who hast judged thus*; and shall say again: *Even so Lord God almighty, true and Righteous are thy Judgments.* And

And this now have I spoken in faithfulness to Jesus Christ, and in faithfulness to his true Church, and in faithfulness also to the University, that they might hear and avoid that Ruine which will otherwise inevitably befall them for their offence at Christ and his Gospel. And now let them that can receive it, receive it, and let them that cannot, deride and reject it. But whether you receive it, or whether you reject it, sure I am I have spoken the Truth, which God himself in his due Time will Witness to; and so much also for this Point.

The fourth: Point is

The blessedness of them that are not offended at Christ, according to Christs Word here.

Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.

Now those very few that are not offended at Christ and his things, when the whole World and worldly Church are offended, their blessedness appears in many particulars.

I. As first, in that its evident that *they all are taught of God, and have heard and learned from the Father* himself touching the Son. And they that see Christ by the Revelation of the Father, are not at all offended at him, when all other Men are. For such do clearly see Christs Power in his weakness; his Glory in his Reproach; his Exaltation in his Abasement; his divine Nature in his human; they see his Sufferings were for Sins, his Stripes to heal us, his Death, to deliver us from Death; and all this they know not only by the Word, but also by the Revelation of the Father in their Hearts, and so they cannot be offended at Christ who see him thus. Wherefore when the World and worldly Church had many several Opinions of Christ, and *Peter* notwithstanding acknowledged him to be the Son of the living God, Christ replied, *blessed art thou Simon, for Flesh and Blood hath not revealed this to thee, but my Father which is in Heaven*: And this is thy
blessedness,

bleffedness, that thou knowest me by the Revelation of the Father, and so knowest me aright, and art not offended.

He then that is not offended at Christ when all other Men are, hath for certain the Father's Teaching, and sees Christ far otherwise than the World and worldly Church do; he sees Christ in all his Mystery, and in all his Glory; and when we see him thus, we value him never the worse for the form of a Servant, nor for all his Reproaches and Sufferings from the World, but we rather behold these Things with the greater wonder and comfort; seeing for our sakes he humbled himself from the form of God, to the form of a Servant, and in that form to the Death of the Cross.

2. They are blessed, because through this Revelation of the Father they have true Faith in Christ wrought in them. For true Faith in Christ doth necessarily follow the Father's Revelation; and when God teaches us Christ, we must needs believe in him; and through this Faith we know him by Experience: And he that knows Christ through the Experience of Faith, finds and feels Christ to be all that to him, which the Scripture speaks of him: He through this Faith feels Christ to be made unto him of God Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, and all Things; and Christ being through Faith made all that to him, which he is in Himself, it is not possible he should be offended at him.

Farther, through this Experience of Faith, Christ becomes precious to him, as *Peter* saith 1 Pet. 2, 7. *To you who believe he is precious*: That very Christ, which to others is a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of Offence, is precious to them who have Faith, and know him by Experience; so precious, that they esteem all the greatest and most excellent Things in the World but dross and dung in comparison of Him: And such Believers have chosen to part with their Liberty, their Estates, their Relations, and their own Lives, all which are precious Things in themselves, rather than they would part with this infinitely more precious Christ.

3. They are blessed in that through this Faith they have establishment, as Christ saith: On this Rock I will build my Church. And he that hath Christ for his only Foundation, is never offended at him, whatever Scandals the World and the Devil raise up against him: But he that hath another Foundation than Christ, to wit, either his own Works and Righteousness, or the World and the Things of the World, when Scandals come, they are presently offended, and their Offence against Christ declares they are not built on him. But they whom nothing can offend, they are surely built and established on Christ, and in this they are blessed.

4. They who have received the Revelation of the Father, and through this Revelation have received true Faith, and through this true Faith, firm Establishment, are farther blessed, in

that all such are past perishing ; For he that cleaves so inseparably to Christ that nothing can offend him, and is so firmly built on Christ that nothing can remove him ; It is impossible for him to perish by any Thing : Wherefore it is said : *Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner Stone, Elect and precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded* : And Mat. 16. saith Christ : *On this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail.*

5. And last of all, they that have escaped the Offence of Christ, are sure of Salvation : For such do truly partake of all that infinite and everlasting Advantage that is by Christ ; they partake of his own Righteousness, and Wisdom, and Truth, and Power, and Nature, and Life, & Word, & Spirit ; & of all his fulness, and thus they have true possession of the beginnings of eternal Life, as *John* saith : *These things have I written to you that believe, that you may know ye have eternal Life abiding in you,* 1 *John* 5, 13. and Christ saith : *I give unto my Sheep eternal Life* ; that very Life which was in the Father, and was communicated to Christ, and manifest in his humane Nature.

And in all these Regards are they blessed that are not offended at Christ, as Christ affirms, *blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

And so now I proceed to some Uses.

5. The Uses.

1. To warn all Men of all sorts, that they take special care that they be not offended at Christ, and the Things of Christ ; You have heard that the World, and the wisest, and greatest of the World, and that the worldly Church, and the holiest and most religious in that are offended at Christ ; And you have heard also how great an Evil it is to be offended, and how great a blessedness it is not to be offended ; wherefore I do advise you from the Word, to take care that you be not found amongst them who are offended at Christ.

But you will be ready to say, *we hope we are not offended at Christ, but we do love, honour, and embrace both Christ and the Things of Christ.*

To this I answer, that many do usually say they are not offended at Christ, and it may be some may think so too, who yet indeed and before the Lord are grievously offended at him, as may thus appear, for :

1. First, he that is offended at the true Word of Christ, is offended at Christ himself ; for Christ is the Word, the Gospel Word, the Word that was with God, and was God, and came into the Flesh, and that spake, and did, and suffered, and overcame all in that Flesh ; and Christ said it was expedient for the Church, that he should withdraw his flesh or bodily Presence, and only continue that Presence of his with them, which is by the the living

ing Word of God through the Gospel ; and this is that Jesus Christ who is present with Believers to the End of the World.

And so he that is offended at the true spiritual Word, held forth by the Confession of Faith, is offended at Christ himself, who is present in that Word ; wherefore saith *Peter*, 1 Pet. 2, 8. *He is a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to them that stumble at the Word.* The most People adore the outward Name of Christ, but yet cannot endure the true Word of Christ. Now all that are offended at the true spiritual Word of Christ, and right Doctrine of the Gospel, are offended at Christ himself, and stumble at that stumbling Stone. And thus multitudes are offended at Christ, who do think themselves very free from this Sin.

2. They that are offended at true Believers, are offended at Christ himself. For they are in the World as he was, and walk as he did walk ; and they are one Flesh and Spirit with him ; they are his Members, they are himself ; and whosoever is offended at them, is offended at him. For Christ is the self same both in himself the Head, and in Believers his Members. And these are the Children of God, together with him the first born, and these are comprehended in the same Love, chosen with the same Choice, called with the same Calling, sanctified with the same Holiness, kept by the same Power, and glorified with the same Glory ; these partake of the same divine Nature, and have the same Word and Spirit dwelling in them, in the same Righteousness, Wisdom, Grace and Truth, and there is no difference between Christ and them, but what is between the Head and the Members, the first born and his Brethren. And so, they that are offended at these, would as certainly and necessarily be offended at Christ himself, if he had lived in their Time, or if they had lived in his Time.

It is manifest then that they who are offended at the Word of Christ, and at the Works of Christ, at the Nature and Life of Christ in Believers, would have been offended at them in Christ himself ; yea, they who are offended at Christ in Believers, would much more have been offended at Christ in himself ; because what is in a Christian but in Part, was fully in Christ ; and what is in a Christian in a small Measure, was in Christ without Measure ; and there was in Christ a far more glorious Presence and Manifestation of God, than in any Christian ; and proportionably would they have been offended at him in himself, who are truly offended at him in his Members.

3. They who are offended at the Sufferings which come on Christians for Christ's sake, are offended at Christ himself, because they suffer not on their own account, but on Christ's, and the Cross they take up and bear is his, and not their own. If they would live as other Men in the common Religion of the Nations,

and make use of the form of Godliness without the Power ; and comply with that Doctrine and Discipline which the Clergy shall allow for Orthodox, and the Magistrate accordingly approve and confirm ; then might they live as quietly and prosperously as other Men ; but because they cleave only to Christ, and take him for their only Master in the Things of God, and to receive his Word in Faith, and then hold it forth to others, therefore the World hates them, as Christ said : *I have given them thy Word, and the World hath hated them, because they are not of the World, as I am not of the World.*

Wherefore every true Christian who speaks and professes the Word of Faith, the Word which exalts Christ alone, and his Things, and throws down all other things of the World, though in the highest esteem with Men, must needs meet with his Enemies and Avengers, his Scribes and Pharisees, his *Herods* and *Pilates* : And now when the carnal Church which hath the Favour and Countenance of the State, sees poor Christians for the Word's sake suffering all the Hatred, Malice and Rage of the World and worldly Church, they are greatly offended at them ; and in being offended at them, they are offended at Christ himself ; for it is his Cause in which they suffer, and not their own ; and it is he who suffers in his Cause more than they ; as is evident by that complaint of his, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?* I say, as it is Christ, that is, and doth all in his true Saints, so also it is he that suffers all in them ; and they who are offended at these Sufferings of Believers, which they suffer in and for Christ, are offended at Christ himself.

And in these three Regards it doth plainly appear, that many who pretend to honour the outward Name of Christ, are yet indeed grievously offended at him.

2. The second Use is another Caution to warn all Men to take heed, as not to be offended themselves at Christ, so also not to be troubled nor offended with the Offences of others : But when we see the whole World and worldly Church offended at Christ and his Things, let us take care that we be not therefore offended also, but let us consider :

1. That it is no new Thing that Christ and his Gospel should be stumbled at, and contradicted by the World and worldly Church ; for thus it was foretold by the Prophets, and thus it hath been done ever since Christ was manifested in the Flesh. In the Days of his Ministry, his Doctrine was so contrary to carnal Reason, and the humane apprehensions of Men in matters of Religion, that many of his Disciples said, *this is a hard saying, who can bear it ?* Joh. 6. *Yea, many of his Disciples murmured at his Doctrine, and went back and walked no more with him.* And all along during

ing Christ's Ministry, many were snared, and stumbled, and fell, and were broken thereby; and he that is troubled and offended at this, must get him another Christ, and another Gospel; for the true Christ is set for a Sign to be spoken against, and the true Gospel is set for a Word of contention and contradiction to the carnal Christians, and to the whole World.

Wherefore when we see in our Time the World and worldly Church offended at Christ and his Gospel, let us know that thus it hath been from the beginning; and let us know that as Christ and his Gospel are the same now as they were then, so the World and Antichrist, and the Devil, the Head of both, are the same also; and therefore it cannot be but Christ and his Gospel must suffer the same contradiction in our Time, as they have done in all former times.

2. That we may not be offended with the common and general offence of others, let us consider that Christ and his Gospel are never the worse for the offence which the World takes at them, but Christ is still the Son of the living God, and the Gospel is still the Power of God to Salvation, to every one that believes, and Christ and his Word do still remain a sure Foundation for the true Church of God; That Christ crucified, which is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, is notwithstanding to them who believe, *Christ the Power of God, and Christ the Wisdom of God. 1 Cor. 1.* So that Christ is not the worse for the World's being offended at him, neither do the faithful think him the worse: Nay the more vile he is to others, he is still the more precious to them.

3. Let us consider that notwithstanding all the offence of Men, Christ and his Gospel still remain and continue what they are, and cannot be prevailed against. Men may be offended at Christ and his Word, but they cannot destroy and extinguish them, but they still remain, and do always prevail against all things that oppose them.

Wherefore, to deliver us from the scandal of all Mens being offended against Christ, we are to consider, that as all the World have been, are and will be against Christ, so Christ and his Kingdom shall rise up and increase against all the World, and against all their Thoughts and Endeavours; and all their Councils, Contrivances, and industrious Actings shall not be able to hinder the Kingdom of Christ from prospering and growing great; but it shall arise and stand up in all its Glory, out of the midst of all the offences and Contradictions in the World. Wherefore Christ and his Kingdom are called a tried Stone; for he hath long ago indured whatever the World and worldly Church could do against Him, and whatever the Might and Malice of Men and Devils

could do against him, and yet hath overcome all : All that have opposed Him have been dashed in pieces by him, in the several Ages of the World ; and he and his Kingdom still remain, and shall remain for ever ; For He is a sure tried Stone. And they in this Town and University, who are the most grievously offended at the Word, shall not by all their subtilty, Malice, Slanders, evil speaking, nor by any Things they can say or do, design or undertake, be able to prevail against it, but they must shortly die and depart out of the World, and in despite of them, leave this Word of God behind them, to live, and flourish, and overspread the World. And these considerations, if entertained by Faith, may keep us from being offended at the Offence of the whole World : And this for the second Use.

3. In the third Place, I shall shew you how Believers ought to carry themselves in the midst of those Offences that are taken against Christ, and against themselves for Christs sake, that is, for his Life and Doctrines sake.

1. First then, we ought to be careful to abide in Christ, and to walk in Christ ; to speak all our Words, and to do all our Works, and to live our whole Life in Christ, and in his Spirit, that so the World may not be offended at us who are nothing, and do nothing in ourselves, but as Christ in us, who is and doth all in us : And then as we shall certainly be established and preserved in Christ, through our abiding in him : So they shall as certainly perish and be ruined through his abiding in us, and their dashing against him in us.

2. To carry our selves aright in the midst of offences, let us be sure that the Word we believe and hold forth is Christs Word, and then we may be very confident that this Truth and cause shall and must remain, how many Adversaries soever it may have ; and though the World and Devil may rage against it, yet (as hath been said) they shall never be able to overthrow it, much less to root it out.

A true Christian must be able to say, I know the Word which I believe and profess, is the only Word of the Lord God, and his everlasting and unchangeable Truth, and the last manifestation of his will by his own Son ; and whatever Word agreeth not herewith, is false, and of the Devil, and Antichrist ; and therefore by this Word will I stay, though all the World be against me.

And when we are thus certain of the Word of God through Faith and the Spirit, it comforts the Heart and makes it glad, and settles it in inward Peace and Rest, in the midst of all outward Oppositions and Troubles as through Gods goodness we have found by Experience. For when we know that the Word which we have received and profess, is the very Doctrine of the Son of God,

then also we know that it shall prevail against all Kingdoms, Commonwealths, States, Governments, Societies, Universities, against all Laws, Orders, Decrees, Acts, and against all sorts and degrees of worldly and Ecclesiastical Powers which are contrary thereunto, and shall in the Time appointed by God utterly consume them, and bring them to nothing.

And by these Means, to wit, by abiding in Christ and being all in him; and by being sure that the Word we believe and profess, is his Word, we may live safely in the midst of all offences without the least prejudice.

4. *Lastly*, I shall speak a few Words to those in this University and Town who are offended at Christ and his Gospel; and also a few Words to those who (through the Grace of God) have escaped this offence, and so shall conclude this Matter.

And first, for you who are offended at Christ and his Word, which (we must needs say) is come amongst you in Truth, and in plainness, and are angry at it, and storm at it, and reproach it, and think and contrive how to resist it, and to hinder the free course and passage of it in this Place, because it is not only contrary to the Philosophical Divinity of the Schools, and University, and the common carnal Religion of the Nation, but doth also reprove and condemn them, and will have the haughtiness of Men bowed down, and the pride of Men laid low, and the Lord Jesus Christ and his Things only exalted, and that here where the Wit, and Wisdom, and Parts, and Learning, and Accomplishments of Men, have ruffled it, and reigned hitherto: I say you that are thus offended for this cause, are offended at Christ himself, and at God in Christ, and you do stumble at the stumbling Stone, and shall so fall thereby, as to be broken in Pieces; yea this Stone it self shall fall upon you, and shall grind you to Powder, and you shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power, and this Destruction shall be poured on you with the greatest Severity and Wrath, that God himself can inflict in all his Infiniteness and Eternity; for if (as the Penman of the Epistle to the Hebrews saith) *the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, what escaping can there be for them who neglect that great salvation, which was published at first by the Lord Christ, and after confirmed by the first believers, and witnessed to by Signs and Miracles, and gifts of the Spirit, by God himself? Heb. 2, 2. 3. 4.* and if (as the same Believer saith) *he that despised Moses Law, died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment shall he be guilty who treads underfoot the Son of God? &c.* And assuredly it had been much better for you, that you had lived among the Heathen and Pagans, where the Gospel of God our Saviour

Saviour had never been heard, than to hear this joyful sound which manifests the Love of God, and brings along with it Remission of Sins and the gifts of the Spirit, through Faith in Christ, and to be offended at it, and so to be destroyed by the Word of Salvation, and to be immediately punished with eternal death by him who is the true God and eternal Life. And this is the heavy burden which the Word of the Lord hath laid on your Shoulders, and you cannot remove it.

2. And then for you true Believers, you little Flock, you few chosen out of the many called, who hear the Word of Christ and are not offended at it, though you hear it everywhere, and that with both Ears in this University and Town, contradicted, misreported, reproached, scandalized, and called Error, Heresie, new Light, Faction, Schism, Seditions, and hear all manner of evil spoken against it falsely, not only by the rude and ignorant People, but also by the Scribes and Pharisees and Hypocrites of this Place, and yet for all these offences you are not offended at it, but own it, and love it, and imbrace it, notwithstanding all the extream disadvantages it hath from this Place, which is counted by carnal People the very Fountain of Religion and the Ministry, knowing by God's own teaching, that it is the Word of Righteousness and Life, and the Truth as it is in Jesus, though contrary to the sense of the University and Schools, who have generally their teaching from Man; to all such, I say by the Word of the Lord, blessed are ye, of the blessed of the Lord, for you are all taught of God touching Christ, and have heard and learned the Son from the Father, and through this teaching you have true Faith in Christ, and so know him by Experience, whereupon Christ is most precious to you; and through this Faith you are established on Christ so that nothing from Earth or Hell can remove you: And being so established through Union with Christ, you can no more perish, and you shall as certainly be saved as Christ is saved.

This is your blessedness from the Lord; and the World and the Devil shall never be able to make it void; and therefore go and eat your Bread with cheerfulness, and lie down and rise and live in safety under the Shadow of the Almighty, though in this World, and in this Place, you dwell among Bears and Lyons, and have your Conversation in the midst of Scorpions; for Christ himself hath blessed you in himself, and you shall be blessed for ever; *Blessed is he who-soever shall not be offended in me.*

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