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T O T H E

Rev. Mr *BAINBRIGGE*,

Rector of *WALTON*.

S I R,

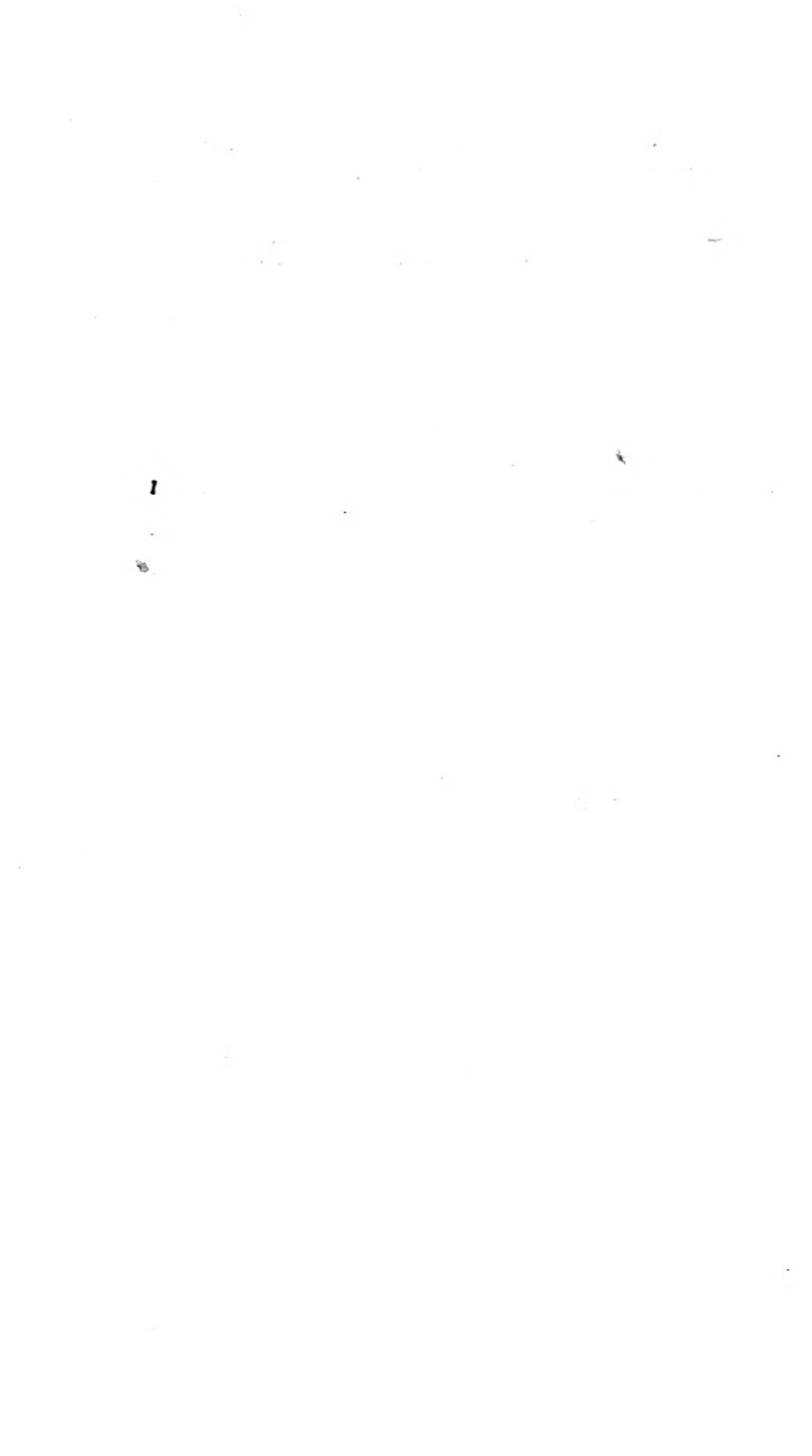
AS I have had the pleasure of an intimate and uninterrupted acquaintance with you for a great many years; and often received advantage in my literary pursuits and inquiries by your judicious remarks and observations, which I have heard in the many hours conversation we have had together upon various subjects; I have taken the liberty of inscribing the following Treatise to you.—And I beg that you would be pleased to look upon this as a testimony of gratitude and friendship from,

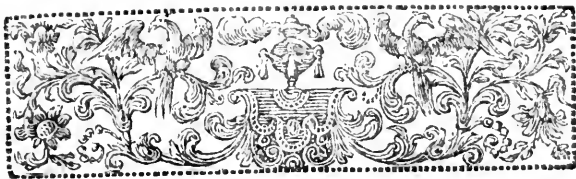
S I R,

Your most Obedient

Humble Servant,

Thomas Green.





T H E

P R E F A C E.



Considerable part of what is contained in the following sheets was drawn up some time ago with a design to be inserted in a larger Work ; the chief intention of which was to promote peace and unity in the church of Christ, and especially amongst ourselves ; (an undertaking which I was induced to set about by the particular situation I was in ; having the care of a parish where various divisions from the established church have long prevailed).

But as *Entbusiasm*, or a false pretence to the SPIRIT, has of late made a great progress in this nation by the increase of those who are called *Methodists*, *Moravians*, *Mystics*, and the like ; as is the case in this part of the country in particular ; (where we have lately had a me-

a

lancholy

lancholy proof of its dangerous effects on a person, who in a fit of despair stabbed himself to the heart, after he was become a follower of those new teachers set up amongst us). I thought it might therefore be of some use to publish this treatise by itself. It is chiefly the result of observations made at several times, as occasion offered, and upon consulting many of the most eminent authors upon this subject; with some of whose useful and judicious sentiments several readers will by this means become better acquainted than otherwise they might have been. And in speaking about some things of an uncommon nature, I was willing to strengthen my own opinion with the best authorities I could meet with.

As *Euthusiasm* is destructive to the cause of true religion, and has been oftentimes the occasion of much disorder, and confusion in states and kingdoms; and as our own nation has formerly greatly suffered by it, discourses of this nature are at present the more necessary; and the best way will be to endeavour to prevent the disorder, or remove it, before it becomes dangerous. The *cloud*, which at first appeared only as *a man's hand*, increased we find so fast, that the heavens became black immediately, and a *great storm* ensued, 1 *Kings* xviii. 44.

Though

Though there have been several judicious treatises lately published on this subject; yet as this takes in a greater variety, or more particulars than any I have met with; I hope it may on that account be the more generally useful.

By giving a full description of *Enthusiasm* in its several parts and branches, and shewing by a variety of instances in what manner it has appeared, not only in the Christian but also in the Heathen world, amongst *Jews* also and *Mahometans*; persons may by the marks here laid down be the better enabled how to discover and avoid it.

I have taken notice in a brief manner of most of the distinguishing tenets of our modern *Enthusiasts*; and been a little more full upon the points of *Justification by Faith*, and their notions of *conversion, regeneration, and absolute assurance of Salvation*.

And as there are several amongst us, who, (though they are not run into any dangerous excesses of *Enthusiasm*) are yet persuaded, that their teachers have extraordinary gifts or assistances from the Spirit, by which they are enabled to pray and preach in an *extemporary* manner, or without premeditation; which opinion lays them more open to the delusions of *Enthusiasm*, or being imposed upon by bold pretenders; and is also one great occasion of divisions in the

church of *Christ*; I thought it necessary to take this point into consideration.

As to a more full inquiry into the proper *qualifications* of the Ministers of the gospel, and the *commission* by which they ought to be sent; with the particular advantage of well-composed forms in Public Worship; and studied Discourses for the better instruction of the People; the great duty of UNITY, and hurtfulness of DIVISIONS, with a great many other particulars not necessary to be mentioned here; all this was intended to be comprized in the larger Work spoken of before; some parts of which at least, I may perhaps hereafter (if God permit) venture to make public for the better information of the common rank of mankind, and in order to promote Peace and the good of Religion in general.

The more fully to have compleated this inquiry concerning *Enthusiasm*, or false pretences to the *Spirit*; I intended to have added a *Dissertation* on the several other sorts of miraculous powers still claimed by many, more especially by the church of *Rome*; on the agreement betwixt Popery and Paganism in point of Miracles; the superstitious application made to Saints and Angels for miraculous assistance; and the wonderful virtue attributed to Relics, Images, and the like;—with a few observations concerning

cerning the cessation of *Miraculous Powers* in the primitive church.—But I omitted this part of my design (tho' nearly finished) as it would have swelled this treatise to a larger size than was proper.

As I have taken particular notice of those called *Methodists*, I thought that the best way of giving a true account of the *Moravians* (a sect lately risen amongst us) would be by setting down some Extracts from Mr *Rimius's Candid Narrative* of their Rise and Progress, lately published, and dedicated to his Grace the Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*; and also from another piece of his, intitled, *A solemn Call to Count Zinzendorf*, author and advocate of that sect; wherein he calls upon him to answer the particular charges brought against them in the *Narrative*.

We have good reason to rely on the accounts given by this author concerning their doctrines and practices, as he mentions several things from his own knowledge; and he all along refers to their own writings for most of what he says. I have interspersed some Remarks and Observations of my own in the Extracts; and also taken notice of some pleas and apologies lately made in defence of this sect, and of some doctrines which they seem to value themselves upon.

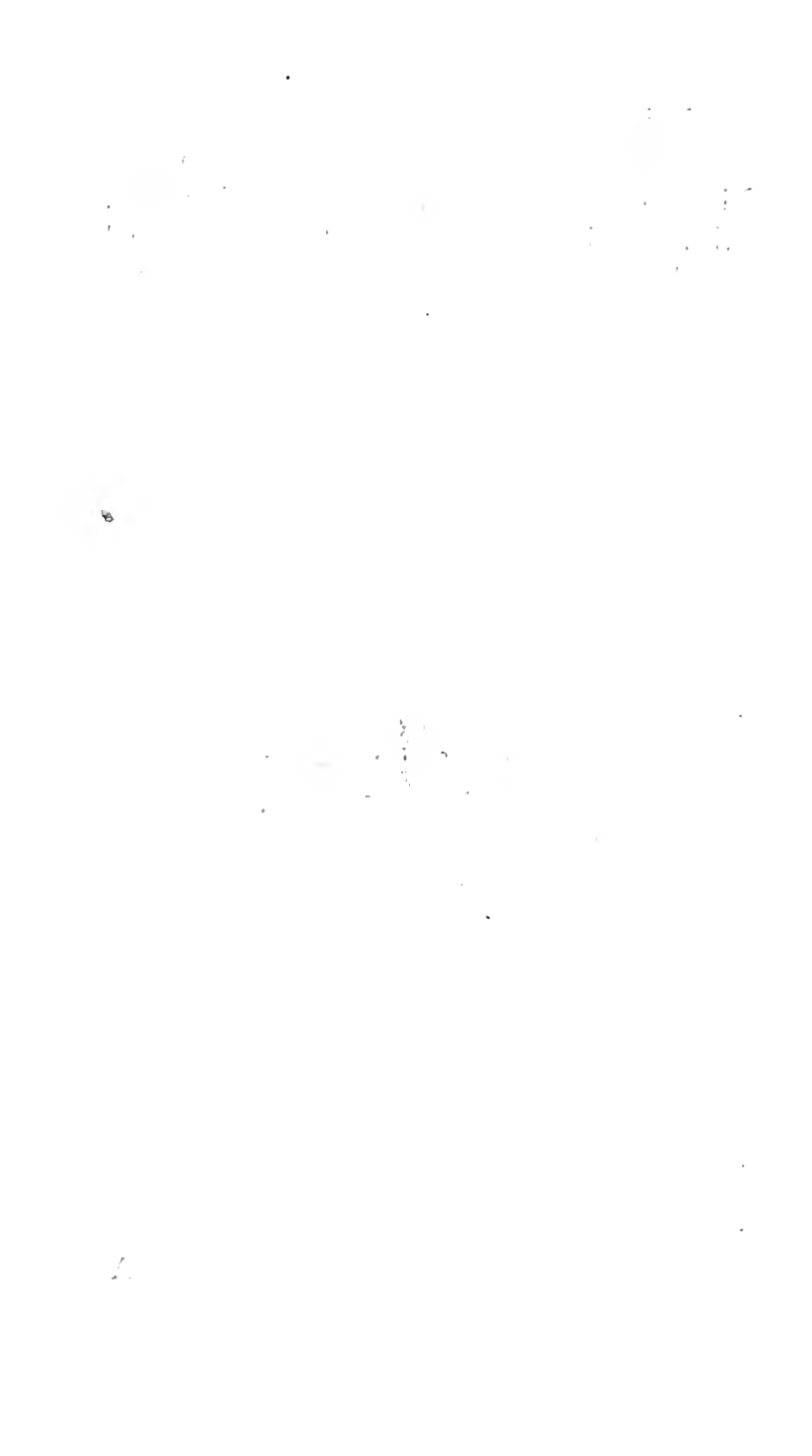
It was far from my intention to provoke any sect or party of men by any thing that is offered in the following treatise, or to misrepresent their notions and practices. My great design was to inform and persuade, and bring them in some things to a more sober mind and better judgment, and to be esteemed their friend for telling them what I looked upon as truth; and putting them in a way of establishing their peace and comfort upon good and sure foundations.

I have endeavoured to express myself in as plain and easy a manner as I could, to make this piece the more generally useful; and if there be some things in it not very intelligible to the common readers, they must impute this in a good measure to the nature of the subject, and the strange notions which some *Enthusiasts* have lately broached.

If I had kept it longer by me it might have come out perhaps a little better finished in some particulars, but I thought the sooner it was published, the more useful it might be in helping to put a stop to the present increase of *Enthusiasm*.—And I beg that the whole may not be condemned upon account of some smaller slips or mistakes which may have happened through haste or inadvertency.

If it prove of any real service in promoting the cause of truth, peace, and pure religion, (as I hope it may) the satisfaction arising from thence will be a recompence for the pains and trouble I have been at.





A

T A B L E

O F T H E

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A P P E N D I X.

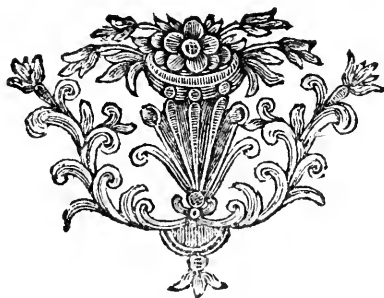
THE sect of the *Moravians* of a late date;—no branch of the ancient *Moravian* church,—owes its rise to Count *Zinzendorf*, who looks upon his self as the head of it, and has sent his fellow-labourers throughout the world, 17, &c.

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- called the Lamb's or Saviour's chest, to which every one who becomes a brother is expected to contribute; this enables them to carry on their several undertakings, Page 190, 191
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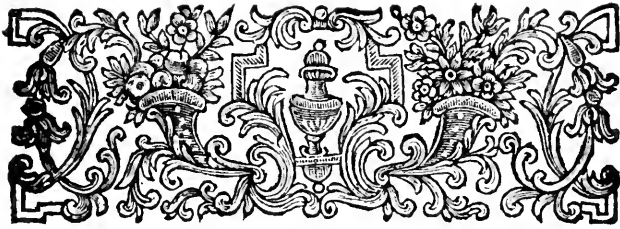
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E R R A T A.

- P**AGE 13, Line 7, for *still* read *shall*.
 Page 73, Line 5, for *loving* read *living*.
 Page 82, Line 2, read *a mixture of this kind of Enthusiasm with their hypocrisy*.
 Page 111, Line 5, read *of Felix*.
 Page 124, Line 22, for *besieged* read *be seized*.
 Page 141, Line 4, for *certainly* read *certainty*.
 Page 175, Line 25, for *attempting* read *attaining*.





O N

ENTHUSIASM.

CHAP. I.

An examination into the pretences of those who lay claim to immediate calls, revelations, gifts in preaching, and other extraordinary assistances of the Spirit, &c.



IN order to avoid mistakes about *spiritual assistances*, we must in reading the scripture carefully distinguish between the *extraordinary* or *special*, and the *ordinary* or common operations of the *Spirit*: The former consisted in immediate revelations from God, and miraculous powers which were necessary when the gospel was first preached; but when this was sufficiently confirmed and established in the world, and the Canon of Scripture completed and left to the church as a rule, or full direction for our *faith* and practice, extraordinary *gifts* of the Spirit then ceased, as being no longer necessary for the use of *believers*.

B

But

But the *common* assistances of the Spirit God has promised to bestow on all faithful christians to the end of the world; in order to enable them to *will, and to do of his good pleasure,*—and to *fill them with all joy and peace in believing.*

Now as the apostles and other persons truly inspired were indued with the power of working miracles, as a proof of the divine authority of their doctrines,—*God bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost,* Heb. ii. 4.—All those, who now lay claim to immediate revelations, or any extraordinary *mission*, must prove it by miracles; or else we are not bound to believe them, but may conclude that *the word is not in them,* Jer. v. 13.—Without this evidence all their pretences of this kind are only downright *enthusiasm*, or a dangerous imposition upon the ignorant; who by that means are oftentimes drawn into many errors, before they can distinguish *what spirit* their teachers are *led by.*

We must be careful then not to look upon our own private fancies as divine inspirations; or mistake the suggestions of a heated imagination for an extraordinary illumination of the Spirit.—We must not dare to make so free with that adorable name, or impute our imperfect conceptions to the *Spirit of wisdom.*—This is a dangerous self-deceit, and hath often been the occasion of much confusion both in church and state. *No prophecy of the scripture,* we read, *is of any private interpretation,* 2 Pet. i. 20. or rather of the private suggestion of the prophets themselves; that is, holy men of God did never speak what they thought good of their own incitation or motion, or *run without being sent*; but they were always sure that they had a particular mission and appointment from God; and *spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost* *.

As

* See Dr Hammond on the text.

As *lying to the Holy Ghost* is a grievous sin, Acts v. 3. So the reporting things as coming from the *blessed Spirit*, which do not proceed from him, or even tend to dishonour him, must be a very dangerous offence.—When persons are possessed with a strong opinion that they have an extraordinary assistance, it may so heat the fancy, as to make them imagine that whatever they say proceeds from a divine power; and this groundless presumption has made many run into great extravagancies both in opinion and practice, give false and dangerous interpretations of scripture, and very much deceive themselves, by *imagining themselves to be something, when they are nothing*, Gal. vi. 3.

“ Every opinion that settles itself strongly upon
 “ their fancies is an *illumination* from the Spirit of
 “ God, and presently of divine authority; and
 “ whatever odd action they find in themselves an
 “ inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to
 “ be a call or direction from heaven, and must be
 “ obeyed*.” And those, who thus think themselves
 enlightened far above others, labour under this
 misfortune, either not to listen to any thing that is
 said against their opinions; or to look upon the
 arguments which they cannot answer, only as “ a
 “ piece of *human sophistry*, and prefer their own
 “ infallibility of spirit before all carnal reasonings
 “ whatsoever.—Tho’ to exclude the use of reason
 “ in search of divine truth is no dictate of the *Spi-*
 “ *rit*, but of headstrong melancholy, and blind
 “ enthusiasm †.”

Persons may have strong impulses of mind in a
 wrong cause or a false religion, as has often been
 the case with heretics, infidels and heathens.—
Paul before his conversion *verily thought* with him-

B 2 self,

* *Locke's Essay*, Vol. II. ch. 10. B. 4. of *Enthusiasm*.

† See Dr. *More* on *Enthusiasm*, Sect. vi.—and preface to his
Essay on the three first chapters of Genesis.

self, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of *Jesus Christ*, Acts xxvi. 9. — Amongst christians we find different parties obstinately maintaining quite different opinions with an infallible kind of assurance. — And no doubt but several amongst the *papists* are fully persuaded that they do *God service*, John xvi. 2. by violently persecuting those whom they call *heretics*. — An inward persuasion of mind then, unless it be founded on a fair and strict examination, rational grounds, and good evidence, is no safe rule of action; and we must be careful, “not to entertain any proposition with
 “greater assurance than the proofs it is built upon
 “will warrant*.” And this care is a necessary step to true *sincerity*; the meaning of which word many have been apt to mistake or misrepresent. — As it is no excuse for those, who are hurried on with a kind of violence and impetuosity in wrong courses, and *delight to do evil*, to plead their natural inclinations in vindication of their actions; — so in all our other pursuits, even in those of a religious kind, we are to be upon our guard, and try our proceedings by the rules of reason and the word of God, in order to prevent our falling into any dangerous errors, through the strength of our passions and imaginations. The warmth or fervour, which may sometimes arise in the mind, is not to be looked upon as a demonstration, that our opinions or designs are right, — as persons of very different persuasions have been affected in the same manner; and those also, who have promoted opinions very erroneous; and a zeal without knowledge commonly makes persons more vigorous than ordinary in propagating their favourite notions. — Zeal of itself is nothing but a natural warmth of disposition; which without due care may lead persons into hurtful and
 pernicious

* *Locke's essay*, Vol. II. ch. 19.

pernicious practices; as is evident from the sense in which the word is sometimes used in scripture*. Our zeal then, to make it truly commendable and religious, must not only be well designed, but we must take the best care we can, that it be also *according to knowledge*; for this end we must diligently search the scriptures, which are *given by the inspiration of God*, and ground our *zeal* on the doctrines and directions there plainly delivered.—Where the imagination is more active and powerful than the judgment, many things which have the appearance of religion, will oftentimes be too readily admitted as truths. Even religious and good men may have been sometimes imposed upon, or led into mistakes, by taking their own private fancies for divine admonitions or instructions.

A pious martyr of the primitive church gives us an account of some *visions* of his, or revelations concerning things, which do not appear to be of importance enough to require such kind of extraordinary directions; or in cases where there seems to be no necessity for them †. “Considering his
“ character in other respects, it would be dealing
“ too severely with him (as a learned writer ob-
“ serves) to ascribe this intirely to artifice and po-
“ licy, and it would be more candid and charitable,
“ to suppose, that with much *piety* he had a mixture
“ of *African enthufiasm*; and that what he thought
“ upon in the day he dreamed of at night, and
“ so took his dreams for divine admonitions §.”

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* Vid. Leigh's Crit Sac. in verb. Ζηλος.

† Vid. Cypr. Ep. 63. ad Cæcil. where he seems to speak of *divine admonitions* about *mixing wine and water in the sacramental cup*.

§ Mr Fortin's remarks on Eccl. Hist. Vol. II. p. 299.—Thus Pliny was said to be admonished by a *dream*, to write his history of the wars of Germany. vid. Plin. Ep. l. iii. Ep. v.

The safest way then must be to be governed by holy scripture, and it is happy for us, that we have this perfect rule always ready to try our opinions and conduct by* ; and it is one great excellency of the established church, that she never was directed by private visions and revelations, but stuck wholly to the rule of faith laid down in scripture.

As God has not only given us reason, but scripture also for our direction, we must beg of him to assist us by his divine grace in the proper use of those means ; that we may receive *the knowledge of the truth*, and be enabled *to will and to do of his good pleasure*.—This blessed influence we are taught to pray for and expect, but we must not (as some would have us) look for “ extraordinary impulses “ on the mind, particular revelations and admonitions from heaven, to direct us in our public “ and private conduct.—Or for such effective motions upon the soul, that it cannot reject, or any “ ways doubt but that they are supernatural or divine ; — for an *oracle* in the breast, by the residence of the *divine Spirit* there, to be consulted “ on all occasions, as the *Jews* inquired of God “ in their special exigencies.—Or for an extraordinary acquaintance with God, whereby persons “ become after an inexpressible manner partakers “ of the *divine nature* ; yea, one spirit and one “ will with him.”—All this and much more to the same purpose, is taught in what they call the *mystical divinity* §.

This scheme of religion, (which I shall say something more about by and by) has been very much promoted

* Verbum est organum quo Spiritus sui illuminationem fidelibus Dominus dispensat. *Calv. Inj. i. l. v. cap. 9.*

§ See a book called *Theologia Mystica*, or two discourses concerning divine communications, printed 1697. See also *Catech. on Enthusiasm*, ch. iii. p. 149, &c.

promoted by several of the church of *Rome* †, and has been lately taken up and enlarged by some persons amongst ourselves enthusiastically inclined.

Now, as many persons who have made very high pretences to religion, and the favour of God, have been led into groundless confidences, and mistaken their own fond imaginations, or natural fervour of mind, for divine impulses, (as has been the case in particular of most enthusiasts) every sober christian should take warning from hence, and be the more cautious in these respects.—In any doubts or difficulties, in regard either to their spiritual or temporal affairs, they will put up their petitions to God, and desire of him to *enlighten* their understandings, and direct their choice; and after using the best means in their power to be rightly informed, they will proceed to action; not upon an absolute certainty, that what they are going to do is right, but upon a well-grounded probability.—And all faithful christians upon a review of their lives and undertakings, will find abundant reason to return God thanks for hearing their prayers, preserving them from several dangers and misfortunes, and directing or influencing their minds in the choice of such things as have tended to their true benefit and advantage.

But we have no direction in the word of God, to desire or expect from him *extraordinary signs* from heaven for determining our doubts; this may be considered as a kind of tempting God; and persons who have such expectations lay themselves open to mistakes and delusion; “ they will be in
“ danger of being imposed upon by the warmth
“ of their own imaginations, especially if they be
“ wrought up to a strong desire and expectation

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“ of

† See Bishop *Stillingfleet* on the *fanaticism* of the church of *Rome*, Sect. 14, 15.

“ of an extraordinary *sign* from heaven, in favour
 “ of a design which they heartily wish should
 “ succeed.—And it is not to be wondered that a
 “ mind thus prepared should be disposed to inter-
 “ pret any incident that should happen, in favour
 “ of its own prepossessions*.

But let us proceed to consider more particularly the case of those who are fully persuaded in their own minds, that they have an extraordinary commission from God to declare his will to the world.—Now supposing this, yet how can they reasonably expect to persuade others to believe them; unless, like the prophets and apostles of old, they are enabled to work miracles;—without this power, any revelation must be looked upon, at most, to be but of a private nature, and to reach no farther than to themselves.—When *Moses* was sent to bring his brethren out of bondage, though he was assured in his own mind, that his commission was from God, by the wonders he beheld; and had a sufficient token given him, that God was with him, *Exod.* iii. 3, 12.—Yet he does not think this enough for the conviction of his brethren, who might deny that the Lord appeared to him, *Exod.* iv. 1. till God gave him a power to work miracles amongst them.—And *Gideon* desired that the Lord would shew him a sign or miracle, to be the more satisfied *that he talked with him*, *Judg.* vi. 17, 37.—When *Elijah* had raised the widow's son from the dead,—“ *By this*, says she, *I know that thou art a man of God*, “ *1 Kings* xvii. 24.”

Whenever

* Dr *Leland* (in his *View of the principal deistical writers*) observes, concerning Lord *Herbert's* desiring a sign from heaven, to satisfy him about publishing his book *De Veritate*, which sign he imagined was given him, p. 467, &c.—It is a wonder indeed, to find that a person, who expected a *private revelation*, should be an enemy to the public and standing revelation of God in scripture.

Whenever then God sends his prophets or messengers on extraordinary occasions, he will also enable them to prove their mission by miracles, and we have a right to demand this test of them; and without this, whatever claim any persons make to immediate calls and inspiration, we may conclude that their pretences are false and imaginary. One mark of *Mahomet's* being an impostor, was his pretence of having revelations from God without the power of miracles to confirm what he taught; so that to those who said, that they would not believe in him unless they saw him work some miracle, he was commanded to reply, as he assures us, "That he was only sent to preach the word.†" And we may just observe indeed that in case miracles are now pretended to be wrought in confirmation of the truth of what is taught, we must try the doctrines by what is plainly delivered in scripture; and if they disagree with that rule, we may conclude that both the doctrines and miracles are false.

As all truths necessary to salvation are already revealed and confirmed in scripture, and we are not to expect any new doctrines. *Gal. i. 8.* What reason can we have to think that the things there plainly declared should be revealed again to us? This seems quite needless.—And indeed when persons pretend to any kind of miraculous powers or inspirations, without a very evident necessity, we have the greatest reason to suspect that such declarations are impositions on mankind, or the effects of an enthusiastic imagination.

St Paul bids *Timothy* commit the things which he had heard of him to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also, *2 Tim. ii. 2.* He does not refer them to the inward teachings or communications of the Spirit for those things, which were already known

† Alcoran, chap 13 and 17.

known and might be learnt by common means.— And we find that *Apollos*, an eloquent man and *mighty in the scriptures*, who being *fervent in the Spirit*, spake and taught *diligently the things of the Lord*, had yet *the way of God more perfectly expounded to him by Aquila and Priscilla*, Acts xviii. 24.—So eminent a preacher had not that knowledge immediately revealed to him, which he had an opportunity of attaining by ordinary means; thus we see that extraordinary revelations were not; even in the apostles times, exercised without necessity. And we have no need of them now to teach us what the holy scriptures plainly declare to all.

If persons pretend to find out the true sense of scripture by the help of *immediate revelation*; the different opinions maintained by several, who pretend to such extraordinary assistances, shew how little credit is to be given to them upon that account; and how far they are from clearing up difficult passages in scripture, or determining *contraversies of faith*.

As the scriptures were given by divine inspiration, and are the standard of true religion, by them we are still indeed *taught of God*, John vi. 45.—“By them, as a learned writer observes, the prophetic promise of our Saviour, *that the Comforter should abide for ever*, was eminently fulfilled. For though according to the promise his ordinary influence occasionally assists the faithful in all ages; yet his constant abode and supreme illumination is in the sacred scriptures of the New Testament.*”

It was necessary that most of the first teachers of the gospel should be assisted with immediate directions from the *Spirit*, before the *rule of faith* was perfected in a collection of the apostolic writings; after this there was no need for the same kind of
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* Dr *Warburton's* Sermons, Vol. I. p. 224.

extraordinary assistance, as persons were to have recourse to and be directed by the *sacred canon*.— Hence then we see how groundless the pretences of modern *fanatics* are, who claim as high degrees of divine communications, as if there was no compleat *rule of faith* in being.— “ They read the history of
 “ the spiritual dispensations in old times; they look
 “ with wonder on the privileges and powers enjoyed
 “ by those chosen vessels; their imaginations grow
 “ heated, they forget the difference between the
 “ present system of things and the past; they seem
 “ to feel the impressions they see recorded; and
 “ they assume the behaviour and mimic the authority of prophets and apostles. † ”

We must therefore *search the scriptures* with diligence and sincerity; begging of God that he *would open our understandings that we may understand them*, —and making those words of our Saviour the general introduction to our public instructions, namely, *Thus it is written*, Luke xxiv. 45, 46.— The *Spirit* is not so properly our *rule*, as he is a necessary guide to enable us to walk by *the rule* laid down in holy scripture. As we have *Moses* and the prophets, *Christ* and his apostles, still preaching to us, let us *bear them*, and those who fetch their instructions evidently out of the inspired writings: And not expect extraordinary revelations to teach us knowledge, or persons *from the dead to convert sinners*, Luke xvi. 30. as this would be to multiply miracles without any real necessity. — Besides, a persuasion of being immediately instructed by the Spirit may induce persons to pay the less regard to God’s written word; — and some may be tempted to reject it by relying on the imagined *illuminations* or *light* in their own mind as a sufficient rule.

All faithful christians are still to hope and pray for the divine assistance (as the scripture directs them)

† Dr Warburton, *ib.* p. 253.

them) to enable them to perform their duty, and *to enlighten the eyes of their understanding*, Eph. i. 18:—And nothing is more contrary to truth, than to represent the church of *England* (as some do) as not paying a proper regard to the assistance of the Spirit;—the contrary being plain from almost every prayer in her public service, wherein the *divine grace* is acknowledged and desired: Thus we beg of God, “That as by his special grace preventing
 “us he doth put into our minds good desires, so
 “by his continual help we may bring the same to
 “good effect.—That by his holy *inspiration* we
 “may think those things that be good, and by his
 “merciful guiding perform the same.—That he
 “would send his holy Spirit to comfort us, and
 “assist us in our way to heaven.—Cleanse the
 “thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of his
 “holy Spirit,”—and the like*.——This is so evident a truth, that some persons inclined to the *mystical divinity* have affirmed, that the church of *England* agrees even with them in their notions about the guidance and operations of *the Spirit* †.

As God can easily enlighten our understandings by his immediate direction; so no doubt can be made, but that new thoughts and counsels are sometimes inspired into the soul by the silent whispers of the divine Spirit, or *still small voice of God* ‖. But then these spiritual communications cannot be clearly and absolutely distinguished from the operations of our own minds; and our Saviour compares them to the *wind*, whose sound we hear, but cannot tell whence it cometh, *John* iii. 8.—So that though the Spirit may produce great and good effects

* Collect for *Easter-Sunday* — for 5th *Sunday* after *Easter*— for *Sunday* after *Ascension-Day*—first collect in communion office.—See the 13th and 16th articles of religion.

† See *Theolog. Mystic*. Disc. II. p. 20, &c.

‖ Concerning divine influences or impressions on the mind, See *Wallaston's Religion of Nature*, S.V. Prop. xviii. p. 106, &c.

effects in us, and we are in no doubt about his *in-dwellings* and operations; yet we cannot say, that such a *particular* thought or opinion was owing to his immediate direction, and so deliver it as a *divine oracle*.—The gospel gives assurance to all faithful christians, that *through the power of the Spirit they still abound in hope, and be filled with joy and peace in believing*.—These and the like fruits or influences of the Spirit will be always necessary in the church of Christ; and they are indeed as much from God as what we call the extraordinary *gifts* of the Spirit; but they are not given us for the same ends, but only as necessary helps for *working out our own salvation* along with our best endeavours.—The gifts which we are now to expect are the sanctifying and *saving* graces of the Spirit; *good desires* put into our hearts and pious affections.—*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith*, Eph. v. 22, 23. That spiritual assistance which enableth us *to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present life*, is more valuable to us than the extraordinary *gifts* of the Spirit, by which persons were enabled to work miracles; which were not so much given for their own private benefit as for that of others, and to confirm the truth of the gospel in general.—Thus our Lord declares, that the *voice from heaven* came not, *because of him*, but for the *sake of the people who stood by*, John xii. 30. And we find that some persons might be in possession of miraculous gifts without *working out their own salvation*.

Our Saviour tells us, that to many who should plead at the last day, that they had done *wonderful works* in his name, he should answer, *I never knew you* (or approved of you as true disciples) *Depart from me, ye that work iniquity*, Matt. vii. 22, 23. — So that we find those gifts were sometimes given to the *evil as well as the good*, and did not necessarily

rily secure their salvation.—They were but mere instruments, and contributed themselves no more to the wonderful things done than the bones of *Elisba*, 2 Kings xiii. 21. or the *handkerchiefs or aprons* brought from the apostle, *Acts* xix. 12.

From the history of *Balaam*, Numb. xxii. 2 Pet. ii. 15. it also is evident, that without the true sanctifying influences of the *Spirit* upon the heart persons may be in possession of extraordinary gifts; a point that ought to be seriously considered by all those who now imagine that they have such gifts, lest they miss of salvation.

When the *seventy* returned with joy, saying, *Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name.*—He tells them, *Rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven*, Luke x. 17, 20.—And *St Paul*, speaking of the several miraculous gifts of the Spirit, and directing the disciples to desire the *best gifts*, yet declares (for the comfort and satisfaction of those who had not *miraculous gifts* imparted to them) that he would shew *them a more excellent way*, 1 Cor. xii. 31. which was that of *charity* or christian love;—a virtue, which all true christians may, and are obliged to practise; and without which the most excellent of the miraculous powers would signify nothing to those who possessed them, 1 Cor. xiii. 1.—which lets us see how far the *saving gifts* of the Spirit exceed the miraculous ones. We may be very well content then to be without the latter, if we are blessed with the other; which will lead all persons, who make a proper use of them, to eternal happiness;—those we must then constantly pray for, and we are assured that they will be bestowed upon us.—Thus much I thought proper to say in order to prevent complaining; or that christians may not think that they are now deprived of any gospel privileges necessary to their salvation; or that God's goodness is less evident

to us now, than it was to the *primitive christians*. How far the Spirit may assist persons in all their good designs and undertakings, and in what particular manner he does it, we cannot exactly determine; but as it is God that *worketh in us*, we must always remember to give him praise and glory.—However, in regard to the spiritual assistance afforded to the *ministers* of the gospel, *they* may certainly expect as good a share of it, who with due preparation and study compose religious discourses before they deliver them to the people, as those persons who speak without this care or premeditation.

And here it will not be improper to make some observations on those extraordinary gifts in *preaching and prayer*, which some persons are thought to be endowed with.

By the help of a good memory, quick invention, and a fluency of speech, which is *natural* to many, they may be able to preach and pray *extempore*, or without much premeditation; as well as to speak readily on several other subjects where no miraculous power is pretended to. If this readiness of speech was to be met with only in speaking on religious subjects, there would be the better pretence for looking on it as an extraordinary *gift*, but this is not the case;—and by use and study persons may much improve themselves in this manner of speaking*. So that amongst those who are trained up and exercised this way in order to fit them for the ministry, what they say, or is reckoned a *gift* by some, is evidently the effect of art and study; and can no more be attributed to the immediate assistance of the Spirit than what is written down.—And it is observed of those, who pray or preach *without book*, as well as of other orators, that they do not

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* See Bishop *Wilkins's* two discourses of the *gift of prayer and preaching*; where he shews how far it is attainable by industry, and gives several directions to that purpose.

go on with that fluency at first as they do afterwards; and this we must attribute to a *natural* cause: If they had the extraordinary assistance of *the Spirit*, and it was he that *helped their infirmities*, affording a supply of words and matter, their discourse must be equally fluent throughout, without hesitation, interruption, or any other deficiency. — Even some persons, though ignorant and unlearned, by diligently listening to others, if they have a good memory, and several scripture *phrases* ready, may in time, and by frequent practice, attain to what some persons reckon a great *gift* in prayer and preaching.

Preaching without book is practised by many in the established church, who do not pretend to any greater *spiritual* assistance than their brethren. — And it is the usual method in the church of *Rome*, where we are told many perform it with a kind of enthusiastic rapture, with such loud exclamations and strange tone of voice, that they even terrify several of their auditors*. And it has been given out that the virgin *Mary* has sometimes suggested every word to the preacher; this is reported of some of the *Dominicans*: Also in sharing the gifts and graces of God (which the *Monks* have done amongst themselves) they have boldly appropriated to their own order the *gift of preaching*, styling themselves the *preaching brothers*; though a person, who frequently heard them, informs us, that he had scarce found any more unsuccessful than themselves in this part of the ministerial duty †.

A readiness of utterance in preaching, accompanied with the appearance of great zeal, are of themselves no sure marks of extraordinary spiritual assistance;

* This is most peculiar to the *Capuchins*. See the *frauds of Romish Monks*. By *Gab d'Emilliane*, Vol. I. p. 275.

† *Frauds of Romish Monks*, &c. ib. p. 270. — See also *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Vol. I. p. 51.

assistance; we find that heretics and wicked persons have sometimes had abilities of this kind, to the great surprize of their hearers.—When the fancy begins to be warmed, and the *animal spirits* put in motion, and by this means words begin to flow more readily than usual, some have mistaken that for the immediate influence of the Spirit, or an extraordinary *gift in speaking*; which was the effect only of nature and art, (as we find persons are frequently affected the same way, where religion is not at all concerned.)—One person may much excel another in a ready way of utterance, without having any better spiritual gifts or more knowledge in the doctrines of religion; nor can the pretence of following teachers thus gifted or qualified, be any lawful excuse for making divisions in the church of *Christ*.

Strictly speaking, indeed, all the *wisdom* we have, and every useful endowment, is a *gift* owing to God's bounty; he giveth us a capacity and ability for it, and assists our lawful endeavours: He is the author of our being, and of every valuable quality belonging to it. *If we got much learning, and profit thereby*, we must (as the son of *Sirach* observes) *ascribe the glory to him who giveth us wisdom*, Ecclus. li. 17. *Every good gift, and every perfect gift*, is from above, *Jam.* i. 17.—And *the inspiration of the Almighty giveth man understanding*, Job xxxii. 8.—“*Reason* itself may be considered as natural revelation, whereby the fountain of all knowledge communicates to mankind that portion of truth, which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties*.”—And the natural or acquired gifts of the mind may, in one sense, be called *spiritual*, as they are the operations of the soul, which is a spiritual substance breathed into man by God the *father of spirits*.—But we must distinguish be-

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* *Locke's Essay*,—Vol II Ch. 19.

twixt gifts of this kind, and the *supernatural* ones we are here speaking of. “How much soever
 “some men may transcend others in their intel-
 “lectual capacities and improvements, we must not
 “ascribe this to a higher principle than the *nature*
 “of man, (for the tallest trees are *natural* as well
 “as the lowest shrubs) they differ as much from
 “men *gifted* by inspiration, as *Goliath* from *Sam-*
 “*son*; or studied linguists from the Apostles, who
 “were inspired with the *gift of tongues*.*”

Some persons then, by having much better natural endowments than others, attain wisdom with less trouble, and arrive sooner to a great degree of religious knowledge, and other parts of learning. But no one must now pretend to this *wisdom*, as being an extraordinary gift imparted to them without any pains or inquiry of their own. — They who think so deceive themselves, and impose upon others, and will *err, not knowing the scriptures*, Matt. xxii. 29.

If any persons, by the *spirit of prayer and preaching*, mean only an ability to pray and preach to advantage, they ought to express themselves so clearly upon this point, as not to make their hearers believe they do it by *immediate inspiration* from the Spirit;—a notion that has been hurtful to religion, as it has given some a disgust to *pious forms of prayer*, and has been a great occasion of schism and rebellion in this kingdom.—In the church of *Rome* we are told, that the learning of their *St Bridget* was not *acquired* but *infused*, by which she answered the most profound doctors in the most difficult speculations of divinity;—and both their *St Francis* and *Ignatius Loyola* (founders of two famous orders) were ignorant enthusiastic persons, and looked upon by many as *mad*.—It is said of *St Francis*,

* See *The spirit of Enthusiasm exercised*, in a Sermon by Dr B. 1711. Vol. VII. p. 3.

Francis, that he had no teacher but *Christ*, and that he learned all by inspiration; that the rules of his order were not composed by the wisdom of men, but by God himself;—and that *Ignatius* had such clear divine revelations, that in a moment of time he understood the greatest mysteries of religion, and most subtil speculations in *philosophy* *.

Mabomet, the famous impostor, could neither write nor read, as he himself informs us; and this both he and his followers urge as an argument, that he received the doctrine which he taught by *immediate inspiration*; and that no person by human wisdom could compose any thing equal to the book of their law for instruction and eloquence †.—And they pretend that this proves his divine mission instead of all miracles.—A late writer of his life, who seemed to look upon him as a *hero*, yet observes, “That with an offensive arrogance *Mabomet* defied both men and angels to compose any thing equal to what he delivered to the world;—and that it was above the ordinary force of nature for a man without letters, destitute of all theological learning, to project, by his own power, a system of doctrine capable of opening all the eyes of the world ‡.”—And some of his disciples have affirmed, that their *Alcoran* was sent them down from heaven already written, and have been in a doubt, we are told, whether it was *created* or *un-created* ||.

As for extraordinary inspirations, or *gifts in prayer* and preaching, we must not expect them

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* See Bishop *Stillingfleet* on the *Idolatry and Fanaticism* of the church of *Rome*. Chap. 4.

† See *Alcoran*, chap. ii. 7, 10 and 11. and also *Prideaux's* Life of *Mabomet*, p. 21.

‡ See the Life of *Mabomet* by count *Boulainvillers*, ed. *Lond.* 1752, p. 94. 194.

|| See Dr *Warburton's* Serm. Vol. I. p. 225.—*Voltaire's* *Selected Pieces*. (*Lond.* 1754.) p. 214 —of *Mabomet* and the *Koran*.

now any more than the *gifts of languages*, or other miraculous powers.—If we had the same promises which *Moses* had, that God *would be our mouth*, and teach us what we should say, *Exod. iv. 12.* or if our Saviour's promise to his disciples, *not to meditate before*, (as he would supply them with words and wisdom, *Luke xxi. 14, 15. Matt. x. 20.*) could be applied to christians in all ages, and upon all occasions, (which even in that place only means, that he would supply them with proper answers when they were brought before their persecutors) then would study and labour be loss of time. But if any fancy, or would have others believe that the words which they speak are immediately given them from above, it is time enough to believe them, when we find that they speak any other language besides what they have learned; or teach any thing which cannot be acquired by common means.—It is certainly a desirable thing to be taught immediately from heaven all necessary and divine truths, without the *weariness of flesh* which attends *much study*, as the royal preacher expresses it, *Eccles. xii. 12.* who seems to speak from his own experience.—As he excelled in all manner of knowledge; many of whose valuable works in *natural* and *moral philosophy*, as well as in *poetry*, are not come to our hands, *1 Kings iv. 30, &c.*

God could easily furnish the mind at once with all kind of knowledge, if he thought fit; but this is what we are not to expect, any more than to be fed by a miracle from heaven without any labour of our own, as the *Israelites* were in the wilderness.—His goodness inclines him to give us those things which are necessary for us; and when this can be done in the common way of his providence, and according to the settled laws of nature, he does not choose to exercise a miraculous or uncommon power. And it is but laziness and a presumptuous

sumptuous tempting God to look for supernatural help in such things as we are enabled to do of ourselves. — If the gifts then, which some pretend to, are not designed to give them a true understanding of the scriptures, or explain the difficulties contained therein, but only to teach them the truths already known and sufficiently revealed; and enable them to express, what may otherwise be done to equal advantage by common or ordinary means, assisted with the divine blessing, where is the occasion for such *gifts*, or what grounds have we to hope for them? If all persons may expect to be immediately taught of God, then there is no need to be *taught* of man; or even for the scripture itself. — But if this *gift* is only given to some particular persons, they must convince others of the truth of it by *working miracles*.

God ceased by degrees, as a learned writer observes, to discover the doctrines of the gospel by inspiration to the ministers of *Christ*; and by the time the writings of the New Testament were made up, and the scripture-canon, as it were, sealed; the successors of the apostles, in the age immediately following, pretended to no other way of revelation, or coming to the knowledge of the christian religion, than by the word of God in scripture. — And as to the gift of praying or preaching *by the Spirit*, there is no mention made of it in the ecclesiastical writers, when they enumerate the rest of the *spiritual gifts* continued for some time after that apostolic age; — neither need we wonder, says he, since christians might learn what to pray for, and *how*, out of the scriptures, which are an excellent rule of devotion, as well as of *faith*; and since that gift was also rendered useless by the early and general use of liturgies *. — We must then

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* See the *Spirit of Enthusiasm exorcised*, by Dr Hicks, p. 27. and — *Engl. Hist. Ecc. lib. iii. cap. 37.*

carefully distinguish between an age of miracles, when the christian religion first made its appearance, and that time when it is fully established in the world, and the scripture is given to us as a *rule of faith*.—Supposing a person was taught the gospel now by inspiration, yet might he not thereby be more capable of advancing religion than one who had this knowledge by diligently searching the scriptures.—What multitudes perished in sin and unbelief, who heard the inspired instructions of the apostles, and saw the great miracles they wrought? nay, how many were unmoved by the divine discourses of our Lord himself? though it was owned by some, who were not his disciples, *that never man spake like him*, John vii. 46.

As to the duty of prayer, there is no need of immediate inspiration for the due performance of it, if we offer up our prayers with a devout heart, though in a *premeditated* form; yet will they be as acceptable at the throne of grace as if they were inspired. As we have then no promise of being miraculously *taught of God*, so have we no necessity for it; seeing we have the holy Scripture given for our direction; wherein are contained all truths necessary to make us *wise unto salvation*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And if persons are not content with this, but will fly to extraordinary means, it is an evident mark of *enthusiasm*.

In the established church we pray for the *inspiration* of God's Spirit to assist us in the work of the ministry, as well as in other religious duties.—
 “ That God the giver of all good gifts would give
 “ his grace to all those, who shall be called, or
 “ ordained to serve in the sacred ministry of his
 “ church,—and replenish them with the truth of
 “ his doctrine, and illuminate them with the true
 “ knowledge and understanding of his word*.”

But

* See prayers for *Ember Week*, - and Litany.

But this is not to be expected without their own best endeavours, and the outward means of study, and diligent application to the scriptures. — As we are not to expect that God will make us good without our own endeavours, so neither must we hope that he will make us *wise* without the same diligence. We are not only to desire divine knowledge, but *also seek for her as silver, and search for her as hid treasure*, Prov. ii. 3, 4. — Thus the son of *Sirack* tells us, that he not only asked for *wisdom openly in his prayer*, but also *sought after her diligently to the end*; by which means he *profited much therein*, Eccus. v. 13, &c. — And our Saviour directs us not only to ask, but *seek also*, in order to *find* what is good for us, *Matt.* vii. 7. — And we may hope for the greatest degree of spiritual assistance now afforded, when we are careful to make use of the best means in our power for understanding the *scriptures*.

Gifts are the best tried by the fruits they produce; now if we compare the *gifted* discourses of some with the studied ones of others, we cannot, I think, be much in doubt which to give the preference to. — The more pains and care is bestowed in our religious compositions and interpretations of holy Scripture, the more useful and instructive they are like to be; and upon this account more agreeable to the Spirit of God, than what is spoken off-hand without much study or thought; where, I am afraid, many things are uttered, which, if duly examined, could lay no great claim to *spiritual* assistance; — but would be found to be *words multiplied without knowledge*, Job xxxv. 16. — Persons, who preach *extempore*, should be those of the best learning and judgment, and by no means the ignorant and unexperienced, (as is too often the case) who are, of all others, the most unfit for it; though they generally have a good opinion of their

own abilities, and scarce know enough to make them truly sensible of their own deficiency — Nor are persons to look upon themselves as *gifted for prayer and preaching*, or qualified to be ministers of the gospel, though they have a supply of words for holding out a prayer or religious discourse for a considerable time. — A fluency of words in this, as well as in several other cases, as was observed, may be had without any uncommon assistance; — but more than this is required to make public instructions truly useful and edifying. — A sermon is not valuable for its length, or because it was spoken without book; but as it tends to inform the judgment and understanding of the hearers; — it should both please, persuade, and instruct; scripture must be properly applied, the difficulties of it explained, several texts carefully compared one with another to find out their true meaning, and be so interpreted as to keep up a consistency in the whole. — This cannot be well done without study and premeditation, which, by the divine blessing, will be a good means to keep us from any dangerous mistakes, or from deceiving ourselves and others: And by writing down some part of our thoughts, when we have time and leisure carefully to examine things, and compare one part of scripture with another, some of the more difficult doctrines of the gospel will be better explained, and all things expressed in a more clear and instructive manner; in better method and order than by trusting to our memory. If the *Spirit* afforded the same extraordinary assistance to persons *now* as it did to the Apostles, so as to bring all *things to their remembrance*, John xiv. 26. or give them a full knowledge and understanding of all parts of holy scripture, there would then be less need for premeditated discourses. But as we are not inspired as they were, we are

are under no necessity, nor are we able to imitate them particularly in all things they did: Our business is indeed to preach the gospel; but we are at liberty to do it in such manner as we think is most edifying and instructing.—And persons have an opportunity of exercising the best *gifts* they have in *premeditated discourses*; they are not abridged of their christian liberty, as they may choose what subjects they please, and treat of them in such a manner as they think most proper for the instruction of their hearers.—And we may undoubtedly hope for as much spiritual assistance when we are composing and writing down religious discourses in private, as when we attempt to speak in public without this care and caution.—They who think that the committing our thoughts to writing can make them less *spiritual* and useful, must be governed by unreasonable prejudice.

A late ingenious writer upon the subject of *preaching*, whose book contains many judicious remarks, and useful instructions, has observed indeed, “ That though a close study and application
 “ of mind to one’s subject is necessary before per-
 “ sons appear in public, yet a great deal must be
 “ left to the *extemporary* efforts of nature.—That
 “ if the speaker be master of his subject, and tho-
 “ roughly warmed with it, nature in that case
 “ will suggest the most becoming ornaments and
 “ significant phrases.—Light and order will natu-
 “ rally dawn upon it; and every thing will fall
 “ into the place which becomes it best.—One part
 “ will introduce another, just at the time that the
 “ minds of the audience are prepared to receive
 “ it.—That unless imagination play its part very
 “ ill, the boldest figures and most moving expres-
 “ sions will pour in upon you, and animate the
 “ whole discourse with such life and spirit as
 “ cannot

“cannot fail of gaining the utmost attention of
“the hearers*.”

This author seems to fall in with, or make use of several of the same kind of arguments with the *Archbishop of Cambray* in his *Dialogues on Eloquence*; —who amongst other things mentions, “The advantages which a preacher must have, who does not get his sermon by heart, over one who recites word for word what he has studied.—That if he has any natural talent for eloquence, his language must be lively and moving; even the warmth that animates him, must lead him to such pertinent expressions and figures as he could not have found out by study; and even his repetitions will help to imprint the truth more deeply, &c. †.”

These and the like assertions cannot be generally allowed of; experience too often contradicts the truth of them, (however well qualified in those respects the authors themselves might be whom we have here mentioned).—Though some persons may preach to advantage in the extemporary way on particular subjects, yet it is trusting a matter of moment to too great an uncertainty, without any necessity for so doing:—And it would be wrong to make it a general practice, where persons have means and opportunities of doing it in a more safe and perfect manner.—It will be the best then, upon the whole, for a christian orator or preacher to be content to go in that way which is the safest, though

* See a Dialogue concerning *The Art of Preaching*, by Mr *Fordyce*, 1752, p. 219, &c.

† See his second Dialogue concerning *Eloquence*.—This very eminent writer, we may just observe, had something of an *enthusiastic* turn in his disposition, as appears from his being an admirer of the *Mystic Divinity*, and becoming a disciple for some time at least of *Madam Guion*, the broacher of *Quietism* in France, a great *enthusiast*, who pretended to prophecies and revelations. —See *Voltaire's Age of Lewis XIV.* Vol II. ch. 34. of *Quietism*.

though it may be sometimes the *lower*, than needlessly to strike into paths in which he is exposed to precipices and dangers*.

If by writing down the chief part of our sermons they are hereby made more exact, and it has produced to us many volumes of *the best* that are extant (as an eminent writer owns, who yet proposes a different method of preaching †).—This is sufficient to recommend it for general use; nor will it be proper to leave it for the sake of some *imaginary* advantages in another way.

A person who makes use of notes is under no necessity of always *poring* upon them, nor is he hindered from enlarging on his subject when he sees a proper occasion for it, or can do it to real advantage.—There are many persons who, though they have not all the qualifications necessary for making an accomplished *extemporary* preacher, are yet sufficiently enabled to instruct the people by set and premeditated discourses; a method that ought not to be found fault with, considering the great number of preachers which are now required amongst us; and they, who find themselves qualified to do it in a *different* manner, are not restrained from using their liberty.

Persons of very good abilities may not at all times be in a fit temper and disposition to preach to the best advantage in an *extemporary way*; or so as they themselves would desire it should be done.—If the animal œconomy be out of order it will hinder the soul from exerting some of her choicest operations.—*The body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind*, Wisd. ix. 15.—This weight is felt more by some than others,
and

* Debet orator erigi, attolli, interdum etiam effervesce, ac sæpè accedere ad *præceps*—*lutius per plana*, sed humiliter & depressius iter. *Plin. Ep. xxvi. 19.*

† See Bishop Burnet's Past. Care, ch. ix.

and at one time more than another; and this defect the Body will be subject to till it puts on *incorruption, and is clothed with immortality*.—This is an argument, which amongst several others may be urged in behalf of *set forms* and *precomposed discourses* in public worship.—A pious person, who had been used to a contrary practice, complains of it (whilst a teacher amongst the Dissenters) “ as being, to *some*, too great discouragement and oppression of mind, to have prayers to make always and wholly when they are to use them in so public a manner, and a hindrance to their *own* devotion; and if written precomposed prayers as well as sermons were in use, some ministers could address themselves to that part of their service, with more cheerfulness than in the present way of prayer *extempore* *.”

The prudent and modest must be often sensible of the many imperfections of this method, and no doubt be inwardly ashamed of some expressions or explanations of scripture, which might have been prevented, or done to better purpose, by premeditated discourses.—By this means our *extempore* thoughts are put in due method and order; any luxuriancies of fancy or redundancy of expression corrected, deficiencies supplied and errors amended.—Thus the more pains we take beforehand in preparing our sermons, the more regard we pay to our audience, and the more benefit will be received.—The *extempore* method of preaching will be apt to lead many into error and *enthusiasm*, and make them mistake the natural fervours which they work themselves up to for divine operations.—And when a supply of proper matter is wanting, they will make up the defect by warm exclamations and

* See some letters of Mr *Crompton's*, p. 48 added to his Funeral Sermon, preached by the Reverend Mr *Marsden*, late Archdeacon of *Nottingham*, 1729.

and needless repetitions; and being much affected themselves, will imagine that the hearers must be so too. But the understanding and judicious part of an audience must be moved by something more than a seeming zeal and warmth, which are only the outward means or instruments for the better conveying wise instructions to the soul [*rapit illos rerum pulchritudo, non verborum inanium sonitus*, Senec. ep. 108].—Good forms of any kind can be no hindrance to a rational well-grounded devotion; but enthusiasm generally makes persons impatient of being kept within stinted bounds and limits.

As no method of instruction can produce true conviction or a real and lasting reformation, unless “the great Father of Spirits concur, and transfuse life and vigour into the heart*,” we cannot doubt but that God will be as ready to produce this good effect by means of premeditated discourses as of *extemporary* ones.—If persons can read the holy scripture, and other religious directions with real profit, and are commanded to do so, they may surely receive as much advantage by hearing them read or preached by others.—And if premeditated discourses, compared with *extempore* ones, are found more exact and perfect, why should they not be reckoned more useful to those who hear them? To assert the contrary is making *edification*, or religious improvement, depend on groundless fancy rather than on true judgment and reason. If we had indeed any command in scripture for *extemporary* instruction, then we might be assured that it would be the most *edifying* way; nor could we doubt of the divine assistance in order to make it so.

I shall here just take notice, that though the writer last referred to allows our *modern preachers* a
great

* *Fordyce's Art of Preaching*, p. 112.

great share of real merit, yet he says, that he is not thoroughly satisfied with all their combined excellencies.—“ I want, says he, to have my mind exalted above the world, and above itself, with the sacredness and sublimity of divine things; I want to *feel*, no less than be *coolly* convinced of, the transcendent beauty of virtue; I want to be awed as with the presence of God, to sink into deep prostration before him; I want to conceive an infinite horror at sin, to glow with an ardent passion for doing good;—to pant after perfection and immortality; in short, I want to have my understanding *enlightned*, my heart inflamed, every affection thrilled, and my whole life reformed*.” This is indeed a beautiful description of the blessed effects which every one should desire from *bearing* the word of God preached;—but then what is here wanted is not so properly to be looked for from the preacher, as from the grace of God operating upon the soul of the hearer; which we must constantly apply to him for by prayer, *Matt. vii. 7. &c.* (using also the best means in our own power) as it is God that must work in us, and enable to will and to do of his good pleasure, *Phil. ii. 13.*—Without this divine help the holy scripture itself will be read or heard with coolness and indifference; no wonder then that the wisest human instructions should prove ineffectual to promote a *good life*, so that *neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase*, 1 Cor. iii. 7.

As to extemporary discourses, a readiness to speak off-hand with judgment and discretion, may on some occasions or sudden emergencies be very useful, and is a valuable qualification; so that I am far from slighting the abilities of those who perform it in a proper manner; but then there is no reason

* See Mr Fordyce, ib. p. 69, &c.

reason for preferring it (as some do) so much above studied compositions, which in the opinion of all judicious persons must have the preference in many respects, and may certainly lay as good a claim to an equal share of divine assistance.

Though the *extemporary* way of instruction may perhaps more effectually work upon the *passions* of some hearers, than that of premeditated discourses; yet as this latter method tends more to inform their judgment and understanding, it is therefore in itself much preferable to the other.—And the pretended gifts of many, when examined to the bottom, would be found to be built upon too fond and perhaps a mistaken opinion of their own abilities, set off with a good assurance.

If *extempore* prayer and preaching were necessary, the ministers of the established church could, I hope in general, shew as good *gifts* this way as any others; but this method does by no means seem so proper in some parts of public worship, particularly of *public prayer*, in which the whole congregation ought to join.—One of the reasons given in the primitive church for *forms of prayer* in public worship was to prevent thereby the using any expressions *against faith* and *sound doctrine* through ignorance, hastiness, and inadvertency*.—And public instructions and explanations of the word of God, where there is an opportunity of doing it by precomposed discourses (as there is amongst us in the peaceable times of the church which we are blessed with) will be performed in general this way to the best advantage.

We may just observe that many of those, who take upon them to be teachers amongst the modern sects, we are more particularly speaking about, are ignorant and unlearned persons.—If it be alledged
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* Vid. Conc. Milevit. Can. xii —Con *Carth. tert.* Can. xxiii. —Caranz.

in their defence, that some of the Apostles were *unlearned*, this observation is nothing to the purpose, for they were taught of God in a wonderful manner; they understood divers kinds of languages without study, and were guided into all truth by the Spirit of truth himself; *John* xvi. 13. *God bearing them witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles.* And it would be absurd to think that *unlearned* persons should be fit teachers of God's word *now*, unless they could give proofs of some heavenly or extraordinary assistance afforded them for this purpose; but we must not conclude that the religious knowledge, which some persons have, or pretend to, is any proof of extraordinary gifts or inspiration.—This notion might lead us into dangerous errors, and make us liable to be imposed upon by every bold pretender, who pleaded an extraordinary call.—What such persons know more than others of their rank, may easily be accounted for by natural means, and we need not wonder *whence they have these things*, *Matt.* xiii. 56.

Persons cannot be properly qualified for the business of explaining the scriptures, and preaching God's word in our days, without a sufficient stock of learning, and diligent study and labour.—And no wonder that this is requisite in an employment of such importance.—As the most common arts and trade require a good deal of time to learn and understand them; why should the interpretation of the holy scriptures be looked upon by several as so easy thing, that many undertake to *teach* what they never *learned*? This is indeed a complaint of old; [*quod medicorum est promittunt medici, tractant fabrilia fabri; sola scripturarum ars est, quam sibi omnes vendicant.* — *Hanc garrulus anus, hanc delirus senex—hanc universi præsumunt, lacerant, docent antequam discunt, &c.* Hieron. ep. Paulino 103.] Upon this account they will be in
danger

danger of explaining some points of faith *injudiciously*, 2 Tim. iii. 8.—Teaching that for scripture-doctrine, which upon due inquiry will be found to be false and unfound*.

Amongst the principal causes of error taken notice of by a judicious writer, *one* is, “want of proper qualifications for discovering truth; as when illiterate persons invade the province of scholars; and such he observes are forward, and arrogate to themselves what a modest studious man dares not, though he knows more.” [*Wollaston’s Religion of Nature Delineated*, Sect. III. Prop. 16.]

It was the maxim of a very eminent divine, and deeply impressed upon his soul, (as he declared) “that rashly to be author of a false interpretation of scripture, is to take God’s name *in vain* in a high degree †.”—And such as take upon them publicly to explain scripture, without due care and proper instructions, must be more liable than others to run into dangerous errors; and often give their own groundless fancies instead of the true meaning of God’s word ‡.

King *Solomon’s* advice concerning our behaviour in God’s house ought to be carefully remembered. *Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God, for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few*, Eccl. v. 1, 2. As God is infinitely great, wise and perfect, we should endeavour to serve and worship

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* Pro auro plumbum supponunt. Vincent. cont. Hær. cap. xxvii.—Vid. *Leigh’s Crit. Sacra* in verb. ἀδόκιμος, 2 Tim. iii. 8.

† See Preface to *Mede’s* works.—Grande periculum in ecclesiâ loqui, ne fortè interpretatione perversâ de evangelio *Christi*, hominis fiat evangelium; aut, quod pejus est, diaboli.—Hieron. in ep. ad Gal. cap. 1.

‡ Attrita frons interpretatur sæpè quod nescit, & cum aliis persuaserit, sibi quoque usurpat *scientiam*.—Hieron. ep. ad Nepct.

him in the most reverend and solemn manner we can; not be rash and inconsiderate in our expressions, or speak whatever comes into our mind, but fit and prepare ourselves in the best manner we can both inwardly in our hearts, and outwardly in our words; that so we may worship God in *the beauty of holiness*, and give unto him *the glory due unto his name*, Psal. xcvi. 8, 9.—This our church takes care to do by pious *forms of prayer* and premeditated instructions.—As this is a proper means of promoting true religion, and keeping up decency in God's worship; so does it also express great humility and reverence.—But when persons appear before God in public to offer whatever comes into their mind, this is, I think, making too free with the divine majesty.—Christian *liberty* and freedom, in this case, should be tempered with modesty and discretion; nor must persons be unmindful of the nature of the great God, in whose presence they stand.

There are some persons who seem much affected with that loud, rapturous, and enthusiastic manner of preaching often made use of in the *extemporary* way, and look upon it as proceeding from an extraordinary degree of *spiritual* assistance; but those sudden emotions raised by that means in the breasts of the hearers, (which they consider as true and *spiritual edification*) may be excited in a great measure by unusual tones of voice, solemn affected looks, vehemency of words and action, warm exclamations and the like natural means;—and whilst the pleasing illusion lasts, perhaps every common thing they hear is considered as of a very extraordinary nature; but when the charm ceases, and they come coolly to examine what it was that moved them so much, they will scarce be able to give any satisfactory account of it*, and find it

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* *Emo. iente demum sono superest nihil.*

was not so much the matter of the discourse that affected them, as the manner in which it was delivered: But without due caution in this respect persons will be in danger of being carried about with every *wind of doctrine*, and may be brought under the power of any deceiver, who hath attained the skill of raising the passions, which is the more easily done amongst ignorant persons; whereas the wiser part of mankind are only to be moved by reason and sound arguments †;—and what is looked upon as the most moving oratory amongst an assembly of ignorant *enthusiasts*, would appear very different to most other congregations §.—Those sudden artificial heats, which are kindled in the mind, where the passions bear a greater sway than reason, are not of a durable or reviving nature; but may be compared to a blaze of light, which glitters for a moment and quickly goes out. That way of preaching, which some reckon most *edifying*, is compared by a learned writer “to the coming of the *tide* with noise and violence, which leaves little effect; whereas the other, which is built on strength of argument and clearness of reason, is like a constant stream, which goes on in a steady course, and makes the earth more fruitful. ||.” That must be looked upon as the most *edifying* preaching, which not only warms the affections but informs the judgment; abounds with light as well as *heat*; and instructs as well as pleases; promotes the practice of true religion; and leaves a lasting impression on the mind.—It is not our business to eradicate the passions, but strive to make them subservient to the great purposes of religion,

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† Nil tam facile quàm plebeculam et indoctam multitudinem linguæ volubilitate decipere; quæ quicquid non intelligit, plus miratur. Hieron. ad Nepot. ep. 2.

§ Qui stultis eruditi videri volunt, stulti eruditus videntur. Quint. Inst. I. x. cap. 7.

|| Bishop *Stillingfleet's* Eccles. Cases, p. 137.

so that our devotion may become at the same time both *warm* and *rational*.—But unless persons find themselves moved by the force of such reasons and arguments as will bear examination afterwards, any other kind of sudden emotions or transports in the mind, occasioned by what they hear, are not to be accounted the *workings of the Spirit*, any more than those pleasing sensations raised in the breast, by *the song of one who has a pleasant voice*, or by the sound of *an instrument well played on*, Ezek. xxxiii. 32.—The force of sounds, in alarming the passions, (as an ingenious writer observes) is prodigious; thus the noise of thunder, the shouts of war, the uproar of an enraged ocean, strike us with terror †.—A learned heathen describing to us the manner in which a person will be moved, who hears the precepts of philosophy to true advantage, observes, that if he be affected only with the words, and manner of speaking, this will be of little use; and that such a one does not so much attend to the philosopher as to the *musician**. We have also accounts of persons amongst the heathens of old, who by the power which some of their orators had over them, were moved in that extraordinary degree as to do things even against their own reason; and were in a manner beside themselves, not knowing what they did †.

There were also amongst them persons called *sophists*, who travelled about the country, discoursing on divers subjects to gain the applause and admiration of the people; and some of them succeeded wonderfully that way by their smooth and voluble

† See *Avifon's Essay on Musical Expression*, p. 3. 1753.

* *Tum scias nequè illic philosophum loqui, sed tibicinem canere, &c.* Vide *Aul. Gell.* Noct. Att. lib. v. cap. 1. ex Musonio.

‡ See *Casaubon on Enthusiasm*, chap. iv. (conc. Rhetor. Enth.) p. 200, &c.—*Chambers's Dict.* Preface, p. xi.

voluble tongues.—And to shew their abilities, they offered themselves to speak publicly, without any premeditation, on any argument or controversy that should be proposed to them; and they were often much admired, especially by their common auditors, who could not well distinguish betwixt matter and words; and imagined, that whoever spoke readily and fluently, spoke also to the purpose.—Some of them excelled so much this way, that they would speak *off-hand*, not only in *prose* but *verse*, and were looked upon as persons speaking by divine assistance or inspiration*. *Christians* must then be careful that they mistake not upon any occasions the sudden motions of the *animal* or natural spirits for divine and spiritual operations; or be deceived with the outward appearance of *godliness*, without the inward *power* and virtue of it.—Some by the *power of godliness*, as a judicious author observes, understand only the fervor and heat of religious passions, which is very apt to transport and carry away those, who have better affections *than judgment*;—and he takes notice, that by this great zeal and outward concernment for religion and the good of souls, the leaders of sects gain and hold more people than by their preaching or any other way †.

As to that loud or uncommon vehemency of voice made use of by some in *preaching*, this cannot properly be looked upon as a necessary qualification for a christian orator, or any sure proof of a great degree of religious ardour or extraordinary assistance; nor can we hope that *crying aloud* will

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* *Casaub. ib. 203, &c.* Fortuiti sermonis contextum nunquam mirabor, quem si *spiritus* ac calor tulit, Deum tunc adfuisse aiebant, &c. *Quintil. Inst. l. x. cap. 7.*

† Bishop *Stillingfleet's Misc. Discourses*, published by his Son, 1735, p. 35.

be a means of being sooner *heard of God*, 1 Kings xviii. 27 ||. “None but the most low, weak, and
 “mechanical minds will be affected with mere *dint*
 “of sound and noise; the passions so raised leave
 “no lasting or valuable effects upon the mind,
 “and answer no good purpose, because the under-
 “standing hath nothing to do with such impres-
 “sions*.” A learned heathen will not allow this
 to be a forcible way of speaking, but he terms it
 downright violence or *bawling* †. A *hollow tone*,
 we are told, is amongst the *Turks* reckoned as one
 of the great excellencies of prayer ||.—Though this
 manner of speaking may very much affect some,
 or even depress their spirits, which effect they may
 mistake for religious sorrow and compunction of
 heart; yet is such a practice offensive to the gene-
 rality of hearers §.

God, we find, did not manifest himself to the pro-
 phet *Elijah* in the *storm and tempest*, but in a *still*,
small voice, 1 Kings xix. 12. and *Moses* declares,
 that his doctrine *should drop as the rain, and his*
speech distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the ten-
der herb, Deut. xxxii. 2. or gently sink into and
 influence the hearts of his hearers.—We have no
 reason to think that our Saviour and his Apostles
 made use of any unusual way of speaking, when
 they instructed the people.—And the *Pharisees* are
 blamed

|| *Quantis arteriis opus est, si pro sono audiamur. Tert. de*
Oratore.

* *Mason's Essay on Elocution, 1751, p. 7.*

† *Nam et clamitant, et omnino emugiunt,—illi hanc vim*
appellant, quæ est potius violentia.—Quintil. Inst. l. xi.

|| See *Maunder's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*, first letter
 at the end.

§ *Imò vulgares animos tantùm levi aliquâ ægritudine afficit,*
(quam pro religioso quodam dolore falsò putant) eodem ferè
modo, uti aures vulnerare solent creatus cornicum, canum ulu-
latus, &c. Vid. Nichol. Def. Ecc. Ang. p. 330.—and Collier's
Essay on Music, p. 74.

blamed for putting on melancholy *countenances*, and disfiguring their faces, or affecting unusual appearances in the performance of religious duties, *Matt. vi. 5, 16.*—A mild composed voice was most agreeable to the *meeke spirit* our Saviour was of, *Matt. xi. 29.*—*Let your speech be always with grace*, *Col. iv. 6.* which word also implies *joyfulness*; as nothing is so fruitful of true joy as *grace*. There is no necessity then for uttering religious discourses in a sorrowful melancholy manner; but in a way more becoming the *glad tidings* of salvation, and that cheerfulness of soul, which is the *fruit* of the gospel Spirit, *Gal. v. 22. Phil. iv. 4.*—Though we are to speak with a becoming *gravity* and *authority*, as the ambassadors of Christ, *Tit. ii. 7, 15.*—The primitive christians were advised by a pious martyr to observe a proper discipline and becoming decorum in their speech, when they made their addresses to God; and to avoid all tumultuous clamour and noise*.

But to return to our inquiry about immediate revelations or extraordinary assistances of the Spirit.—They who make false pretences to them, should remember what was denounced against those prophets, *who prophesied out of their own hearts, and followed their own spirits, and had seen nothing; saying, The Lord saith it, albeit he had not spoken*, *Ezek. xiii. 2, &c.*—God threatens that he would be against them, and that they should *not be in the assembly of his people*, *ver. 9.*—So far were they from being wiser and better than others, that they should not be looked upon as members of his church, or partakers with his chosen people.—Persons may pretend

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* *Verecundiæ & disciplinæ memores esse debemus—non passim ventilare preces nostras inconditis vocibus, nec tumultuosâ loquacitate;—quia Deus non vocis sed cordis est auditor; nec admonendus est clamoribus, &c. Cypr. de Orat. Domini, § 3.*

tend to be *prophets*, and to have a revelation from the Lord, and yet *lie unto us*, 1 Kings xiii. 18.—And the prophet which should presume to speak any thing in God's name, which he had not commanded, was under the old law to be punished with *death itself*, Deut. xviii. 20 †.

Pretenders to those gifts we find have broached doctrines quite opposite to each other, which plainly shews that they could not be led *by one and the self-same Spirit*, 1 Cor. xii. 11. but that this must be the effect of *enthusiasm* and delusion in several of them at least. The *Spirit of truth* cannot differ from himself, and it must certainly *grieve* him to fix errors and contradictions upon him.—If then such extraordinary gifts are necessary, it is also necessary that a power of working miracles should attend them, to distinguish the true from the false ones. Persons should also know and declare when they speak by the Spirit, and when they deliver only their own private opinions, 1 Cor. vii. 6, 12.—But when they pretend to extraordinary assistance about doctrines already plainly taught in holy scripture, or about such things as are of no great use or advantage to the church of *Christ*, we may safely conclude, that such pretences are vain and false.

The Bishop of *Rome* is looked upon by many as having the guidance of an infallible Spirit; and there are in that church several visionaries or pretenders to revelation: Most of their religious orders were founded by enthusiastic persons, who laid claim to divine directions from heaven for what they did: They affirmed that their knowledge and learning was imparted to them at once by inspiration; and most of their saints were taught immediately by the Spirit.—Their pretences of this kind are innumerable; and upon this foundation they build

† Consult Bishop *Stillingfleet* upon this passage.—*Orig. Sacra*, B. ii. Ch. v.

build most parts of their worship and religious ceremonies.—They boast of gifts and inspirations, which they say protestants are deprived of; and we are told that most of their *religious* (after they are arrived at a state of perfection as they call it) take upon them to *prophecy*.—In short, as gross enthusiasm may be found amongst persons of that communion, as amongst the wildest sectaries we read of*. Madam Guion, the broacher of *Quietism* in France not many years ago, pretended to visions, revelations and prophecies;—and in one of her phrensies, we are told, she supposed herself married to *Jesus Christ*, and from that time never invoked the saints; saying, “that the mistress of a family ought not to address herself to her domestics †.” The church of *Rome*, as a learned writer observes, has encouraged many gross impostors and enthusiasts in their pretensions to inspirations, and to all sorts of miraculous gifts that we read of in the primitive church:—They have not only canonized many of both sexes for saints, but, to the scandal of the christian religion, have incorporated religious societies to live according to their pretended *inspired* orders; for which not only the common people, and brethren and sisters of the order, but their learned doctors, we are told, pretended to have as great a veneration as for the gospel itself §. And the *papists* value themselves so much

* See Bishop *Stillingfleet* on the Idolatry and Fanaticism of the Church of *Rome*, Chap. iv. where this is made evident by abundance of instances.—*Foulis's* history of *Romish* treasons, corruptions and impostures, B. i. Chap 1.—*Caranz.* in Sess undec. Later. Concil. 895, &c.—*Frauds of Romish Monks*, &c. by *Gab. d'Emilliane*, Vol. I. p. 189.—*Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Vol. I. p. 65, &c.—*Christianity no Enthusiasm*, (a learned and judicious book, published 1678, in answer to the inspirations claimed by the *Quakers*) p. 79, &c.

† See *Voltaire's* Age of *Lewis XIV.* chap. 34. of *Quietism*.

§ See *The Spirit of Enthusiasm exorcised*, a Sermon by Doctor *Hicks*, on 1 Cor. xii. 4. P. 37.

much upon account of their visions, revelations and miracles, and look upon them as so peculiarly belonging to themselves; that some of their writers declare, that none but *Roman catholics* can have them; and all pretences and appearances of that kind, in any persons of a different faith, are infallibly diabolical ||.

There have been many in our own nation (and are still several) who lay claim to the immediate teaching of the same Spirit; and yet widely differ in their opinions amongst themselves, and from the church of *Rome*: what must determine then the truth of their pretensions? As God gave sufficient attestation to the inspiration of his servants of old by the miracles they wrought; if the same kind of inspiration was designed to be continued, he would certainly give us the same distinguishing signs; but as none amongst us produce this testimony, we must conclude that all their pretences are equally groundless; and that *they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord*, Jer. xxiii. 16.—As to the *popish*, and some other *modern miracles*, when inquired into, they will be found only impositions upon the ignorant, or built upon enthusiastic imaginations.

We have accounts in history of many wicked persons, who have prayed and preached in so fluent and fervent a manner, as to make several imagine, that it was above the power of nature, and that they must certainly be inspired:—As appears from the accounts we have of one *Swenckfield*, a notorious heretic in *Germany*; *Hacket*, executed for blasphemy, in the days of queen *Elizabeth*; *John Basilides*, duke of *Moscovy*, who lived at the same time,

|| See Lord *Clarendon's* Animadversions on *Cressy's* Reply to Doctor *Stillingfleet*, on *The Fanaticism of the Church of Rome*, p. 63, 232.

time, and deluded the people by his pretended visions, revelations, *gifts of prayer*, and his fervent behaviour at his devotions, though he is described as a most cruel and wicked person.—And it is observed concerning him, “that the devil, after “ God for his incredible wickedness had once quite “ given him over, might take advantage of his “ enthusiastic devotions to represent himself to him “ in the shape of an *angel of light*, to encourage him “ the more in his inhuman and wicked courses*.” These and some noted enthusiasts and impostors, who pretended to pray by the Spirit, were, we find, very *eloquent*; had words, tears, and sighs at command, and so bewitched the people, by their rapturous and spiritual-like devotions, as to pass for men extraordinarily inspired †.—That great impostor or enthusiast *David George* lived in appearance a sober life, and was admired by many for his moving eloquence and powerful exhortations to the duties of *godliness* ‖.

Thus also *Mahomet*, a man of no learning, had a great share of natural eloquence, which was one chief means of gaining profelytes when he first began his imposture; and he is represented by a late writer of his life as the *finest orator of his age* §.—A natural enthusiasm, or ardency of temper, has been mistaken by many as *great zeal* for religion; and by this means they have been *drawn* into dangerous errors and practices. A pious father

* See *Casaubon on Precatory Enthusiasm*, chap. 6. p. 278, &c. —Dr. Scot on *The Use of Forms of Prayer in public Worship*, p. 11, &c.—*Camden's Account of Hacket*, *Annals Eliz.* A. D. 1591.—*Conspiracy for pretended Reformation*, by Dr. *Cosin*, who gives a particular Account of the pretended Inspirations of *Hacket*, *Copinger*, and *Arbington*, p. 13, 41.—*Nelson's Countermine*, ch. 7.

† See Dr. *Hicks's Spirit of Enthusiasm exorcised*, p. 43.

‖ See Dr. *More's Discourse on Enthusiasm*, Sect. 33, &c. where you have an Account of his Tenets; he died at *Basil*, 1556.

§ See his Life by Count *Boulainwilliers*, p. 168, 200.

ther of the primitive church, in the third century, mentions an enthusiastic woman at that time drove on, as he says, by the instigation of the *devil*, who deceived many amongst other things by her *readiness and fluency in prayer* †. The *Scribes and Pharisees*, in our Saviour's time, endeavoured to impose upon the ignorant, and to cover their own covetous and wicked designs, by pretending to extraordinary sanctity, and to a particular *gift of prayer*, Matt. xxiii. 14.

Many noted heretics ‖ of old pretended to prophecies and extraordinary illuminations; (some of which persons were also men of corrupt lives §.)— We have many remarkable instances also of the same nature of later date, both at home and abroad, amongst persons who have widely differed one from another in their sentiments*.

Socinus also pretended to a divine assistance in those dangerous interpretations, which he has given us of several passages in scripture ‡.

Amongst the *Lutherans* there was a *Jacob Bebmien* with his adherents;—and amongst the *Calvinists* (as a foreign writer observes) “ what advantage did
“ not *Cromwell* draw from enthusiasm with respect
“ to the part he chose to act? and how powerfully,
“ says

† Vide Ep. *Firmit.* ad Cypr. inter Cypr. opera, Ep 75. § x. —“ *Facultas dicendi, si in malos inciderit, et ipsa judicanda est malum; peiores enim illos facit, quibus contigit.*” *Quintil. Inst.* l. 12. cap. 1.

‖ As *Simon, Menander, Cerinthus, Manichæus, Montanus, &c.*

§ See Dr *More on Enthusiasm*, Sect. 21.

* See *Sliden's General History of the Reformation*, B. III. and V. concerning the *German Enthusiasts*.—Many Instances of the same Nature we have in the times of the long Rebellion, as you may find at large in *Edwards's Gangræna*, 1646.—*Pagitt's Description of Heretics in the latter Times*, 1654.—See also *Christianity no Enthusiasm*, chap. 6. *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*.—*Rimius's Account of the Moravians, &c.*

‡ Vide *Ashwell de Socino*, p. 5.

“ says he, did the same spirit operate in the last
 “ century in the society of the *Quakers*? They
 “ talked of nothing but inspirations and visions,
 “ and shewed an incredible zeal for propagating
 “ their sect, and found many followers in the *Dutch*
 “ Provinces *.”

We find indeed a strange mixture of enthusiasm, hypocrisy and profaneness, in some of the principal leaders of the party during the times of the usurpation.—Thus in regard to *Cromwell* himself, we are told, if any thing was strongly impressed upon his mind, he apprehended that it came immediately from God, and was a rule of action.—But if there was a *flatness* in his devotion, or no strong impression upon his mind, he looked upon it as a denial:—That by his art in preaching, praying, and falling in with the humours of the greatest enthusiasts, he got himself no less credit than *Mahomet* of old did amongst his followers:—That he sometimes would spend an hour in public prayer, and as much in a sermon, and he pretended to inspirations; and when any weighty matter was propounded, he would retire for some time, and then deliver out the oracles of the Spirit.—At the very time when King *Charles I.* suffered death, in order to prevent Lord *Fairfax* from endeavouring to hinder the execution, *Cromwell* prevailed with him that morning to go along with him *to seek the Lord by prayer*, that they might know his mind in the thing:—And *Harrison*, one of the company (privately appointed for that purpose) drew out his discourse

* See Mr *Stinstra's* Pastoral Letter against *Fanaticism*, translated from the *Dutch* by Mr *Rimius*, 1753, p. 91, &c.—*Cræsi Hist. Quakerian. Amsteld.* 1695, lib. 1. & lib. 3. p. 497, &c.—See also Mr *Law's Way to Divine Knowledge*, where he speaks of the *Mysteries of Heaven* revealed to that divine Man, *J. Behmen*; of Impulses, by which he preached to the *Infidel Brethren*, which they were not able to resist, p. 4.

discourse to God to such a length, as to give sufficient time for the execution of the King, which they hastned by private messengers; and when it was done, *Cromwell* rose up and persuaded the General, that this was a full return to prayer, and they were to acquiesce in God's pleasure.—In this case indeed there seems to be as great a share of hypocrisy as of enthusiasm; and we are told by Mr *Baxter* himself, that this person thought dissimulation no vice in several cases; and that he behaved in such a manner amongst several different parties in religion, so that they all thought he was one of their number*. — We are also informed that Dr *Tillotson*, when a young man, and going to *Whiteball*, just after the death of *Oliver*, heard such bold sallies of *enthusiasm* amongst some of their eminent teachers, as gave him great disgust. God, we are told, was in a manner reproached by them with the deceased Protector's services; and Dr *Goodwin*, who, in a prayer a little before *Oliver's* death, pretended to assure them that he was not to die at that time, had now the boldness to say to God, “*Thou hast deceived us, and we were deceived;*”—and another of their divines, at that time, praying for *Richard*, used these indecent expressions next to blasphemy; namely, “*Make him the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person †.*”—We have pretty much the same information from others; as that a noted independent minister, when *Oliver* was sick (of which sickness he died) declared, that God had *revealed* to him, that he should recover and live thirty years longer; for that God had raised him up for a work which could not be done in less time!—but his death being
published

* See Dr. *Grey's* Examination of the 4th Vol. of Mr *Neal's* History of the Puritans, p. 221, &c.

† See the Life of Archbishop *Tillotson* by Dr *Birch*, p. 16.

published two days after, the said divine publicly in prayer expostulated with God about the defeat of his prophesy in these words, “*Lord, thou hast lyed unto us.*” — The news of his death indeed put another eminent person amongst them upon giving it a different turn:—He desired them not to be troubled, telling them, “It was good news, because, if he was of great use to the *people of God* when amongst us, now he will be much more so, being ascended *into heaven to sit at the right hand of Jesus, there to intercede for us*, and to be mindful of us upon all occasions*.” I thought it might not be improper to give this short account of the madness and enthusiasm of those times, as an useful *memento* or warning.—And it is no wonder that God should suffer persons to fall into strong delusions themselves, when they pursue wrong and wicked measures, and endeavour to deceive or impose upon others.

We may observe in the next place, that *Mahomet* affirmed that he was a prophet sent from God, and that he received his revelation from the angel *Gabriel* †; and he seems to have been an *enthusiast*, as well as an impostor, as we before took notice. And several amongst the *Turks* still pretend to visions and revelations †.

The ancient heathen poets pretended to a divine *impulse* or inspiration, which was believed not only by the credulous multitude, but by those of the greatest knowledge, who fancied that God made use of them as his ministers and prophets §. Their eminent

* See Dr Grey’s 4th Vol. of his Examination of Mr Neal’s *History of the Puritans*, p. 218. who gives us the Accounts from Dr South, Ludlow’s *Memoirs*, and others.

† *Alcoran*, chap. 2, and 10.

‡ See Sir Paul Ricaut’s *History of the Ottoman Empire*, B. II. chap. 14, 15.—Hill’s Account of it, chap. 7, 8.

§ See *The Inquiry into the Life of Homer*, 1738, Sect. 8. p. 130.

eminent orators were also thought to be assisted in their compositions by some power more than human §. — That fire or ardour which they felt within themselves, and was taken for divine inspiration, may be indeed looked upon as nothing else but an uncommon warmth of fancy or imagination; which under due regulations was necessary to make them eminent in their professions.—Upon this account it has been observed by some ingenious writers, that *Tully* would not have glowed with so much eloquence, had he been warmed with less enthusiasm; and that the fancied presence of the *Muses* had almost as wonderful an effect upon the thoughts and language of some of the ancient poets, as if they had been really *inspired*.—That a *poet* is an *enthusiast* in jest, and an *enthusiast* is a poet in good earnest, as he takes his no better than *poetical fits* for divine inspirations and real truth*.

The Persons who delivered the oracles of their Gods, were thought to have a particular intercourse with them, and to be possessed or inspired by them †. And in their prophetic extasies indeed they were wont to appear like persons distracted, to swell, foam at the mouth, and the like; and were sometimes enraged to that degree, as even to affright those who came to consult them ‖.

Those violent commotions, or astonishing appearances, made the people believe that they were acted by some divine power or impulse.—An eminent

§ See *Casaubon on Rhetorical Enthusiasm*, ch. 4. p. 192, 246.

* See *Sir T. Fitzosborn's Letters*, the 1st and 57th.—*Dr More on Enthusiasm*, Sect. 20.

† Vid. *Max. Tyrrii Dissert.* 26.—*De Socratis Deo*.

‖ See *Potter's Antiquities*, B. II. chap. 9.—*Smith's Select Discourses* the 6th. chap. 4.—*Orig. Cort. Celsurn*, l. 7. p. 333. de *Pythia*.—*Ravinell. Biblioth. sac. in verbo Pythones*.

—stimulo fluctuque furoris

Compages humana labat, pulsusque Deorum

Concutiunt fragiles animos.—*Lucan*, l. v.

gent heathen writer of old observed, that some dispositions were excited to extasy and enthusiasm, by particular sounds, or natural objects which were great and uncommon*.

It has been also observed by some, that in the earlier ages of the world, amongst the heathens in particular, the natural temper of man was somewhat *ecstatical* and superstitious; and that in their expressions they were very *poetical* and *enthusiastic*; so that poetry was used in their compositions before prose; and, in most things they did, they were guided by sudden instincts and raptures;—and there were then almost as many religions as men; as every one's religion was chiefly built on his own imagination, or fancied revelations and visions; and then were they very liable to be deluded by *seducing spirits*, and drawn into gross superstition and idolatry, as was evidently the case.—And several wicked rites and mysteries were instituted to the honour of their Gods, by persons who professed themselves *inspired*.—But if they were influenced by any *spirit*, it must be the *unclean ones* mentioned in the gospel, *Mark* i. 27. *1 Cor.* x. 20.

As their oracles began to cease after our Saviour's appearance in the world; so enthusiasm and private revelations began to grow out of request, as men became more rational, wise and sober, in their conversation †. *Tully* imputes the defect of some oracles, even in his time, to a less degree of credulity than formerly ‖.

Madness, as a noble author observes, was frequently mistaken for *inspiration*; and the *prophetic*
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sibyls

* Sono quodam vocum & Phrygiis cantibus incitantur, multos nemora silvæque, multos amnes, aut maria commovent, quorum mens videt antè multo quæ futura sunt. *Tull. de Divinat.* L. I. S. 114.

† See *Cassaubon on Enthusiasm*, chap. 1, 5, &c.

‖ Quando ista vis evanescit? an postquam homines minus creduli esse cœperunt? *De Divin.* L. II. Sect. 117.

sibyls put on an air, and the looks of madness, to obtain an implicit belief to their prophecies.—And from such impositions mad people reaped some remarkable advantages, and were often looked upon as messengers sent from heaven to declare the will of the gods.—Thus one of the greatest calamities that attends human life, appeared as one of the greatest blessings §.—And amongst the *Turks*, we find, mad or frantic people are had in great esteem, as they are thought to have something divine belonging to them; and that their revelations have transported them out of the ordinary temperament of humanity*.

Amongst the *Jews*, in the last century, in the year 1666, arose a famous impostor (called *Sabbatai Sevi*) who first appeared at *Smyrna*, and professed himself to be the *Messias*, from whom the *Jews*, in that part of the world, had great expectations; several of his followers fell into strange extasies, and four hundred of them prophesied of his growing kingdom; young infants are said to have pronounced his name, and that he was the son of God:—The people were for a time possessed, fell into trances, foamed at the mouth, talked of their future prosperity, and their visions about their imagined *Messias*; and several miracles were mentioned as done by him.—All these accounts were given by persons who lived in *Turkey* at that time; and several of the things which happened were looked upon as the effects of diabolical delusions, as the *Jews* themselves since confessed †.

This

§ See Lord Orrey's 21st Letter on the Life and Writings of Dr *Swift*, p. 272.

* *Ricaut's History of the Ottoman State*, B. II. ch. 20.—*Hill's History*, ib. chap. 8.—See also *Defence of the Snake in the Grass*, Part I. p. 70.

† See Bishop *Kiddier's Demonstration of the Messias*, Part III chap. x. p. 173, &c.

This impostor, we find, turned *Mahometan* at last, to avoid a cruel death which the *Grand Seignior* threatened him with :—And the *Cabala* of the *Jews*, (or that received doctrine and secret science, by which they pretend to expound the scriptures) is looked upon by many as nothing else but the productions of disordered brains †.

Thus we find that wicked persons, and that many amongst the *Papists*, *Jews*, *Turks* and *Heathens*, have felt themselves affected much after the same manner as several of our *modern enthusiasts*, or pretenders to extraordinary assistances of the Spirit; now the persons abovementioned (who were most of them *at least* persuaded of the truth of their inspiration, or *being* actuated by some divine power) must have worked themselves up into those enthusiastic fits and delusions, either by natural means, or we must impute it to some worse principle, namely, *The agency of the devil*; and if so, it shews how busy that great deceiver hath been in imposing upon mankind. These things may be looked upon as our examples, 1 *Cor.* x. 6. to the intent that we should beware of falling into the same kind of delusions.—God, by way of punishment, may give some persons up to be deceived by this means, to fall into gross errors, *and believe a lye*, because they *received not the love of truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*, 2 *Theff.* ii. 11. or perhaps because they despised the ordinary and appointed way of knowledge and instruction.

We read in the gospel of *Satan's filling persons hearts*, *Acts* v. 3. *entering into them*, *Luke* xxii. 3. *John* xiii. 27. (which must signify their receiving strong impulses from him) of *his transforming himself into an angel of light*, 2 *Cor.* xi. 14.—And the papists allow that he doth this sometimes to deceive

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visionary

† See Mr *Steinbr's Pastoral Letter against Fanaticism*, p. 92.

visionary persons, and that there may be a *satanical* imposition in extasies, visions, voices, assurances and the like*.—The scripture also mentions *deceitful workers*, who are his ministers, appearing as the ministers of righteousness, 2 Cor. xi. 15. One sign of their being so is, when they broach with great zeal and pretences to godliness some dangerous errors, with a mixture of truth, the more craftily to deceive, as has been the case with most heretics; and we find, that a person possessed with an evil spirit gave attestation to the truth of the gospel, Acts xvi. 17.

A certain author, speaking of some of the writings of a famous French enthusiast, observes, “ That there are in them great flights of devotion and abstraction from the world; but, says he, the cloven-foot does appear in superlative and blasphemous pride; in running down several outward ordinances of the gospel; in the uncharitableness of damning the world, and in several heretical notions contrary to the gospel, and in a contempt of the holy scriptures †.” By such like marks then may enthusiasts and impostors be generally discovered by sober inquisitive christians; and they cannot be long imposed upon.—Mr Baxter takes notice that there have been many enthusiasts, whom Satan hath notoriously deluded by pretended angelical revelations; and he brings several instances in proof of this assertion ‖. And he farther observes, “ that to such deluded by spirits, I may add the comforts of many, (whom I have known) who long lived in doubt of their salvation next to despair; and when a deceiver hath drawn them

* See *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Vol. III. p. 106.

† See an Account of Mrs Bowignon in the Preface to *The Snake in the Grass*.

‖ See Baxter's *Certainty of the World of Spirits*, &c. chap. 9.

“ them to change their religion from sound doctrine to some error, they have presently been delivered from their trouble, and lived in peace and confidence.—This, says he, cannot be from the nature of the doctrines received, for it befalls divers that turn to contrary doctrines from each other; some who turn *Papists, Quakers, Anabaptists, Antinomians, &c.* and are against each other, yet have sudden peace upon their change*.”—When persons have taken up some new way of worship, though they may have a pleasure and seeming satisfaction in what they have done; yet is this no sure proof that their conduct is right.—It is the nature of all new things, (as a judicious writer observes) especially in religion, to have this effect; but this is a very unsafe way of judging; for I have known, says he, those who having gone through several ways of religion, have been almost ravished with the pleasure of every *new way* at first; and after a while have cast off that, and taken another, because that pleasure of its being *new* could not continue long §.—A strong fancy of having found out a better way may for a time bring relief; but then a little present ease is by no means a proof that we are cured of a dangerous disorder or are quite well.—In some cases it may be a fatal symptom, as a mortified limb is insensible of pain.—Some of the chief leaders in our modern sects complain that there are several amongst them, who substitute an uncertain inward motion in the place of the plain written word, and are in danger of being carried away with false joys and imaginary transports †.—This should teach us to stand upon

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* Ibid. p. 183.

§ Bishop *Stillingfleet's Miscellan. Discourses*, published 1735, p. 308.

† See *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Vol. II. p. 105, &c.

our guard, that we mistake not some sudden impressions made upon our imaginations and passions for the extraordinary operation of God's Spirit in us.—The scripture has given us sufficient warning to *try the spirits whether they be of God*; not to be deceived by outward appearances and pretences; and the frequent instances there are in the world of this kind, may put us in mind of the danger we are in of being imposed upon, unless we are careful to watch against it. How cautious should we then be of admitting any new or immediate revelations, or extraordinary ways of coming at religious knowledge, lest we be led into dangerous errors and false security; we ought to rely entirely on the *holy scriptures*, and receive all our instructions from thence, and use the best means we can to understand them.

We find that the *man of God* was severely punished for leaving that, which he assuredly knew to be the message and word of God, and listening to a person who pretended to fresh revelations, *1 Kings* xiii. 18. without being able to give any sufficient proof that they came from God.—Persons must then never disturb the peace of *Christ's* church, and forsake teachers lawfully set over them, upon account of giving ear to or following those who pretend to extraordinary gifts and assistances; and, from whom they may perhaps hear some good instructions pressed with a seeming religious earnestness.—They must yet remember the Apostle's caution, that those, who make unnecessary *divisions, are to be avoided*, *Rom.* xvi. 17. — The most dangerous heretics and deceivers have often put on the greatest appearance of zeal for religion; *by good words and fair speeches deceiving the hearts of the simple*, *Rom.* xvi. 18.—*There must be heresies or divisions amongst you, that they which are approved may*
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be made manifest, 1 Cor. xi. 19. *Offences will come, but wo to him through whom they come*, Luke xvii. 1.

—A great zeal for the cause which persons undertake, or the outward appearance of much sanctity, are not then of themselves any sure evidence that such persons are called or moved by God.—The *Montanists* of old pretended to a severer piety than others, and taught persons to put on affected sadness and sanctity*. But we must always take care that a becoming *form*, or appearance of *godliness*, be accompanied with the *true power* of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5.

Bold assertions and positive declarations of being in the right, and condemning others who oppose them, (by which means enthusiasts often impose upon the weak and ignorant) must not be looked upon as any proofs of truth or a good cause; “big words are quite another thing from *science*, “or a strong presumption from a regular demonstration †.” — We find there were persons of this disposition in the days of the Apostles, whom they complain of as giving great disturbance in the church of Christ; *Men speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them*, Acts xx. 30. *Many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, teaching things which they ought not*, Tit. i. 10, 11. *Beguiling unstable souls*, 2 Pet. ii. 14. *Zealously affecting them, but not well*, Gal. iv. 17.—Others, as *speaking great swelling words of vanity*, Jud. 16. *Boasting, proud, heady, high-minded, having a form of godliness; of this sort were they who crept into houses and led captive silly women*, 2 Tim. iii. 6.—No doubt but that they pretended to teach them a better, a more pure and excellent way, than what they knew before,

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* Vide Dr *Cave Hist. Literar.* A. D. 172.

† Bishop *Stillingfleet's Appendix to Bishop Tillotson's Rule of Faith*, p. 3.

fore, or were instructed in by the Apostles themselves:—As *many deceivers were then entered into the world*, 2 Epist. John vii. and *many were like to follow their pernicious ways*, 2 Pet. ii. 2. Upon this account the disciples are frequently cautioned *to hold fast their profession*,—to beware of *falling from their steadfastness*, and the like.—As this was then the case, and the doctrines taught by the apostles met with opposition in their own times, we need not so much wonder indeed at what happens now, or at the strange doctrines broached by some; but this should put persons upon their guard, lest *they be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men*, Eph. iv. 14.

C H A P. II.

A more particular inquiry into the nature of Enthusiasm (or false pretences to the Spirit) giving an account of the causes of it, some of its distinguishing marks, and the effects produced by it at several times, more especially in our own nation, and amongst some sects lately sprung up: With observations upon some of their most distinguishing tenets and opinions.

AS enthusiasm is of so dangerous a tendency, and upon this is grounded all those pretences to inspiration or extraordinary gifts of the Spirit claimed in our days, it will not be improper to make a more particular inquiry into it. As to the *cause* of it; it has been observed by judicious writers upon this subject to the following purpose; namely, that strange things may be done by no diviner a cause than a strong fancy impregnated by heated

heated melancholy, for this sometimes warms the brain to a degree that makes it very active and imaginative, full of odd thoughts and unexpected suggestions, which will be often taken for the immediate actings of the holy Spirit: And those thoughts, by the help of pride and self-love, may work so much upon the heightned affections, and they upon the body so far, as to cast it sometimes into a kind of *raptures* and *extasies*; where every dream will be taken for a *prophecy*, and every image of the fancy for a *vision*.—Thus may some persons be inspired in this manner by temper and imagination, and not by design only; nor must we reckon all such pretenders as hypocrites or knowing impostors.—And the ignorant, who understand not *nature*, are apt to take every thing that is vehement to be sacred, or to proceed from some supernatural cause, and so are easily deceived into the belief of those pretensions; and thus have diseases been worshipped for religion:—Accordingly, an ingenious traveller, speaking of an enthusiastic sect amongst the *Turks*, observes, that they are for the most part tradesmen, whose sedentary life affords opportunity and nutriment to melancholy and distempered fancy*.—Again, There is nothing but nature and complection, or a peculiar temperament of body in the illuminations, raptures, new lights, fluency of expression, and other wonderful things of the enthusiast, which are ignorantly taken to be divine communications, to the great abuse of religion and the souls of men †.—By the power of melancholy (which may be looked upon as a kind of natural *inebriation*) the imagination of some persons is
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* Sir Paul Ricault on the Ottoman Empire, B. II. ch. 12.

† See Glanvill's 4th Essay Concerning the Usefulness of real Philosophy to Religion, sect. 4. His 7th Essay on Antifanatical Religion.—Dr Scot on Forms of Prayer, p. 10, &c.

so strangely affected, that they fancy themselves *kings, princes*, and the like; or fall into several odd and extravagant conceits, as to think that they are some kind of beasts, birds, or even made of glass; that they are *dead* and so cannot *eat*; (a late eminent physician assures us that he had met with innumerable instances of this kind ||.)—Though in other things they may have a due use of their reason, be wise and discreet.—Now it is no wonder if, from the same cause (or a bad habit and disordered temperament of body) some should lay claim to inspiration itself, fancy themselves special messengers of God, prophets sent by him, nay even *Christ* himself, *the holy Ghost*, or God the *Father*; (which extravagancies we find some wild enthusiasts have run into through a corrupt and violent imagination *.)—Thus enthusiasm is properly described as consisting in a persuasion that the Spirit of God acts in us in a supernatural manner, whilst what we experience within ourselves is nothing more but the mere natural effect of a heated imagination, violent passion, and the like.—And imagined revelations and visions may as effectually enter into a troubled brain, as well as many strange things fix themselves in the head of a person in a high fever; which he so firmly believes to be true (though there is no reality in them) that it is impossible at that time to persuade him to the contrary.—It is also observed, that the imagination of a melancholy man, who often fancies strange and absurd things, is every whit as strongly affected as that of a man who persuades himself that he is *regenerated*, when he

|| Hæc & sexcenta similia interdum evenire cernimus. Dr Mead's *Monita Medica*, p. 76. *Sacra Medica*, cap. 9. p. 72.

* See Dr More's *Discourse on Enthusiasm*, Sect. 6, 12, 14, &c.—Buxtor's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 3, 32, 170, 525.—*Cassation on Enthusiasm*, p. 106, &c.—Horace mentions a Person, *Qui se credebat miros audire trogædos*, &c.—*Defense of Snake in the Grass*, Part 1st. p. 71.

he has no reason for thinking so, but the heat of imagination, which he experiences within himself.—And one of a disordered imagination may as well in good earnest boast of being daily in converse with Jesus Christ, as persons of low rank fancy themselves to be kings, and the like, which has often happened. Imagination has also a marvellous power to persuade persons to things they have an inclination to believe, and assists in those kind of delusions, whereby persons *come to believe a lie*, 2 Theff. ii. 11.*

Amongst the causes of the increase of enthusiasm we may reckon these two; namely, *ignorance*, and *want of religion*: When persons are not well acquainted with the true nature of religious duties, and many through their own neglect are, I am afraid, defective in this kind of knowledge; it is no wonder, that like children they are *tossed to and fro, and carried about with divers and strange doctrines*.—The ignorant are apt to admire every thing that seems strange and uncommon; no wonder then that enthusiastic leaders gain profelytes amongst such.—And those who have embraced some false and erroneous principles in regard to their *election*, the favour of God, and the like (as if they might be saved without *bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory of God*, Phil. i. 11.) will be more liable to be imposed upon by some teachers who offer salvation upon easier terms than strict obedience.

Enthusiasm also generally increases upon the decay or neglect of true religion; at such times bold pretenders will be ready to start up, and undertake to reform mankind, or put them in the way of salvation by some extraordinary methods; and
many,

* See Mr *Sturtra's Pastoral Letter against Fanaticism*, p. 4, 9, &c.

many, who have been very careless about the knowledge, and *practice* of their duty, will listen to them; expecting now to be healed at once of all their spiritual indispositions by some wonderful remedy, (a mistake they are apt to fall into with regard to the health of their bodies as well as souls) slighting the common and ordinary means offered them; which by the divine assistance, and their own sincere endeavours, might conduct them safely to heaven.—And some by way of punishment, for their former neglect and contempt in this respect, may be suffered to fall into strong delusions, *2 Thess. ii. 11.*

“ As soon as enthusiasm sets up its standard,
 “ and proclaims that all sinners, how much defiled
 “ soever may come to *Jesus*, and leave to him the
 “ care of cleansing them, people will run in crowds
 “ to list themselves under so convenient a disci-
 “ pline; a doctrine that doth not insist on virtue,
 “ and purity of manners, cannot fail of pleasing
 “ them; so that divine providence may sometimes
 “ permit a torrent of fanaticism to overflow the
 “ world, in order to punish the wicked and
 “ thoughtless, and to make trial of those chris-
 “ tians who have a regard for true virtue*.”

“ *Fanaticism* is a fire which heats the mind in-
 “ deed, but heats without purifying; it stimulates
 “ and ferments all the passions, but it rectifies none
 “ of them, and thus leaving the appetites unsub-
 “ dued, pride, vanity and ambition insinuate
 “ themselves into the impotent and disordered
 “ mind, under the disguise of purity, holiness and
 “ perfection †.—And when we consider how inju-
 “ dicious and unstable a large part of mankind is,
 “ together with those various infirmities both of
 “ body

* *Mr Stinstra against Fanaticism*, p. 62.

† *Mr Warburton's Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 207.

“ body and mind, it is no wonder that the ostentation of a sanctified look, a specious address, fantastical oddities, innovations in doctrine and places of teaching, zealous professions of piety, and affectation of scripture phrases, and high pretensions to inspiration should draw and deceive the multitude.”—It is also observed, “ That persons of bad principles will be fond of joining themselves with an *enthusiastic* sect; that hypocrites, and such as *pretend* to sanctity only, are fond of a religion which they can reconcile to their vicious habits and disorderly passions; or those also of a vain and ambitious mind, who are not able to make a figure elsewhere, will become disciples; or persons of wicked lives, who when touched with a sense of guilt, are so hurried and distracted in their thoughts, that they will be apt to betake themselves to a quack remedy, neglecting every regular method.”—Bad men, evil designs, melancholy fancies, Satan’s suggestions, the want of better arguments, or the like, have frequently, in all ages of the church, taken sanctuary under so sacred a cover as immediate revelation or inspiration;—and the leaders of the party often impose even upon pious people of weak understandings, by that *outward shew* of religion, more than what perhaps they generally see practised by those of the communion they belong to;—so that they follow a new doctrine set off with such fair appearances*.—The Pharisees of old, we find, who were so very zealous in making *profelytes*, Matt. xxiii. 15. were also remarkable for their great pretences to holiness above others:—Thus *may* we account, in some measure, for the numbers of those
who

* See *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Vol. II. p. 2, 12. Vol. III. p. 203.—Mr *Sturges* on *Fanaticism*, p. 62. &c.—*Christianity no Enthusiasm*, Preface, p. 3.

who follow the new guides set up amongst us.—And though several may have been deluded by enthusiasm so far as really to imagine that they were inspired, or had an extraordinary commission from God; yet no doubt but that many others have only pretended to this, as the readiest way to defend themselves, and impose upon the ignorant.—And it has been observed, “ That a hypocrite, “ who at first setting out intended only to deceive “ others, at last may become a *dupe* to his own “ illusions, or be actually imposed upon himself*.

Let us in the next place consider some of the evident marks, effects and consequences of enthusiasm.—In the times of the Apostles there were persons falsely pretending to the Spirit; whom the disciples are cautioned to beware of. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God,* 1 John iv. 1.—As there were then many impostors †, who either in imitation of, or out of opposition to the Apostles, pretended to miraculous powers of the Spirit, (as *Pharaoh's* magicians opposed the miracles of *Moses*) it pleased God to bestow upon his church the *gift of discerning spirits*, 1 Cor. xii. 10. or of distinguishing between true and false powers or inspirations; and no doubt, as a writer upon this subject observes, but that one of the tests then of *trying the spirits*, was, “ That “ every spirit that wrought signs to confirm any “ doctrine, which was inconsistent with a pure “ and peaceable life, or the sober use and rules of *moral reason*, must needs be a *false spirit* ‖. Any doctrines then, which tend that way in after ages, must be owing to the spirit of error.—As the extraordinary gift of *discerning spirits* is now ceased,
we

* *Stinstra's Pastoral Letter*, p. 95.

† *Acts* viii. 9. xiii. 8. xvi. 16. xix. 14.

‖ *Dr Hicks's Sermon* on 1 Cor. xii. 4. p. 19.

we ought to give the more heed to the directions of scripture, and the marks which judicious writers have laid down for that purpose; by which means we may hope to preserve ourselves from error and delusion. In all ages of the christian church there have been false pretenders to the extraordinary assistance of the Spirit; but as a learned writer remarks, “ The all-wise conduct of divine providence is very observable, that scripture inspiration, for seventeen hundred years, has maintained its sole privilege; and all the others, so far as they have been considered as such, have passed off as dreams.” He also takes notice that an imaginary inspiration, or false pretences to *the Spirit*, has been one of the subtlest engines of *Satan* in all ages; one of the most refined artifices of his policy; and God has permitted it, probably for the trial of his faithful servants, that they may be proved and exercised every way: — And amongst the several marks which he has given us of discovering these false pretences, one is,—*Disobedience* to rule and order; a contempt of lawful authority; and attempts of drawing people from the regular standing ministry which God has ordained, to follow teachers set up by their own authority; as God is not the author of *confusion*, but of *peace*; and we are to *submit ourselves to every ordinance of man* (that is, every lawful ordinance) *for the Lord’s sake*, 1 Pet. ii. 13. — The Apostles had indeed special commissions from God to oppose human ordinances, and miracles were their credentials. And we find, that one of the rules in the Apostles time to *try the spirits* by, was submission and obedience to the proper governors of the church: — *We are of God*, says St *John*, 1 Ep. iv. 6. *He that knoweth God beareth us; he that is not of God beareth not us. Hereby we know the Spirit of truth, and the Spirit*

spirit of error.—Our author takes notice, “ That
 “ some false pretenders may labour to bring per-
 “ sons from *swearing, drunkenness, and other vices,*
 “ (which is done by the regular ministry in a more
 “ edifying way) but if they lead them into other
 “ sins, such as *faction, schism, contempt of rule*
 “ and authority, and the like; it will be easy to
 “ see that they have not the *Spirit of God* to direct
 “ them in what they do.—Another mark, says he,
 “ of a *false spirit*, is laying down deceitful rules
 “ of judging about the Spirit; as *sensible and vio-*
 “ *lent impulses,* presuming to date their *conversion,*
 “ or new *birth,* from such fanciful impressions,
 “ which the scripture gives no countenance to;
 “ and persons may easily mistake the suggestions
 “ of *Satan* for divine impulses. The most certain
 “ rule to know when we are *led by the Spirit,* is
 “ when we so *think, and do,* as the Spirit of God
 “ directs us in the holy scriptures.—And when upon
 “ such an examination persons can upon good
 “ grounds speak peace to their own consciences,
 “ let them attribute the glory of it to God’s holy
 “ Spirit; but let them not blaze it out to the
 “ world, for that will be seeking honour of men,
 “ and will be a sad token of *an earthly and sensual*
 “ *Spirit*:—Boasting and ostentation are a flat con-
 “ tradiction to the graces boasted of, because *hu-*
 “ *mility and modesty* are the chief graces upon which
 “ the rest hang; and as a person in boasting of his
 “ *wisdom* shews the want of it;—so he who boasts
 “ of the *grace* of the Spirit, betrays his want of it
 “ in that very instance *.”

Another

* See Dr Waterland on *Regeneration*, p. 37, 38.—His Sermon on 1 John iv. 1. in his 2d Volume of Sermons.—See also Mr Brown’s 3d *Essay on the Characteristics of Lord Shaftesbury*, Sect. v. where we have several Marks for distinguishing *Enthusiasm* from *Inspiration*.

Another writer, speaking of enthusiasm (or false pretences to the Spirit) observes, that it will shew itself by making persons proud, censorious, uncharitable, condemners and despisers of others †; and it is to be wished that some amongst us at present would consider their conduct in these respects.

A great admirer of the *mystic divinity* (which teaches the belief of extraordinary impulses and communion with God to souls properly disposed) declares, “ That those who are passionate, conceited, turbulent and notional, confident and immodest, imperious and malicious; who doat upon trifles, and run fiercely into the ways of a sect, are lifted up in the apprehension of the glorious prerogatives of themselves and their party, and scorn all the world besides; for such, be their pretensions what they will to divine communications, illapses and discoveries, I believe them not; their fancies abuse them, or they would us †.” It is then, as a pious writer expresses it, “ The greatest improvement of christian wisdom to distinguish in all professions betwixt *grace* and *humour*; to give God his own glory, and men their own infirmities ||.”

Enthusiasts, as a title to their high pretences, or a proof of their mission, generally distinguish themselves by an unsound kind of *popular eloquence*, a rhapsody of words, and streaming tautologies*. But this *talent*, or volubility of words, may be accounted for upon common principles, or by a natural lively imagination heightened by the passions,

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† See Preface to *Snake in the Grass*.

† Vid. *Theolog. Myst.* Disc. 2d, p. 24.

|| Bishop Hall's *Occas. Medit.*—That upon the Sight of a fanatical Zealot.

* Dr More on *Enthusiasm*. Sect 21, 56.

which occasions a quick succession of ideas in the mind. Hence it is observed, that some persons of slender judgments abound with words on subjects very often of small importance, on which men of sound understanding have little to say.—Thus some fanatics finding that they have a flow of words at command, weakly conclude, that they have this faculty as an immediate gift from God §. A fluency of words, or a rapturous and pathetic manner of speaking in *extemporary prayer* or preaching, may proceed in a great measure from a particular *warmth* of imagination or temper; and is of itself no *sure sign* that a person prays by the *Spirit*, as appears by what has been before observed.—To pray by the *Spirit* is to pray with a true *faith*, and our *whole desire*, *lifting up holy hands* with pure hearts unto God.—Persons may then *pray by the Spirit* in the use of a good and pious form of prayer.—And here we may just observe, that those very rapturous, figurative or enthusiastic kind of expressions, made use of by some writers of *devotional tracts*, seem not to be well suited for *general use*; and may be often discouragements to those who cannot come up to the same rapturous warmth in their devotion, though they may be religious and faithful christians. Such methods may be of no real advantage to religion in general, as they may throw some good, though weak, persons into doubts and scruples about their *spiritual* condition; make others more indifferent by looking on religion as a very difficult or impracticable sort of service; and even expose it to the contempt of others, who will be apt to represent it as mere enthusiasm, or the effects of a heated imagination. As our forms of address to
 God

§ See Mr *Stinstra's Pastoral Letter*, p. 15.—Imperitis quoque, si modò sunt aliquo affectu concitati, verba non defunt. *Quiritil. Inst.* lib. x. cap. 7.

God should not be offered in flat, low and unaf-fecting expressions; so ought they also to be plain, easy and intelligible, that we may *pray with the Spirit and understanding also*; suited (as much as may be) to the condition and temper of those, who use or join in them; and formed in imitation of that *perfect* model of prayer given us by our Saviour, in which we find a noble and affecting plainness and simplicity, which our church has happily imitated in her public forms of prayer; an evident proof that our first *reformers* or compilers of our liturgy were acted by a true Spirit of piety and devotion.—There ought to be a proper life, warmth and vigour in the performance of those religious exercises, yet without being too much inflamed or hurried on by a kind of violence or excess, the true cause of which, if strictly examined into, might perhaps oftentimes be found rather the effect of passion, or natural complection and constitution, than of rational affection and serious meditation.

The passions, which God has implanted in our nature, are in themselves very useful in exciting our affections, assisting and quickening us in the pursuit and performance of religious exercises; but we must take care not to be transported by them beyond the limits of sober and rational devotion, or run into any wrong grounded excesses in religion; do or say nothing but what we can approve of in our cooler moments, when we have leisure to examine into the true nature of things; and it will be proper to try both our opinions and compositions by this test or standard.

But to return.—St James tells us, *The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy*, James iii. 17.

A learned writer mentions this text as a particular rule by which we are enabled to *try the Spirits*, and defend ourselves from imposture and the seduction of *fanaticism*; and he observes, that we may safely pronounce, that the person in whom these marks are not to be found, hath not the Spirit of God, or the wisdom which is *from above*, which marks he has considered and explained at large*. I shall briefly point out a few of them.—As the wisdom or knowledge *from above* must be such as may be *understood*; this, he observes, contradicts the pretensions of *Jacob Behmen* and his followers; where we have a heap of unmeaning and unintelligible words, as well as unsound and impure doctrines.—And as the fruit of the *Spirit is in all truth*, Eph. v. 9. *Truth* here must refer to christian doctrines, and so consists in orthodoxy and right opinion; but a chief leader amongst the *Methodists* has declared publicly, “That *orthodoxy*, or right opinion, is at best but a very slender part of religion, if any part at all †.” Here we have *reason* discarded or separated from religion, as it is no longer to be employed in distinguishing right from wrong opinions.

This wisdom of the gospel is *peaceable*; much to be suspected then, says he, is the *wisdom* of some of our modern saints, who discharge their pretended ministry in such a manner, as must necessarily violate the peace of the *established church*, which they profess to support and reform: “For what greater
“ violation of peace than a *schismatical division*?
“ What higher provocation to resentment than a
“ separation, which implies a charge of moral or
“ spiritual unworthiness in the body left? That
“ peaceable wisdom from above seems to assure
“ us,

* See Dr *Warburton's* Sermon. Vol. I. p. 257, &c.

† From Mr *Wesley's Plain Account*, &c. p. 4.

“ us, that a pretence of superior purity and holiness will not justify persons in separating from a religious community, in which they acknowledge all the essentials of christian faith, as delivered in scripture, to be publicly held and professed.” And the speaking evil of *dignities*, scurrilous invectives against the governors and pastors of the established church, is yet another more enormous violation of *this peace*. “ Hurried on by the fervor of *fanaticism* they seem to forget indeed that they live in a christian country, and are carried into a land of pagans and idolaters, with the rulers of this world risen up to oppose the word of life; and under these delusions it is no wonder they should despise order, insult government, and even dare the magistrates resentment.—Another mark of heavenly *wisdom* is its being *gentle and easy to be entreated*; not a rigid reprover of the indifferent manners of others, nor obstinately tenacious of its own.—St *Paul* became all things *to all men to gain some*: The case is different, says he, with our inspired sectaries, who are apt to condemn every thing which is not agreeable to their own humour. Heavenly wisdom is *without partiality*; but one mark of the enthusiastic ferment is a rashness in flinging about the judgments of God; so that when an unhappy accident befalls their opposers, they consider it as God’s owning their own cause, and would think it ingratitude to call it by any other name than a *judgment*.—In accusing their enemies they aggravate the least indiscretion, in excusing their friends they extenuate the worst prevarications.”

The same author, in another discourse on our Saviour’s words, *Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*, Matt. x. 16. has fully vindicated the gospel, and the blessed author of it, from the imputation

tation of enthusiasm.—He observes that no person, under the influence of a fanatic spirit, would be either forward to give this kind of direction in the text, or fond to see it observed; for religious enthusiasm, as we find by sad experience, places its chief glory in despising human prudence, and in violating human peace.—The holy founder of our faith has quelled the wildness of the *fanatic* in the command, *to be wise as serpents*; he hath checked the ambition of the enthusiast in the command, of being *harmless as doves*.—St Paul, who had formed his conduct on this monition of his Master's, became *all things* to all men, that he might gain some; but modern enthusiasts comply in nothing, says he, through a visionary fervor to *gain all*.—The Apostle, with this picture of wisdom before his eyes was polite, always watchful to take honest advantages of every principle and practice of his adversaries in order to recommend the gospel to their favour.—The *fanatic* is rude, positive and overbearing, and ever prompt to misrepresent the right opinion of his adversary*.

Another ingenious writer, who seems to be quite master of his subject, speaking of the *characters* of fanaticism, observes, amongst other things, that enthusiasts shew a contempt of *reason*; and no wonder, as their imagination is full of absurd propositions, which reason disallows; and as they think that the *Spirit* of God acts immediately in them, they make no great account of the holy scriptures, or imagine that they have little need of their directions: They commonly make little account of *moral virtue*, nay often speak of it with contempt, and the transports of a heated imagination take away the true relish for rational and cool morality; nay to give one's self up earnestly

to

* Vol. ib. Sermon VII.

to it is, according to them, *trusting in our own righteousness*, and expecting to be saved by our works. *Faith* is the only thing they boast of, not a faith built upon true gospel foundations, but on their own ill-grounded imaginations and pretended *inward feelings*; and they have little taste for any thing else but transports, sensible alarms, and strong emotions, which agitate the soul; and in this consists what they call the work of *regeneration*.—But whatever *assurance* persons may think they have of being of the number of the *elect*; and though this notion may afford them much joy at present, yet, as our author justly observes, “ If they find themselves not well disposed for the careful performance of the several christian duties, or think that God takes little notice of such things, they may conclude that their joy is not an operation of the Spirit of God.”

Such as are given up to enthusiasm are commonly puffed up with pride, and treat others with contempt, as they imagine that they are the peculiar favourites of heaven, and cannot lose this great privilege.—*Enthusiasm* has also a remarkable effect oftentimes on the *outward appearance*.—Thus it is observed, “ When the imagination has a bent to *sadness*, it changes the very *look* of a fanatic, disfigures his features, and gives him a gloomy, mournful countenance, by which he believes he ought to be distinguished from the world; so that it is not at all strange that these pretended elect should boast that they know one another by their looks *.”

This last observation seems also to hold good with regard to some of our own sectaries; but a serene joy and cheerfulness, built on the consciou-

* See Mr *Stinstra's* Pastoral Letter, p. 17, 19, 22, 25, &c, with which Mr *Rimius's* *Candid Narrative* agrees.

ness of inward virtue, and the hopes of eternal happiness through *Christ*, may be considered as a kind of grateful homage to our Almighty Benefactor; and is more agreeable to the genius of the gospel (the true source of peace and joy) than that gloomy melancholy which diffuses itself over the countenances of some *religionists*.

It can certainly be of no use to true religion to deny the assistance of *human learning* and *rational* inquiries; no persons, one would think, could reckon such helps unnecessary, but ignorant or wild *enthusiasts*, the better to defend themselves and make their strange opinions pass upon the world as divine truths. A noted *German* enthusiast (and promoter of the *mystical divinity*) who has his admirers amongst us, excludes, we find, from his books *the men of reason*, for whom, he says, “ He has wrote nothing; he that will understand the true way, let him depart from and forsake his *own reason*.— Reason must be blinded, kept under, and not allowed to stir, we must reject it as it leads us *astray*:—Human learning, governed by human reason, hath from age to age mistaken the true end and use of the scriptures.—The scripture only speaketh to the heart and conscience of man, which is not enlightned with notions formed from the written letter of the word.—He tells us there is in his writings, “ That which no reason may understand or comprehend *. He speaks of a *mystery*, which is the deep ground of all things, of all nature and all creatures; and no ability of natural reason can so much as look into it.—That the philosophy of this mystery is to lead to *Christ*, as the life of the soul; not as notionally apprehended, or *historically known*,
“ but

* Si bonâ fide quæras; concreto vultu, suspensio supercilio altum est, aiunt. *Tert. adv. Valent.*

“ but as experimentally found, speaking and working in the soul, &c*.”

Though true religion or christianity consists in the inward and spiritual effect which it has upon the soul, and must be a *loving principle* within ; yet, as a means to attain this blessing, we must diligently *search the scriptures* ; and by the use of our reason, and the best means in our own power (the divine blessing concurring) endeavour to understand them ; and be assured of the truth of the *history, facts* and doctrine therein contained, *laying up the words of this book in our hearts and in our soul*, Deut. xi. 18. which are to be the necessary rule and guide in our religious concerns till the end of the world ; begging of God that we may be enabled by his holy Spirit to walk as *children of light, worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called*.—Reason was certainly given us as a guide in our religious, as well as other inquiries ; and it is necessary to try by this test our *inward feelings* and ideas, to avoid any dangerous impositions ; and in order to distinguish between what is truly spiritual, and what is the effect of natural constitution, passion, and the like.—And when some of our *moral* writers speak so much of inward impressions, *sentiment* and feeling, as the rules of our actions, they may be led into several errors, or enthusiastical extravagancies, unless they try their opinions by serious and rational examination.—A judicious writer observes, “ That sound understanding and reason is “ that *on* which, and *by* which, God principally “ operates, when he finds it proper to support our “ weakness by *his Spirit* ;—that true virtue cannot “ derive

* See this Account, and much more to the same Purpose, from the Writings of *Jac. Behmen*, as given us by Mr *Law* in his *Way to Divine Knowledge*, p. 113, 119, 243, 256, &c.—See also *Cressi Histor. Quaker. Amstelod.* 1695, p. 557, &c.

“ derive its origin but from a sound understand-
 “ ing; and that he consequently is most filled with
 “ the Spirit of God, who reasons on things con-
 “ cerning religion with most penetration, and who
 “ practices virtue the best.—That religion without
 “ reason is in reality no religion at all; and chris-
 “ tianity may in particular glory in being a *reason-*
 “ *able religion*, Rom. xii. 1. and the more a per-
 “ son strives to banish reason from religion, the
 “ more undoubtedly he departs from the true na-
 “ ture of the gospel.”—So that enthusiasm may be
 looked upon as fatal and dangerous to the reason
 and understanding of man, and to almost every
 good disposition of the soul*. And in regard to
 those moral writers, who are charged with declin-
 ing to make reason the judge of truth and right;
 and who speak so much of *feeling*, *sentiment*, *sen-
 sation*, and the like; yet, notwithstanding their con-
 tempt of reason, they cannot forbear making use
 of it to establish their system of *sensitive* philoso-
 phy †.

It seems as much designed by the author of na-
 ture, that rational creatures should use their rea-
 son and steer by it; as it is by the shipwright, that
 the *pilot* should direct the vessel by the use of the
 rudder he has fitted to it; the rudder would not
 be there if it were not to be used, nor would *reason*
 be implanted in any nature only to be not culti-
 vated and neglected †.

The doctrine of the *mystics* directs persons not
 only to renounce their *senses*, but also their under-
 standing, or all their intellectual powers and facul-
 ties that are natural; by which means they may in
 time

* See Mr *Stinstra's Pastoral Letter*, p. 6, 31, &c.

† See an Estimate of the Profit and Loss of Religion, with
 Reference to some *Essays of Morality*, London 1754.

‡ *Wollaston's Religion of Nature*, sect. 3. prop. 11.

time attain to an inexpressible union with God, the height of mortal exaltation *. Mr *Addison*, speaking of the *Pietists* a sect then increasing in *Switzerland*) observes, “ That they were to sink themselves into an entire repose and tranquillity of mind, and in this state of *silence* to attend to the secret illapse and flowings in of the holy Spirit ; to give themselves up wholly to his conduct and directions, so as neither to speak, move or act, but as they find his impulse on their souls ;—to avoid as much as possible what the world calls innocent pleasures, lest they divert them from him who is to be the only delight of their whole beings ; to make a covenant with their *senses*, so far as to shun the smell of a *rose* or *violet*, and to turn their eyes from a beautiful prospect †.”—But it cannot surely be any part of religion ungratefully to neglect or despise those natural beauties and ornaments of the creation, intended by the divine goodness for our innocent amusement or entertainment, whilst we continue in this world.—A great promoter of *Quietism*, or the *Mystical Divinity*, in *France*, preached up also an entire self-renunciation and tranquillity of soul ; the annihilation of all its faculties, inward worship, and the like §.

God may, no doubt, when he sees proper, reveal himself to the minds of men, and give them also a full assurance that he is the author of it, but this is only to be expected on extraordinary occasions ; and we must carefully guard against enthusiasm and delusions, which we shall be in danger of falling into, if we unwarrantably give up ourselves

* See *Casaulon* on Enthusiasm, chap. 3. p. 149, &c.

† See Mr *Addison*'s Travels, in his Account of *Switzerland*.

§ See *Voltaire*'s History of *Lewis XIV.* Vol. II. p. 287, in his Account of *Madam Guion*.

selves to expect divine illuminations or extraordinary directions, and make little use of our reason in inquiring whether they be so or no. “ One
 “ would think, says a judicious author, these *mystic*
 “ writers scarce look upon *reason* as a gift of the
 “ all-wise God, but rather of some evil principle,
 “ so much they fear to be guided by it.—And again,
 “ I could never find any solidity in the *mystics* ;
 “ however the heart may be affected, if the under-
 “ standing does not go along with it, it is to be
 “ feared the impressions will not be very lasting *.”

Those *mystics* or enthusiasts have no authority to produce from scripture for that uncommon and unintelligible manner of expressing themselves which they affect †, for their pretended religious transports, extasies and raptures, or thinking that they can by such means, and by renouncing their senses and knowledge, come to a more real union with God and Christ than otherwise is to be obtained ; —that they are not to understand by *sense* or fancy as other men, but by a kind of *union* of substance with the supreme cause of all things ; an union that may be *felt* but not *expressed* or understood, by which the soul is actually *deified*, and all operations of the understanding cease ‖.—That noted mystical enthusiast *H. Nicolas*, a *Dutchman* (founder of the sect called *The Family of Love*) boasted that he was *Godded with God*,—*consubstantiated with the Deity*, and the like :—The person who gives us this account from his own writings, observes, how dangerous

* Mrs *Cockburn's* Works, Vol. II. p. 294, 343.

† *Transubstantiones mysticas* —Potentiarum annihilationes.—Absorptionem in amplexu sponſi.—Orationem in *Quies* passivâ.—Ebrietatem spiritualem.—Uniones superessentialiales.—Ecstasim continuam auditus melodie cœlestis, &c. — See Mr *Coventry's* *Discourse on False Religion*, Part I. p. 54, 63, &c. (Edit. 3d, 1753) where you have a large Collection of those phrases.

‖ *Casaubon* on *Enthusiasm*, p. 147—168.

gerous it is for high-flown enthusiasts to pretend to no less *union with God* than real and *physical deification*; making their union with God the same with that of *Christ's*;—for if so, *divine adoration* would belong to them; or, if not, it is a sign they are not God; and that therefore *Christ is not*.—So that such notions tend to confound or destroy our religion*.

If they mean by *deification*, a being *transformed by the renewing of their mind*, or being partakers of *the holy Ghost and the divine nature*, Heb. vi. 4. 2 Pet. i. 4.—by which is meant only partaking of *spiritual assistance and divine purity*; why do they not express themselves in plainer terms? — “ To
 “ assert that the *union* of any true christian with
 “ God is the same with that of *Christ*, is a bold,
 “ useless and groundless opinion, inconsistent with,
 “ and destructive of, the christian religion †.”

The leading persons amongst the *Quakers* were formerly highly blameable for their unguarded and rash expressions about their *unity and equality* with God and *Christ* §.

Popish enthusiasts have laid claim also to *perfection*, and loved to express themselves in an unusual manner, as being *ingulfed in knowledge of the Creator, in the illuminated life, and assured way of perfection*, &c ||.—And it has been observed that the *Mystics, Molinists or Quietists*, agree in many of their notions with our *Quakers* ‡.

This *mystic theology* is thought to have been much improved by some enthusiastick *Arabians* of old,
 (amongst

* See Dr *More's Mystery of Godliness*, B. i. chap. 5. — B. vi. chap. 12.

† Dr *More*, ib. p. 15.

§ *Snake in the Grass*, sect. 2 and 3, and Defence of it, the first Part, p. 87, &c.

|| *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Vol. I. p. 42. Vol. III. p. 362.

‡ Vide *Craik's Hist. Quaker*. p. 340, &c. where the Comparison is drawn.

(amongst whom *Mahomet* was born) who took it from the *Grecian* philosophers; and it was first adopted amongst christians, by some who were admirers of the philosophy of *Plato*.—And it may be looked upon as of dangerous consequence, especially to persons of ordinary capacities and weak heads; who are apt thereby to turn religion into mere fancy.—It is apt also to fill the parties with pride and vainglory; and may prove a discouragement to those, necessarily engaged in an *active life*, to be told that there are such *perfect states* beyond them, and it tends to open a door to manifold *superstitions* and errors: And a person, who had been a priest in the church of *Rome*, observes, that the doctrine of *transubstantiation* was owing to the whimsies of those contemplative and *mystic divines* †.

A pious writer, who was willing to allow as much as could be reasonably desired to *holy meditations*, *religious feeling* and *experience*, and who has been blamed by some for going into extremes of this nature ||, yet plainly declares, “That when
 “religious persons suffer transportations beyond
 “the support of reason, they suffer they know not
 “what, and call it what they please, as *raptures*,
 “*extasies*, and the like; which even amongst the
 “Apostles were so seldom that they were not
 “spoken of.” And that those visions and raptures mentioned in the New Testament, *Acts* x. 10. xi. 5. were not excesses of religion, but prophetic revelations to great and important purposes, which these others are not: And they may be suspected to be nothing else besides too intense and indiscreet
 pressure

† See *Casaubon on Enthusiasm*, p. 147, &c. where he gives us an historical Account of the *Mystical Theology*.—*Frauds of Romish Monks*, &c. by *G. Emilliane*, Vol. I. p. 194.

|| See *Discourse on False Religion*, by Mr *Coventry*, Part I. p. 52, &c. where he is blamed on this Account.

pressure of the faculties of the soul, or a credulous, busy or untamed fancy. — And there have been some religious, who have acted madness, and pretended to *inspiration*. — This, says he, we are assured of, that many illusions have come in the likeness of *visions*, and absurd fancies under the pretence of *raptures*; and what some have called the *spirit* of prophecy hath been the *spirit* of lying; and *contemplation* nothing but *melancholy*; and *stillness* of prayer hath been a *meer dream* and *hypochondriacal* devotion; and hath ended in pride or despair.

He mentions *Cassian*, an admirer of the *mystical divinity* formerly, as commending the following saying of *Antony* the hermit, namely, “ That is not a perfect prayer in which the votary does either understand himself, or the prayer: meaning, that persons eminently religious were *pathics* in devotion*,” suffering ravishments of senses, transported beyond the uses of humanity. — I will not say, as he farther observes, that all violences or extravagancies of a religious fancy are illusions; but, I say, they are all unnatural, not hallowed by the warrant of revelation, nothing reasonable, nothing *secure*. — And the surest way of uniting us to God is by *faith* and obedience; in these peace and safety dwell †.

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* *Divina patientes.*

† Bishop *Taylor's Great Exemplar*, p. 93, &c. of *Meditation*. — See also *Casaubon on Enthusiasm*, chap. 3. concerning *Contemplative Enthusiasm* — And the 34 Articles drawn up by the Archbishop of *Paris*, the Bishop of *Meaux*, &c. A. D. 1695, upon Account of *Madam Guion's Mystical Notions or Maxims of Quietism*; and also their *Declaration*; with the *Maxims of the Saints* concerning the *interior Life*, by the Archbishop of *Cambray*, who agreed with her in several of her Opinions. — These three, with the *French King's* and the Archbishop of *Cambray's* Letters to the *Pope* on that Subject are published together, *Lond.* 1698. — “ We no longer, says *Voltaire*, read the unintelligible Book of *The Maxim of the Saints*, but we still peruse the same Author's *Telemachus*.” See his *Select Pieces*, *Lond.* 1754, p. 152 — And his *Age of Lewis XIV.* Vol. I. chap. 34

A judicious writer observes, that whosoever applies himself sincerely to the study of *truth* and practice of religion, has no cause to be uneasy, as if he was void of the Spirit of God; though he does not *feel* within himself those lively impressions, and those emotions of soul and agitations which others experience §.

According to the *mystical divinity* religion becomes a very difficult kind of science, and above vulgar or common apprehension; which could never be the design of the gospel, as it was intended to make all sort of persons *wise unto salvation*, and lead them on to *perfection*; it is plain and easy to be understood in all things, which necessarily conduce to this great end, so that *he may run that readeth*.—And it teacheth us to avoid *unprofitable questions which gender strifes*, 2 Tim. ii. 23.—and *vain babblings*, 1 Tim. vi. 20. or empty discourses of theology, and forms of speaking unusual in the church of Christ, as some have understood the words ||, not to *strive about words to no profit*, 2 Tim. ii. 14. to beware lest we be misled or *carried away captive by philosophy and vain deceit*, or seduced with *enticing words*, Col. ii. 4, 8.

Amongst the effects of enthusiasm, in some melancholy dispositions, may be also reckoned those great and voluntary severities, which have been exercised by *beatbens* as well as christians;—we have remarkable instances of this kind amongst some pious and well-meaning christians in the more early ages of the gospel, who in this respect were guided by an enthusiastic imagination, rather than by reason and the precepts of the gospel; and therefore in regard to this practice are rather objects of our pity than imitation; and instead of the
divine

§ Mr *Stinstra's Pastoral Letter*, p. 8.

|| See Dr *Ham.* and *Leigh's Crit. Sac.*

divine approbation at the last day for such behaviour, it may be asked, who hath *required this at your hand*, Is. i. 12 *.—Several of the religious orders, and some enthusiasts in the church of *Rome*, seem to have copied after them in the same kind of practices, and added a great many inventions of their own, some of which seem more suitable to the heathen superstition †, than to the doctrines of the gospel.

As an example of the infectious nature of *enthusiasm*, as well as of the extravagant excesses it sometimes drives persons to, we may just mention a remarkable account given in history of immoderate castigation or whipping, which prevailed in the thirteenth century: It was first begun in *Italy* by some *enthusiasts*, and whole nations, we find, became at once infected with this phrensy, and it spread like an *epidemical* distemper; though most persons indeed at that time ascribed it to pure devotion †.

But if this be true devotion, or a proper regard paid to the Deity, many infidels and heathens have far exceeded christians in this kind of religion.—We are told that thousands of *Bonzes* (a sect of heathens in the eastern part of the world) devote their lives to exercises and penances that terrify nature; some pass their days naked and in chains, others wear an *iron collar*, that bends their bodies double, and keeps them always towards the earth †. Even

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* For an Account of some of those kind of *Severities*, see *Bingham's Antiq.* B. vii. chap. 2. sect. 5. chap. 3. sect. 16.—*Mr Fortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 232, &c.—See also *Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c.* Vol. III. Preface, p. 19.

† See *Remarks on a Discourse of Free-Thinking*, sect. 50.

‡ See *Casaubon on Enthusiasm*, p. 160, &c.

§ See *Voltaire's Plan for A New History of the Human Mind*, p. 153. *Tavernier's Travels into India*, Part ii. B. iii. chap. 6. where we have surprizing Accounts of the Penances of the *Faquirs*.

amongst the *Pharisees* of old there was a mixture of this kind of hypocrisy;—by way of mortification, some of them bound up in the folds of their garments *sharp thorns* to prick them constantly, whether sitting or walking, to put them in mind of their duty*.

And amongst the enthusiastic followers of that noted impostor *Sabbatai Sevi*, in the year 1666, (who pretended to be the *Messias*) we find that some fasted so long, that they were famished to death; many *whipped* themselves severely, and voluntarily underwent other severe sufferings, out of a notion of religion †.

“ False religion has frequently put men upon
 “ unnatural and excessive rigours and austerities ;
 “ but christianity, like the blessed author of it,
 “ keeps clear of all extremes ; it abridgeth us of
 “ no pleasure within the bounds of purity or inno-
 “ cence ; nor doth it oblige us to extinguish our
 “ natural appetites and passions, but to govern
 “ and moderate them §. The austerities to which
 “ people have submitted upon a false persuasion of
 “ religion are almost as incredible as they are
 “ shocking ||.”

Though religion forbids us to indulge ourselves in the intemperate or unlawful use of the things of *this world*, yet it by no means prohibits us to use or enjoy it at all, 1 *Cor.* vii. 31.— or look with contempt upon what was providentially designed to comfort and support us in our passage through this life to another ; so that by using those natural blessings

* *Faciebant grandes fimbrias, et acutissimas in eis spinas ligabant, ut ambulantes, & sedentes interdum pungerentur. Jerom. in Matt. cap. 23. tom. 6.*

† See Bishop *Kidder's Demon. of the Messias*, Part iii. chap. 10.

§ Dr *Leland's Reflections on Lord Bolingbroke's Letters*, Preface,

p. 14.

|| Mr *Cocentry's History of False Religion*, Part ii. p. 17.

blessings set before us with moderation and *thankfulness*, we pay a grateful acknowledgment to the great author and giver of them.

Enthusiasm is often attended with very dangerous consequences, both of a public and private nature.—A judicious writer observes, “ That it
 “ lays persons open to all the delusions of *Satan*,
 “ and their own distempered brain; takes religion
 “ from its true foundation, teaching those that
 “ are deluded by it, to lay the stress of all upon
 “ raptures, heats and mysterious notions; whilst
 “ they forget or scorn the plain christianity, which
 “ is an imitation of *Christ* in charity, humility,
 “ and the exercise of all virtue*.” In regard to
 the peace of the *church* it has been observed, “ That
 “ enthusiasm has been the root of the greatest evils
 “ which have befallen it; that from this the divi-
 “ sions amongst ourselves took their rise in a great
 “ measure; and that the sects, which had increased
 “ in their numbers by means of enthusiasm, have
 “ by degrees left it off, in order to their own bet-
 “ ter establishment, as it is a perfect opposition
 “ to all rule and government; and there can be
 “ no order kept where it is admitted.—From this
 “ also arose the popish legends of their saints,
 “ which have almost overthrown the belief of the
 “ true miracles of *Christ* and his Apostles †.” And
 a learned writer remarks, that the authors of the
 lives of some of our *modern enthusiasts* have injured
 the christian religion, by representing them as en-
 dowed with most of the spiritual *gifts* mentioned in
 the gospel; and, having given some particular ex-
 amples, he adds, “ That unless God in his mercy
 “ rebuke the spirit of *enthusiasm*, which is gone out

G 2

“ amongst

* See Mr *Glanvil's* fourth Essay concerning *The Usefulness of
 real Philosophy to Religion*, sect. 4.

† See Preface to *Snake in the Grass*.

“ amongst us, we may have as many *legends* from
 “ some sort of *protestants* as we formerly have had
 “ from the church of *Rome* ||.” And this observa-
 tion is very applicable to the present times, as we
 have so many surprising accounts given us in some
journals, and other treatises, lately published.

And it has been found true by experience, that
 enthusiasm does not only corrupt religion, but,
 when it has attained sufficient strength, has often
 openly violated the established laws of society, and
 overturned *civil governments*;—and when the pub-
 lic peace is disturbed, or in danger at any time by
 the practices of *enthusiasts*, or any opinions enter-
 tained by them, they can lay no claim to *toleration*,
 or an exemption from punishment.

Amongst the several clear proofs that might be
 given of the extravagancy and dangerous nature of
enthusiasm, we may give an instance or two from
 the behaviour of the *French prophets* in the begin-
 ing of this century.—When they first sprung up in
France, we are told that their chief leader, who
 set up a *school of prophets*, taught them, that if they
 had *faith* as a grain of mustard-seed, they should
 be able to *remove mountains*; and he himself fell
 oftentimes into extasies and convulsions, and re-
 mained immoveable, with his hair standing an end,
 and all the symptoms of a man that was beside
 himself; the youth under his care were soon seized
 with the same *prophesying* humour; prophets mul-
 tiplied, and the spirit of phrenzy redoubled, which
 is indeed a proof of the dangerous and infectious
 nature of enthusiasm. They were unhappily hurried on
 to wicked and cruel practices; for in the year 1703,
 they seized some of the king's *collectors* of taxes and
 hanged them; fell on the priests they met with
 and

|| See *The Spirit of Enthusiasm exercised*, by Dr Hicks, 1683,
 p. 44.

and massacred them; shooting some others who refused to change their religion and come over to their party.—We are told that the son of the Marquis of *Guiscard* was amongst them (the person who afterwards in *England* wounded Lord *Harley* with a knife when brought before the *council*) and that he encouraged those enthusiastic fanatics in *France*, with hopes of succours from *England* and *Holland**. —Such enthusiasts bring a scandal to the reformation; and it afforded *Lewis* a plausible pretence in the latter part of his reign for endeavouring to *extirpate* the protestant religion in his dominions.—Such practices give those a dislike to the *reformation*, who are kept in ignorance of the wise reasons urged in its behalf; and the devil in such cases seems to exert his utmost power to stop the progress of true religion.—We have another remarkable account of the danger of enthusiasm from the case of one *Lacey* (a person of good estate) who was seduced by the *French prophets* in *England*: After he became one of them, he left his lawful wife, and took one who was reckoned a *prophetess* amongst them, and they were joined together at a meeting of the *inspired*, and lived together afterwards as man and wife.—He published a long letter in his defence, declaring, “ That he was threatened with *eternal de-*
“ *struction* if he refused the orders of the Spirit for
“ doing it; and that believing it to be the word of
“ Him, who had power to inflict the same, he
“ could not but subject himself to the *Father of*
“ *Spirits*; in firm hope to live *by faith*.” — The person who gives us this account, had himself been deluded for a while by those deceivers; and he says, “ That he believes, had the same *spirit* commanded
“ him to kill his wife he must have obeyed it,

G 3

“ though

* See *Voltaire's History of the Age of Lewis XIV.* Vol. II. p. 258, &c.

“ though directly contrary to the *commandment*,
 “ Thou shalt do no murder; by reason, says he,
 the spirit had taught us to this effect; namely,
 “ That *true and saving faith* consisted in an im-
 “ plicit belief in, and strict obedience to, what-
 “ ever the *spirit* commanded, without consulting
 “ our reason, or having regard to the commands
 “ of God, as revealed in scripture *.” — So dan-
 gerous in its consequences is some sort of enthu-
 siastic delusion; and the more dangerous, as per-
 sons imagine they are acting upon good principles,
 when they are doing the *greatest evil*. It has been
 also declared formerly by other *enthusiasts*, “ That
 “ whatsoever the spirit (as they fancied) told them
 “ was a *truth*, their salvation depended on observ-
 “ ing it §.”

It has been justly observed, that where natural
 causes or particular habit of body inclines to *enthu-*
siasm, yet these causes do not act irresistibly, unless
 a person by his own fault gives way to them and
 indulges them; and that though the *devil* may do
 much in hurrying them on in such cases to do what
 they ought not; yet that God will not suffer them
 to be tempted above what they can bear; pro-
 vided they give not themselves up to such delu-
 sions, through pride, or any wicked or worldly de-
 signs ||.—*Enthusiasts* are the objects of our compas-
 sion, whilst their mistaken zeal and behaviour may
 be accounted for in a good measure from natural
 constitution, indisposition of body, or the like
 causes.—But when (as is too often the case) they
 fall into uncharitableness against their *fellow chris-*
tians,

* See the Case of one *Samuel Keimar*, as published by himself,
 p. 58. &c.

§ See a Book called *Conspiracy for pretended Reformation*, by
 Dr *Cofins*, p. 42. concerning *Arthington* and *Coppinger* in Queen
Elizabeth's Days.

|| Dr *More* on *Enthusiasm*, Sect. 51, &c.

tians, turn *accusers of their brethren*, are puffed up with pride and vainglory; esteem themselves righteous, and *despise others*, (who have as good or better pretensions to true godliness than themselves) when they treat their lawful governors with contempt, and even slight some of the divine ordinances of *holy scripture*, or run into wicked practices, under pretence of particular commands of God; or enjoying peculiar privileges above others.—This kind of behaviour must be looked upon as quite inexcusable; and they must be accountable to God for it, and for the errors they led several unwary people into;—and are punishable by the laws of man for the violences committed against the peace and safety of human society.

Enthusiasm is also oftentimes prejudicial to the temporal affairs of particular persons, as it causes them to neglect their proper business and care for their families; whilst others enrich themselves perhaps at their expence.—It is also pernicious to *moral virtue*, the practice of which is so expressly required in the gospel; whereas enthusiasm generally teaches, that religion consists chiefly in *inward feelings of grace*, emotions of the heart, and the like; and that to set too much value on virtue would be to lessen God's grace.—But this is to give encouragement to the viciousness of the age, a thing so much lamented by all faithful christians; and when we find any persons entertaining such notions, we may be assured that *spirit is not from God*.

As the practice of virtue is the great ornament of religion, when instead of this persons deliver their own dreams or groundless imaginations for true christianity, this must expose it to the contempt of *deists* and *infidels*, who will not be at the pains to distinguish true from false *revelations*.—Reason must then be our guard against the enthusiast of a warm
 G 4 imagi-

imagination; and we must carefully try all our religious opinions by the standard of God's word in holy scripture. — Enthusiasm also introduces the yoke of *human authority*; seeing the persons, who pretend to be directed immediately by the Spirit of God, may require of their disciples, that their orders and instructions be received as so many oracles; and this we find true by experience*. Thus there may be an easy transition from enthusiasm to *popery*, as there is nothing else to be done, but declaring that they are assured by the Spirit, that the *church of Rome* is the true church, founded on the Pope, as an infallible guide.—No wonder then if the *papists* have been busy in promoting enthusiasm amongst us, in hopes of turning it to their own great advantage, as popish infallibility, and the immediate inspiration of some enthusiasts, are not founded on scripture; so do such pretensions tend to make this rule of our faith in a great measure useless; and multiply controversies instead of deciding them.

Enthusiasm often leads to many crimes; amongst those, which some modern enthusiasts are charged with, one is, that of *impurity*.—Upon this account it is observed, that when the imagination is heated, and the passions inflamed, and neither governed by reason or virtue, it is easy for *impure desires* to get footing, chiefly in the hearts of young people; and these shameful desires hide themselves at first under the appearance of *spiritual* inclination and love; in the Apostles times we read, that some *crept into houses and led away captive silly women laden with sin, and carried about with divers lusts*, 2 Tim. iii. 6 †.

Some

* See Mr *Binion's* Candid Narrative, p. 28.

† See Mr *Combes's* Pastoral Letter, p. 36, 43, &c. and also Mr *Binion's* Candid Narrative, p. 52, &c. or the following Appendix

Some popish enthusiasts of old, we find, so highly extolled *love*, that what would have been a sin without it, they thought to be nothing with it; as fornication, adultery, and the like; and they promised impunity to those with whom they committed such things.—The party increased with much secrecy, but was discovered and condemned by the artifice of one who joined with them, and pretended to *revelations* in as high a *degree* as any of them ||.

The sect of the *Pietists*, which sprung up in *Germany* and *Switzerland* not many years ago, were accused of ill practices; and they ascribed the worst of actions, which their own vicious temper threw them upon, to the dictates of the *Spirit*.—Thus both sexes, we are told, under the pretence of *devout conversation*, visited one another at all hours, and in all places, without any regard to common decency; often making their religion a cover for their immoralities; and yet they (as is natural to enthusiasts) were possessed with a spirit of pride, and a contempt of all such as were not of their own sect*.

And it has been observed by judicious writers, that the same complection of body which inclines to *enthusiasm*, inclines persons often to some licentious opinions and practices †. — That enthusiasts and pious mystics have been remarkably fond of the *nuptial stile*, and of applying expressions of that kind to godly subjects §. The more sparing we are of these kind of expressions on religious subjects,
or

|| See Bishop *Stillingfleet* on the *Idolatry of the Church of Rome*, chap. 4. p. 238. and also, *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists*, &c. Vol. III. Preface, p. 19.

* Mr *Addison's* Travels, in his Account of *Switzerland*. — See also *Cressi Hist. Quaker.* cap. 3. p. 556—*De Pietistis*.

† See Dr *Mercer* on *Enthusiasm*, sect 19, &c.

§ Mr *Jortin's* Remarks on *Eccl. History*. Vol. II. p. 177.

or in our devotional tracts, the better, as they may and have given offence to some persons.—A late writer endeavours to account for the rapturous and extravagant devotion of some enthusiasts, as arising from their natural temper, or from the amorous warmth or disposition of the heart; — and that those, who have been most forward to promote the *mystical* doctrines, have not always been themselves the most spiritually minded;—and the pretences of *Quietism*, and a more sublime and abstracted devotion, have been sometimes employed to very gross and carnal purposes;—and he gives us some examples, where some noted pretenders to high degrees of devotion and mortification have been very defective in several religious duties, and much deceived in the nature of them; having sanctified some particular humours or inclinations of their own; and then made the chief or whole of religion consist in pursuing them, overlooking several necessary duties of religion*.

Persons of an *enthusiastic* turn of mind, we may observe, are generally of an unsettled disposition, spurred on with a desire of travelling and encountering difficulties in order to make *converts*; and, as an ingenious writer observes, “the ambition of gaining profelytes is the strongest perhaps of any species of *ambition* †. — Thus the *Scribes and Pharisees encompassed sea and land to make one profelyte*, Matt. xxiii. 15. We have had many instances of this in our own nation. — Amongst the *Quakers*, in the last century, we have accounts of some of them who travelled into *France, Italy, Greece*, and as far as *Asia*; went to *Rome, Venice, Constantinople, Smyrna* and *Jerusalem*; though they were ignorant of the language

* See the *History of False Religion*, by Mr *Coventry*, Part I. p. 63, &c. Part II. p. 95.

† *Voltaire's Age of Louis XIV.* Vol. I. p. 287.

language of those countries, and could shew their dislike of several superstitious customs they met with *only* by some outward signs. They could not then well expect to make any great proficiency in the business they went about; and if God had given them an express commission to do this, they might have expected (one would think) the gift of tongues, or speaking divers languages, to have enabled them to perform it.—One woman in particular amongst them could not be satisfied till she had attempted to convert the Emperor of the *Turks*; and having undergone much hardship in travelling through a great part of *Europe* on foot, ignorant of the way, and a stranger to the common language, she at last came to the Emperor's court, and gained admittance; and after he had heard what she had to say, by an interpreter, he compassionately ordered her to be sent into her own country §. — Great were the hardships voluntarily undergone by several enthusiasts in *the church of Rome*; as by their *St Francis*, in his voyage to convert the *Sultan of Egypt*; *St Antony*, to convert the *Moors* in *Africa*; and by *Ignatius* to convert the *Turks* ||. In the time of the *Crusades*, when several *European* christians were besieging a strong city in *Egypt* belonging to the *Turks*, *St Francis*, we are told, thought he could easily make a convert of the *Sultan of Egypt*; and when he was brought into his presence, he began to preach to him in *Italian*, and proposed that a great fire should be made, and that he, and the *Mahometan* priests, might leap into the flames, in order to determine who were in the true religion;—nay he offered to leap in himself in defence of his *faith*, which the *Sultan* would
not

§ Vid. *Cross Hist. Quaker. Amstelod. 1695. p. 565, &c.*

|| See *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Vol. I.

not suffer him to do:— This transaction was attested by some historians who were present at the siege; and it is a convincing proof of the great power of blind enthusiasm*.—A false prophet and enthusiast amongst the Jews in Arabia, about the year 1167, met indeed with a much worse fate.—He pretended to be the forerunner of the *Messias*; the King, we are told, asked him, what sign or miracle he could shew to confirm his mission; “Cut off my head, said he, and I will return to life again.” The King took him at his word, and ordered his head to be cut off, and so it remained:—Yet some of his followers were so far deluded as to expect immediately his resurrection §.

We find that those religious wanderers (belonging to more sects than one amongst us) who have been perhaps in distant parts of the world, on their return are had in great esteem by their own party; several of their weak admirers imagine, that by this means, they must have attained to a greater degree of religious knowledge than others; and the generality flock together with great zeal to hear them; not considering that persons may run over a great part of the earth, without being either wiser or better than those who stay at home.—Nay the latter have the advantage of them, by having more time to apply themselves diligently to study God’s word; and making use of several helps for the better understanding it. And the people by attending diligently to the instructions of those guides regularly appointed over them, will, I dare say, receive as much real advantage or edification, as by listening to those *itinerant* instructors, who are not to look upon the multitudes which sometimes flock to hear them,

* See Voltaire’s History of the Crusades, p. 105.

§ See Mr Fortin’s Remarks on Eccl. Hist. Vol. III. p. 335 who gives us this Account from *Maine sides*.

them, as any sure mark of their own superior abilities, but rather as the effects of curiosity, which discovers itself upon several other very different occasions:—Thus we find that those who harangue the multitude on subjects where religion is not at all concerned, very rarely fail of a crowded audience. Many persons have also *itching ears*, 2 Tim. iv. 3. they have a desire of hearing something *new*; being tired of the stated and usual methods of instruction.—Thus several of the *Israelites* of old *loathed manna*, because it was their constant food, representing it as *light bread*, Numb. xxi. 5.

The conversion of heathens and infidels is certainly a most charitable and good design; but those persons who generally travel from place to place in order to preach the gospel, where it is already sufficiently taught and established, and who think themselves above a stated or limited commission, act without any proper authority; nor can they defend their conduct by the example of the *Apostles* and first christians, who were immediately sent by divine appointment to enlighten mankind with the knowledge of the gospel; and be the chosen messengers to carry the *glad tidings of salvation* throughout the world, *Rom. x. 15.* †

If indeed we were to take our ideas of things from the representation of some of our modern *fanatics* (as a learned writer observes) we should be tempted still to think ourselves in a land of *Pagans*; hence it is, that in the accounts they give us of their mission, they declare, *that the name of Jesus is preached up in this place; the glad tidings of salvation conveyed to that; and a new light springs up in the land of darkness*, and the like †.

I must not here omit taking particular notice of the writings of a learned and judicious author, who has

† Mr Warburton's Sermons, Vol. I. p. 254.

has lately set before us a lively picture of *enthusiasm*, and has taken a great deal of pains to compare in all its several branches the enthusiasm of our *modern Methodists* with that of the *Papists*; where we find that the resemblance is so very much alike, in almost every part, that one might think indeed the *Methodists* had copied from the other; but be that as it will, yet, as our author justly observes, “ It lets us see that the spirit of enthusiasm is always the same, operating in much the same manner in all sects.—That the *Papists* and *Methodists* act both upon the same plan (as far as enthusiasm can be said to carry on any plan) that the heads of enthusiasts in general are likewise filled with the same grand projects, driven on in the same wild manner, and wearing the same badge of peculiarities; not perhaps from compact or design, but a similar texture of *brain*, or the fumes of imagination producing similar effects:—Thus, notwithstanding the variation in some circumstances, there have been generally the same distinguishing marks and qualities in all enthusiasts †.—And there will in all probability be a succession of such kind of persons in every age, not exactly alike, nor yet very different §.”

So also Mr *Addison*, speaking of the *Pietists* in *Switzerland*, observes, that as *enthusiasm* carries men generally to the like extravagancies, they differ but little from several sectaries in other *countries*.

The accounts of those strange and astonishing disorders amongst the *Methodists*, given by their own writers,

† See *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Vol. I. Preface, and p. 10, &c.

§ Mr *Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 372.

—facies non omnibus una,

Nec diversa tamen; qualem decet esse fororum.

Ovid Metam. l. 2.

writers, cannot even be read without a kind of horror or pain and uneasiness; such as the frightful screamings, yellings, tremblings, swoonings, convulsions, despairing agonies, nay horrid blasphemies, and variety of grievous tortures both of body and mind, which are said to be common amongst them.—To what cause, says our author, shall we ascribe those astonishing appearances and effects? I am persuaded, says he, we know not enough of nature, and the ways of providence, of the power and extent of natural enthusiasm, when worked up by a cunning operator, of disorders in body and mind, of diabolical possessions, magic, sorcery, nay even of counterfeit and juggling impostors, and the like; as to determine precisely, to what cause we should ascribe, and how account for every particular in these strange and amazing narratives of some of the *Methodist* writers; but this, says he, I know and will prove (as he seems to have effectually done) that the whole account exactly agrees with the extravagant schemes and conduct of the most *fanatical* enthusiasts and wicked impostors among the papists;—and that without precisely determining who or what is the cause; it is certain that *Popery* and *Methodism* are agreed as to matter of fact; and if there be any thing in it beyond the powers of natural force of distemper, or above the reach of juggle and imposture; that it is the work of *some evil spirit* or diabolical illusion §.

No doubt of it but that several have fallen into great mistakes about supernatural operations or inspiration, from their ignorance, or want of duly inquiring into natural causes;—and a little more knowledge of this kind might have prevented several dangerous impositions, where natural enthusiasm

§ See Vol. III. where this point is largely treated of in an historical and philosophical way.

fiasm has been mistaken for extraordinary effects of the Spirit:—And the great enemy of our souls, who was a *lying spirit in the mouths of the false prophets*, 1 Kings xxii. 22. and whose *working* is sometimes with signs and *lying wonders*, 2 Theff. ii. 9. as he is always watching to deceive and get an *advantage* over mankind, may do it sometimes by producing uncommon effects in persons, whose bodies or imaginations are somewhat disordered. And persons of skill have declared, that some dis-tempered dispositions of body, which give advantage to the *Devil* to work upon, may be so cured, by care and physic, as that he cannot have the same power over the same bodies *. In such cases our *prayers* to God must be attended by the best natural means in our power for bringing relief.

And here it may not be improper just to take notice of some surprising effects amongst the heathens, which seem in a great measure to be brought about by *natural causes*. Some of their eminent writers make mention of particular *exhalations* arising from the earth, which were made use of by *demons* as proper means to excite the mind to inspirations and prophesy; and they would account for the ceasing of some of their *oracles* by the decay or failure of such exhalations †.—*Tully* does not indeed allow of this opinion about oracles by *the power of exhalations* from the earth, which grow *flat* by length of time; as if they were speaking, says he, of *wine* kept too long, or rivers dried up or changed into a different course †.

He had reason indeed to laugh at this notion in regard to the cause assigned to the *prophetic* part of their
their

* See *Casaubon on Enthufiasm*, p. 22, 41.

† Vid. *Plutar. de cessat. oracul.*

‡ De vino putes loqui, aut falfamento, quæ evanescunt veritate, &c. *Tul. de Divinat.* l. 1. sect. 38. l. 2. sect. 117.

their oracles; but it accounts very well for the frantic behaviour of those who delivered them.—The priestesses, it is probable, might be intoxicated with some strong mineral exhalations arising in those places, where they generally took care to build their temples; and so might the more easily be imposed on by *dæmons*, or the craft of others placed there for that purpose.—We have a remarkable account that there were such subtile exhalations of old, particularly at *Apollo's Temple at Delphi* on mount *Parnassus*, whence perhaps that place became famous for the inspiration of *poets* and others*. In such places more especially the priestesses were seized, we find, with frantic and furious kinds of extasies; and might be affected in a different degree, according to the strength or weakness of the vapour, at different times.—Thus strange appearances may sometimes proceed from natural causes;—and the very *goats* that fed thereabouts, we are told, were so intoxicated with this vapour, as to dance or skip about.—*Pliny*, in his *natural history*, speaking of several wonderful kinds of exhalations, mentions this at *Delphi*, as having a prophetic power †.

We have also accounts in history of certain drugs, herbs and fumigations, which make persons delirious; that by the power of some particular *opiates*, persons have been forced for many hours to laugh and talk in spite of themselves; and have had

H strange

* Ex profundo terræ foramine *frigidus spiritus* vi quâdum velut vento in sublime expulsus mentes vatum in vecordiam vertit, impletasq; Deo responsa consulentibus dare cogit, &c. *Just. Hist.* lib. 24. cap. 6.

† Quâ exhalatione *temulenti* futura præcinunt,—and he gives this remarkable Reason;—quispiam mortalium aliud causæ asserre possit, quàm diffusæ per omne naturæ subinde aliter, atq; aliter numen crumpens? l. 2. cap. 93.—Agreeably to his Notions in Divinity elsewhere: Mundum numen esse credi par est, æternum, immensum, &c. ib. cap. 1, 7.

strange representations of things before their eyes, and felt other extraordinary effects. Which shews how certain compositions can operate upon the imagination and senses; and some such methods as these might perhaps sometimes be made use of in the heathen temples †.

We before observed what a powerful effect the imagination has upon the body itself; another instance of which may be reckoned those uncommon *marks* which several children bring with them into the world; and are looked upon as proceeding from the strength of the mother's imagination.— And by this means we may (as a certain writer observes) account for some of the marks of the *passion* of our Saviour, said to be impressed on the *bodies* of some *popish saints*, if they be not wholly the effects of art and fraud †.

But let us proceed to consider some of those strange disorders which are said to happen amongst the *Methodists* in particular, and are looked upon by them as marks of *conversion* and *regeneration*.— Persons we find are commonly affected in this manner, or begin to be so in their religious assemblies, upon *hearing* some of their noted teachers, who seem indeed to glory in the numbers which fall under those disorders when they are preaching; and look upon them “as confirmations
“ of God's word;—wounds of the sword of the
“ Spirit;—the power of God upon them;—God's
“ making bare his arm.”—It is accounted by some of their most eminent teachers, “a glorious time
“ and sight, when they saw several struck to the
“ ground, drop down as dead, or struck with
“ lightning;—when many were constrained to roar
“ aloud,

† Mr *Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 164. Vol. II. p. 403.

‡ See *The Frauds of the Romish Monks, &c.* Vol. I. p. 194.

“ aloud, whilst the *sword of the Spirit* (as they say)
 “ was dividing afunder their souls and spirits, the
 “ joints and marrow.—When at their preaching
 “ thousands cried out, some as if in the sharpest
 “ agonies of *death* and pains of hell;—others sunk
 “ down and dropped, as though shot with a gun;—
 “ numbers so strongly *convulsed* in every part, that
 “ several persons could not hold even one of them.
 “ —And we find their teachers thanking God for
 “ enabling them to speak so, as to occasion such
 “ convulsions and agonies amongst their hearers §.”

A writer (who seems indeed to have a true concern for the interest of religion) in his letters to the author of the *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, very much blames those who look upon the disorders of body and mind, mentioned by the Methodist teachers, “ as mere natural distempers
 “ or effects of melancholy, and not as the extraordinary or supernatural workings of God in order
 “ to *conversion*; and undertakes to defend their
 “ teachers for rejoicing over the people in the
 “ midst of their cries and agonies;—and observes
 “ that the trembling of *Felix*, under the terrors of
 “ conscience and a future judgment by the preaching of *St Paul*, must be a joyful sight to men
 “ and angels.—And that the Apostle’s heart must
 “ leap for joy, when his audience, in bitter remorse and anguish, cried out, *Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?*”—But though this might be accounted a glorious sight, as it was
 “ a symptom of spiritual life begun in the soul; and our author expresses the great satisfaction it would have been to him *to have contributed in the least to such a conversion*.—Yet it is proper to observe, that we

§ This, and much more to the same Purpose, we find collected from Mr *Whitefield’s* and Mr *Wesley’s* Journals, in the third Volume of *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*.

ought to be cautious how we draw parallels between the miraculous conversions of *beatbens* and unbelievers by inspired Apostles, and the conversions here pretended to: We must distinguish between an age of miracles, when the gospel was first preached, and these times when it is fully established; and not look for the same extraordinary means as formerly; though we may still hope for sufficient assistance to enable us *to work out our salvation*, if it be not our own fault.

Besides, in the instances of conversion mentioned in scripture, we read of none of those terrifying circumstances attending the modern conversions amongst the *Methodists*.

It is asked, “ Would it not give pious pastors more joy to find their flocks so sensibly touched by the divine word set home upon their souls; that they even *roared out for the very disquietness of their hearts*, earnestly seeking what they *must do to be saved*, than to see them secure in their sins and void of all sense of danger? ”—It must certainly be matter of joy to them, when they find the people committed to their care truly affected with the great truths of religion, diligently endeavouring to go on to *christian perfection*;—yet several pious ministers would suspend their joy, upon seeing their hearers affected with violent agonies and convulsions of body, till they were well assured, upon the best inquiry they could make, that this was a divine operation intended to promote their eternal salvation; and their too easy credulity in such cases may, instead of being an advantage, be of great disservice to religion.—Besides, there does not seem to be the same necessity now for the persons, who have from their youth been trained up in the christian religion, to *cry out*, as of old, *What must we do to be saved?*

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Great numbers, we hope, make it their constant business to *walk worthy* of their *holy vocation*; and as to others, who have fallen into sinful courses, when brought to a due sense of their guilt and danger, they cannot well be ignorant of the way which leads to salvation; which is now, God be thanked, so easily known by the clear directions given for that purpose in the holy scriptures, wherein they are plainly taught, that to a true faith in *Christ*, and reliance on his *merits*, they must add sincere repentance or amendment of life; *abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good*; and as they have *yielded themselves servants unto iniquity*, so now must they become the servants of righteousness, *Rom. vi. 19.*

We may also just take notice, that those *fiery trials* and severe conflicts, mentioned in the gospel, seem to relate chiefly to the violent persecutions against its first professors, urged on by the suggestion of the Devil;—and when they are taken in another sense, they rather denote the trials undergone by the soul in its *spiritual warfare*, than any outward disorders or grievous afflictions of body, as a means to conversion;—and we may very well doubt or deny, that the modern instances of this latter kind are brought about by any supernatural agency to promote that end, without our contributing in the least “to *close persons eyes*;—*hinder their conversion*; “lessen the terrors of a guilty conscience;—bring “any gospel doctrines into contempt; or make a “careless age still more careless,” as some have intimated.

It is indeed necessary for us to consult the scripture, in order to find out “a proper cure for a “*wounded conscience*; nor when the soul is ready “to sink under *the weight of sin*, can the whole “*materia medica* (or utmost power of physic) re-

“ move the spiritual burden?” as is justly observed. —But it may however be proper in some cases to consult *other books also*, or get the best information we can concerning the nature of some bodily disorders, that we may the better distinguish them from *divine operations*;—and not confound terrors of conscience with a disordered brain; or mistake *vapours* or natural melancholy for a *wounded spirit*:—And as several great mistakes have undoubtedly been made in such cases, (as appears in a great measure from what has already been said) it becomes us to be the more careful in our inquiries.—By the divine assistance or influence on the soul, sinners are generally brought to a true conviction of mind and hearty sorrow for sin, without those strange and unusual effects upon their bodies. God can indeed easily produce such, if he sees proper; but this does not seem to be the usual method of bringing sinners to repentance.—An uneasiness of mind, occasioned by the consciousness of guilt, may indeed sometimes have such an effect upon the body, as by degrees to throw it into great disorder; when this is the case, to our prayers and spiritual advice, we must also add the best natural remedies in our power for the relief of persons thus afflicted; and procure, if we can, a wise *physician both for soul and body*.

It may not be improper to observe, that a certain sect amongst us laid claim to divine and miraculous powers, visible in their external bodily emotions or *quakings*, (from which they took their name) with which several of them were seized in a remarkable manner chiefly in their places of public worship; “ This power, we
“ are told, would sometimes reach to, and won-
“ derfully work even in little children, to the
“ admiration of many; nay seize upon some wicked
“ persons, who came to their meetings to mock

“ at them *.” These emotions were looked upon as marks of divine inspirations, and *quaking* itself reckoned a *holy duty*; and those who opposed it were looked upon as profane †. This agrees with the opinion of some popish enthusiasts of old, who taught that certain *ardors*, *tremblings* and *quakings*, were a sufficient token of grace;— and their St *Catherine*, we are told, was first seized with a violent *trembling* in the church, so that she let fall the wax candle in her hand, and could not take it up; and after this she became famous for *her visions and revelations* ‡. A learned writer would account for these tremblings or *quakings* chiefly from the fervor of spirits and heat of imagination, which persons of a melancholy complexion are liable to; which may be wrought up to that pitch as to amount to a perfect *epilepsy* §.—It is not easy indeed to determine how far the power of enthusiastic imagination reaches, or what effect unusual tones or vehemency of voice may have upon some constitutions, in affecting the *nervous system* in an uncommon manner.—Thus we find that particular sounds or tunes, in some cases, have a power to cause such tremors of the nerves, as to put the body into violent motions and agitations, even without the determination of the will §.—The power of sounds is wonderful in those different effects they are capable of producing; and an ingenious writer observes, that it is possible to invent an instrument that shall have a quite contrary effect to those *martial ones* now in use; an instrument that shall *sink the spirits*,

H 4 shake

* See *Barclay's Apology*, Prop. xi. sect. 8.—*Cressi Hist Quaker*. p. 8, &c.

† See *Snake in the Grass*, sect. 21.

‡ *Casaubon on Enthusiasm*, p. 161, 174.—*Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Vol. III. p. 264.

§ See *Dr More on Enthusiasm*, sect. 25 and 29.

§ See *Chambers's Dictionary* on the Word *Tarantula*.

shake the nerves, curdle the blood, and excite despair, cowardice and consternation *.—We have accounts of persons who, through a peculiar disposition of body, would at any time, by force of mournful sounds (though feigned ones) be cast into a trance, so as to lie as dead, and be insensible of any pain †. And of some enthusiasts, formerly in *Wales*, who could put themselves in a trance when they would, or as often as any came to them to consult them as prophets; the same is reported of some *Turkish Dervises* ††.

But if it be thought that some of those strange and violent affections and convulsions, formerly very common amongst the persons we are speaking of, § cannot be accounted for by natural means;—whatever was the cause, we have no great reason to think that they could proceed (whether amongst them or others) from the operation of the Spirit of God; the Spirit of wisdom, goodness and gentleness, manifested in the gospel dispensation, which is not attended with the terror and severity of the law, but abounds with *grace, mercy and peace*, 1 Tim. i. 2. God is represented, even in the Old Testament, as not being present in the fire and earthquake, but in the still small voice, 1 Kings xix. 12.—When he was pleased, upon some extraordinary occasions, to manifest his divine majesty, as it were in a visible manner, no wonder that the sensible appearance of the Almighty should affect frail mortals with terror, *Exod.* xix. 11, 12.—Thus the inanimate

* See *Cellier's Essay on Music*.

† Vid. *Aug. de Civ. Dei*. l. 14. cap. 24.

†† *Casaubon on Enthusiasm*, p. 131, 133.

§ See several Instances in *Snake in the Grass*, sect. 3 and 21, —*The Defence of it*, Part I. p. 51, &c.—*The Fanatic History*, published 1660.—*Bug's Pilgrim's Progress from Quakerism to Christianity*, chap. 3. p. 8.—*Dr More's Mystery of Godliness*, Book IV. chap. 6.

inanimate part of the creation is beautifully described by the Psalmist, as *trembling at the presence of the Lord*, Psal. cxiv.

But when he *comes to make his abode with us, and work in us*,—and be in the *midst* of his servants, *where they are gathered together in his name*, as he has promised in the gospel †, they feel no violent emotions; all is invisibly and spiritually performed; his approaches are, as it were, silent and unseen; and his presence will be the best apprehended by a true *faith*, and the secret comforts, which are conveyed to the soul.—The *fear* and *trembling* mentioned by the Apostle *Phil. ii. 12.* signifies only an awful regard to God, and fear of offending him; the serving him with *reverence and godly fear*, Heb. xii. 28.—or doing our duty with the greatest care and diligence. In which sense the words must be taken, when the same Apostle admonishes servants to be obedient to *their masters with fear and trembling*, Eph. vi. 5. — We read in the New Testament of persons *smiting their breasts*, of being *pricked to the heart* by the preaching of the Apostles; but we have no account of their being affected with violent *shakings* or convulsions upon their *conversion*. Some indeed were terribly afflicted by a power quite contrary to that of the Spirit of God; so that they were cast into the fire, and *into the water, foaming, gnashing with their teeth, and fainting away*, Mark ix. 18. — And amongst the heathens we find those who pretended to inspiration, and delivered their oracles, were possessed with a kind of rage and fury, swelling, foaming at the mouth, and appearing like persons distracted.—Others esteemed it a *chief part of religion to prophesy* with a strange *fanatical agitation* of body *. And
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† *Matt. xviii. 20. John xiv. 23. Phil. ii. 13.*

* *Hanc summam inter eos religionem esse; viros velut mente captos cum jactatione fanaticâ corporis vaticinari, &c. Liv. Decad.*

the priestesses belonging to the *oracular temples* could give no answer, we are told, unless the sacrifice very sensibly *trembled* and quaked, when the wine was poured upon it †.—Distortions and extatic motions of body were common amongst some ancient heretics in the second century who pretended to the gift of *prophecy* §.

We have an account of several enthusiasts lately in *France*, who flocked to the *tomb* of a Deacon called *Paris* (where several miracles were pretended to be wrought) whose imaginations were so worked upon, that their disordered organs produced slight *convulsions and shakings*, which were looked upon as inward and divine motions ||.—The *French* prophets were also affected with strange kind of *shakings* and agitations of body: A person, who for some time had been seduced by them, tells us, that the persons under *agitations* were thrown sometimes upon the ground with a violent force, shewing several strange postures, as walking on their hands with their legs upright, and the like; and that their bodies seemed to jump whilst they were speaking to them;—that at one of their meetings in *Southwark*, several of their *prophets* acted their parts under *agitation* in such a frightful manner, as the very remembrance of it still filled him with horror;—that sometimes the *spirit* tumbled one of their inspired persons down stairs headlong, enough to have killed him at another time; then making him jump up again, in such a manner, as nothing less, in his opinion, than a real possession of the Devil could perform the

Decad. 4. *lib.* 9.—See also *Virgil's Description of t'c Sybil*, *Æn.* *lib.* 6.—*Rabie fera corda tument.*—*Bacchatur cætes*, &c. *lib.* 49, 78.

† *Plut.* de cels. oraculorum.

§ *Vid. Cav. Hist. Literar.* Vol. I. p. 74. *De Montanistis.* A. D. 172.

|| See *Voltaire's Age of Lewis XIV.* Vol. II. chap. 23.

the same; and these pranks continued some hours together †. And in the private meetings of the *Methodists* we are told, that some of those who pretend to receive the spirit, frequently jump and leap about the room*. And this agrees with what is told us of some *Quakers* who were affected in the same manner §.—Thus *quakings* and *agitations of body* are by no means any sure signs that persons are moved by the *Spirit* of God.—Our Saviour cured many bodily diseases, and stilled the violent and tumultuous disorders occasioned by evil spirits, by the same power, and with the same ease that he rebuked the raging of the winds and sea; bringing those who were possessed to *their right mind*, Mark v. 15.—but he never inflicted any punishments of this kind, — as it was his great care to promote peace, harmony and order, both in the *rational* and natural world.—Nor were the doctrines and mysteries of the gospel infused into the hearts of the Apostles, and other inspired persons, in a manner so violent as to overpower their reason or disorder their bodies.—There were, we find, false extasies amongst some heretics of old, who appeared as persons distracted; which *frantic* behaviour was looked upon as a plain mark, by which they might be distinguished from true prophets, who were never affected in this violent manner ||. — The same is observed of some heathen *prophetesses*; their *extatic fury*, which deprived them of the due use of their understanding, was looked upon as a mark,

† See the Case of one *Samuel Keimar*, p. 53. &c.

* See *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Vol. III. Preface, p. 29.

§ See *Bugg's Pilgrim's Progress*, &c. p. 9. and the Account of one *Gilpin* in the *Fanat. History* before mentioned, B ii ch. 2.

|| Vid. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. v. cap. 16, 17.—Facile est personam furor simulatur, facilius quam mens sana, &c. Cuneus de Rep. Heb. l. iii. cap. 7. *De diuino afflatu*.

mark, that this could not be the effects of the Spirit of God †.

The *Methodists* also affirm, that the power of God sometimes came down amongst them, when at their religious meetings, with a “*great and universal shock*,—that the place was almost rent by the “*power and presence of God*,” and the like. If by these and the like expressions, as a judicious writer observes, they would make us believe that the holy Ghost descended on them in the same manner as upon the Apostles at *Pentecost*, “*I will “ by no means undertake to excuse them from blas- “ phemy*. It is indeed hard, as he says, to know “ what to make of those *shocks* and *shakings*, if truly “ represented by them (perhaps they may be only “ in the preacher’s own brain) but we know that “ such concussions of houses have been represented “ by the heathens as indubitable signs of some su- “ pernatural power; and as a public attestation of “ the presence of their deities*.” Agreeable to such descriptions, the writers of some of the lives of the popish saints tell us, that when they were at prayers the whole house *trembled* with a sudden concussion; but this was generally believed by them to proceed from the rage and malice of the Devil †. —And in the life of their *Ignatius Loyola*, they affirm, that he was seen at his devotions to be elevated four cubits above the ground by the strength of the spirit §.

An ingenious foreign writer lately published his *pastoral letter against Fanaticism*, not only, as we are told, to secure his countrymen the *Dutch* against *Moravianism*,

† Vid. *Orig. Cont. Cels.* l. vii. p. 333. Cant. Edit.

* See *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. I. p. 62, &c.— Vid. *Claud. de Raptu Proserp.* lib. i. l. 7, &c. *Ovid. Metam.* lib. iv. l. 402. lib. xv. l. 634. *Virg. Æn.* lib. iii. 90, &c.

‡ *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. I. p. 64.

§ *Cassian on Enthusiasm*, p. 281.

Moravianism, lately introduced amongst them from *Germany*, but also against a kind of *Convulsionism*, which had lately taken its rise amongst themselves. The people of this sect, we are informed, were seen at their public places of worship to sigh, groan, cry aloud; — all their *limbs shook*, and they were under the strangest contorsions; — they violently wrung their hands, and a cold sweat dropped from their faces; they were almost choaked with thirst, but could not drink but with difficulty, and their whole body was in a kind of convulsion; — they scarce uttered any thing but broken words, as, *Alas! What must I do? Give me Jesus; I must have Jesus*; and the like. — At last *Jesus* (as they supposed) manifested himself to them; — then they pretended to be *illuminated*, assured of their regeneration, and fell into transports of joy. — And we are told that people, without having the least *idea of the bad* state of their souls, fell into the same fits; others, whom mere curiosity had led to the place where such scenes appeared, were seized with all those symptoms. — This was called by them the *work of God*, the work of *regeneration**. — This author also observes, that a weak and distempered state of body inclines several to enthusiasm: — As the body and soul are so closely united, the weak state of one generally influences the other; several diseases render the imagination subject to the oddest impressions, and affect the *nerves* and *brain* in a surprising manner. — Hence, says he, we may account why people of learning and experience have sometimes joined the party of *fanatics*. — We often see *fanatics* weep, tremble, fall into fits, and the like; which accidents, in any other case, would be looked upon as proceeding from a *bad habit* or indisposition of body; but here they pass for severe trials of *faith*,

* See the Preface to Mr *Stinstra's Pastoral Letter*.

faith, for violent assaults of *Satan*, who opposes their *conversion*, or strong operations of grace in endeavouring to break the hardness of the heart.—Our author, speaking of enthusiasm, takes notice, that sometimes the soul is thrown into great horror. This dark cloud clearing up, which (unless a person falls into despair) cannot fail of happening very soon; then they become composed, flatter themselves that they have gone through all the pangs that must precede a *conversion*, and they really fancy themselves *regenerated*, which must excite joy. And when this emotion ceases, which of course will happen, then the joy vanishes, and they fall again into a state of *darkness*.—Thus the religion of an *enthusiast* rises and falls like the waves of the troubled sea, and depends in a great measure upon the disposition of the body and on outward means*.—And we are told, that those trembling emotions formerly amongst the *Quakers* were succeeded by *great joy* ||.

Thus we find that *enthusiasm* works pretty much in the same way, in different countries, and amongst different sects;—and the like effects to those amongst the *Methodists* have often happened amongst several others, where they cannot, I think, be well interpreted as divine and supernatural operations for spiritual and religious ends.—We have then no sufficient reasons for looking upon them as such at present; and we may doubt or disbelieve this, without weakening the authority of any accounts in scripture concerning the *conversion of sinners* (as some have declared) or denying that their souls may be affected with dreadful apprehensions by means of the *divine agency*.—Nor do we hereby give a handle to the wicked and ungodly (as is feared)

for

* Ibid. p. 19, 27.

|| *Cross Hist. Quaker.* p. 9,

for looking upon the terrors of the Lord, or pangs of conscience, or the whole progress of a sinner's conversion, as proceeding from bodily indispositions or natural diseases; or that to such like causes might be owing the trembling *Felix*, or other instances of the like nature.—Sinners, by the divine assistance and their own endeavours, may come to a due sense of their guilt, and desire to flee *from the wrath to come*, by an inward conviction of mind, without those violent outward means abovementioned.—As this has been generally the case with penitents, we hope their *conversion* may still be effected in the same way; nor are we to expect extraordinary signs and wonders for this, any more than for other purposes; namely, for the conversion of *heathens* by the power of working miracles, or the persuading persons to repent by the resurrection of a person from *the dead*, Luke xvi. 31.

It will be a detriment, and not any advantage to religion, to declare that to be the *wonderful work of God*, which, upon due examination, may prove otherwise, as has been often by experience found to be the case; so that it may be as safe and religious a way to account for in another manner those uncommon appearances which sometimes happen; notwithstanding what some may affirm to the contrary.—And we may, I think, refuse paying any great regard to the accounts of those *wonderful and sudden conversions*, or *miraculous changes*, said to be wrought of late; without justly incurring the censure of a surprising disposition towards doubting, or being blamed for not looking upon them, as a revival of what was at the beginning; or when the gospel was first preached, as some late writers have observed in their defence. But admitting, “ That it is not unreasonable, as they say, to suppose that God may revive his first work, and
“ give

“ give new life to expiring *christianity* in a way
 “ uncommon, miraculous and astonishing; and
 “ that such a procedure may be looked upon as
 “ necessary to convert christians now from a *dead*
 “ *faith*, and dead works, as it was at first to bring
 “ over *Jews* and *Gentiles* to the faith of *Christ*; or
 “ that God should think proper to *speak in thunder*
 “ *to the soul* *.” Yet I would gladly know, what
 grounds we have for thinking that such great and
 wonderful effects should be manifested in the *Methodist*
 congregations, rather than in several others;
 where the word of God is taught in as great pu-
 rity, and by persons as well qualified in every re-
 spect, as the *Methodist* teachers are? And unless
 they can give us a more clear proof than they have
 yet produced, that such operations *are of God*, we
 must look upon them only as the effects of enthu-
 siasm, or natural disorders and indispositions of
 the body; and this we have the more reason to do
 from the various instances already given, which
 seem to be of the same nature.

It has been observed that the *Methodist* writers
 are not consistent with themselves, as they ascribe
 those outward signs, or grievous affections of body
 and mind, to directly opposite and contrary causes;
 —sometimes making God the cause, and at other
 times the *Devil*; at such a loss are they, says our
 author, so uncertain whose work they are doing †.
 —Several of the *Methodists* (as their own writers
 inform us) have been often seized with violent fits
 of *laughter* for a long time together, which they
 could in no wise resist, though it was great pain
 and grief to them, and kept them from the per-
 formance of religious exercises §. — This they at-
 tribute

* Vide Mr Perronet's *Reflections*, &c. p. 33.

† *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. III. p. 134, 140, 154.

§ See *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. II. p. 71, &c. where
 the Account is given from Mr Wesley's third and fourth Journals.

tribute to the operation or buffeting of *Satan*; it may be looked upon perhaps rather as the effects of a hypochondriacal or *hysterical* disorder, which occasions sometimes excessive fits of crying or laughing, without any apparent cause; and persons of that complexion may be more liable to the power of *enthusiasm* than others: *Laughing* fits were common amongst the *French prophets* in their agitations,—and others have been seized with them, in times of the greatest danger, when there was nothing which could excite them to mirth: This was the case of *Oliver Cromwell* in particular, who, we are told, laughed so excessively at the battles of *Naseby* and *Dunbar*, as if he had been drunk; and his eyes *sparkled with spirits* ||.

Amongst the Methodists we hear of frequent complaints of *spiritual desertions*, *inward deadness*, *coldness of heart*, and great *dejection of mind* *.

There may upon several occasions be good reasons for it, and it may be accounted for upon the principles of religion; but we may observe,—that when persons of weak constitutions and melancholy dispositions have been in violent fervors and enthusiastic raptures; and, to their own admiration, actuated with a particular joy and triumph of spirit,—it is no wonder that their spirits should be exhausted, when this *inebriation of enthusiasm* or *spiritual fever* ceases, if I may so express it.—This may be accounted for from natural causes; if, as learned persons have observed, there is a great agreement betwixt the nature and effects of *wine* and melancholy; and we find there are other things besides *strong liquors* which have a power to raise the *spirits*, and work forcibly upon the imagination, as some kind of music; nay this is often

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effected

|| See *Anbrey's Miscel.* p. 117. on *Impulses*.

* *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. III. p. 75, &c.

effected by fevers *.—Thus enthusiasts may be said to be *drunken, but not with wine*, Isa. xxix. 9. li. 25. and no wonder, I say, that a great depression of spirits should succeed that extraordinary degree of elevation they were in before. Besides bodily disorders oftentimes affect the mind so much as to occasion melancholy, uncomfortable thoughts, even in religious persons. An eminent writer observes, “ That by want of exercise, and through a bad
 “ state of health, vapours and melancholy are often
 “ raised in the mind, which fill many with dark
 “ thoughts, rendering religion, which affords the
 “ truest joy, a burden to them, and making them
 “ even a burden to themselves; this, he says, fur-
 “ nishes prejudices against religion to those who are
 “ but too much disposed to seek them ‖. — Melan-
 choly and *vapours* have been represented indeed as the *inward calls of God to the unawakened soul* †.

Though this notion will not be generally allowed of; yet, however, to the outward means made use of to remove such disorders, it will be fit and necessary to add our earnest addresses to God for relief and comfort. The fears and terrors which the mind is sometimes oppressed with (not as the effects of any particular guilt, but rather of some bodily indisposition) may teach mankind *humility*, by shewing the weakness and imperfection of his present nature; and how soon the true harmony of the human composition may be destroyed, by being set as it were in battle against itself.— This must lead us in such cases to apply to Him, whose *hands made and fashioned us*, and in whom we
 live,

* See Dr More on *Enthusiasm*, sect. 17, 23. Casaubon on *Enthusiasm*, p. 272.

‖ Bishop Burnet's *Conclusion of the History of his Own Times*.

† See the Rev. Mr Perronet's *Earnest Exhortation to the strict Practice of Christianity*, p. 49. 1750.

live, and move, and have our being; and beg that he would be pleased to preserve and keep in order the work of his own hands; and it must also put us upon using our own best endeavours for that purpose. “It might, methinks (as an ingenious writer observes) somewhat abate the insolence of human pride, to consider that it is but increasing or diminishing the velocity of certain fluids in the animal machine, to elate the soul with the gayest hopes, or sink her down into the deepest despair;—to depress the hero into a coward, or advance the coward into a hero*.”—There are things which at some times carry with them a terrible appearance, and yet at other times seem to have nothing frightful in them, though they are still the same in their own nature; the difference being only in our temper, disposition or perception.

However, “When the soul is brought low, and our spirit waxeth faint and faileth within us; from whatever cause this proceed, we must remember to beg of God, that he would lift up the light of his countenance upon us, and put gladness in our heart: Take up with the Psalmist’s holy resolution, and say, *Why art thou so vexed and cast down, O my soul! And why art thou so disquieted within me? Put thy trust (or hope) in God:—In the night season,* says he (when the soul is apt to be the most disquieted with troubles, or to refuse comfort) *I made my prayer unto the God of my life;—Again, When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God; when my heart is vexed I will complain;—my soul, wait thou upon God; for my expectation is from him,—he shall strengthen thy heart &c.*”—When my soul fainteth within me, says the prophet *Jonah,*

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* Sir T. Fitzosborne’s Letters, let. 13.

§ P^{sal.} xlv. 25. P^{sal.} cxliii. 7. P^{sal.} iv. 7, 8. P^{sal.} xliii. 5. P^{sal.} lxxvii. 2, 3. P^{sal.} xliii. P^{sal.} lxii. 5. P^{sal.} xxvii. 14.

I remembered the Lord, chap. ii. 7. — In the New Testament, our Saviour gives us general directions in all kind of troubles, *to pray, and not to faint*, Luke xviii. 1.—*Is any amongst you afflicted? let him pray*, Jam. v. 13.—This religious duty is the most effectual *panacea*, or general medicine, that we can have recourse to; and if it should not quite remove the disorders, it will however much alleviate them; if persons persevere in a due and constant course, or *be instant in it*, Rom. xii. 12. Eph. vi. 18.—Reason and prudence will direct persons not to give way to melancholy fears and uncomfortable thoughts; but endeavour to set things in such a light as may best promote an inward complacency of mind, and to use all lawful means in their power to make life comfortable and easy; which must be chiefly effected by the assistance which true religion will afford them.—On the contrary, *trembling and astonishment of heart*, was one of the curses denounced of old against disobedience, *Deut. xxviii. 28, 65*.

As to this complaint of *spiritual desertions, inward barrenness, dryness*, and the like, made by some of the *Methodists*, this has been also the case of some noted enthusiasts in the *church of Rome*; so that some of them, as the writers of their lives declare, were reduced to so great tribulations, by God's withholding his usual consolations, as to think that they were *forsaken of Christ* *.

The extasies of *St Francis* were said to throw him into such disorder, that they had recourse to physic; they could not get a *drop of blood from him*, nor discern any motion in him.—How exactly does this account agree with that which *Fox*, the great promoter of *Quakerism*, gives of himself; he tells us, “ That he was for some time in the most dif-

“ mal

* This is told of their *St Francis, Ignatius and Teresa*. See *Hist. Gen. of Methodists and Peoples*, &c. Vol. III. p. 107.

“ mal condition, quite given up to despair, and
 “ that he retired into deserts and solitary places.—
 “ That when physic and bleeding was prescribed
 “ him for this, they could not get one drop of
 “ blood from him; his body being, as it were,
 “ dried up with grief and trouble*.”

Thus enthusiasm subjects persons to many desponding doubts and fears; carries them sometimes so far as to make them doubt of the truth of all religion, nay of the being of *God himself* †!

It perhaps may seem strange that such numbers amongst the *Methodists* should be affected in the violent manner before-mentioned, more than amongst any other religious assemblies;—the wonder will in some measure cease, when we consider, that persons, whose natural constitutions subject them more particularly to enthusiasm; and some of the disorders here spoken of, will be inclined to join themselves to the societies of the *Methodists*, upon hearing what extraordinary things are done amongst them; and some doctrines, which they there hear thundered out with great warmth and assurance, may have a very surprising effect upon disordered imaginations and weak nerves; where persons also have their expectations raised to a very high degree about meeting with something wonderful, and believe that their teachers have a special commission from God, and an extraordinary intercourse with him.

It would be very difficult to account for those violent convulsions of body, or distractions of mind abovementioned, by looking upon them as particularly sent by God to bring persons to a true

I 3

faith.

* See *Snake in the Grass*, sect. 23. as taken from his own journal.

† See Dr *More on Enthusiasm*, sect. 1. where he mentions the affinity between *Enthusiasm* and *Atheism*—Preface to *Snake in the Grass*, p. 2, &c.—*Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. II. p. 112.

faith.—What sufficient argument can be brought, either from reason or holy scripture, to shew, why the passage should be so rugged and horrible, which leads us into the *ways of pleasantness* and *paths of peace*? Or why their gracious Lord and Master should be supposed thus violently to correct and afflict them upon their entrance, or when he is inviting them into his *service*, which is *perfect freedom*; or that he should deliver them up to *Satan* to be grievously tormented before they can be proper objects of his divine favour?—These afflictions and diseases may be said, in one sense, to come by divine permission, as several others do; and the persons subject to them are objects of our utmost pity and compassion; and to our prayers to God for their recovery we should add the best natural means which he has put in our power for their assistance.

There seem to be particular times and periods when enthusiasm or some peculiar disposition of body inclining persons that way, are like other distempers more prevailing, and the infection more strong than at other times.—And it has been observed by persons of learning and judgment, that there are more disorders both of body and mind, catching and infectious, than are commonly allowed to be so.—That enthusiasm is of this nature, sometimes running like wild-fire from breast to breast, and is contagious in its kind, though not in the very same manner as other infectious distempers, as has in some measure appeared from instances already given, and is still more evident by the following ones.—As in the common experiment of two instruments tuned to the same pitch, the strings of one being struck, the correspondent strings of the other will sound or tremble; so where the company are of the same complexion or habit of
body,

body, and turn of mind, or are worked up to the same pitch of *enthusiasm*; what affects one, may easily affect the rest.—The *seeing* persons in convulsions is apt to occasion them in persons of *nervous and irritable frames*; — so persons are often set a *yawning* by seeing others *yawn*.—And there are some diseases which affect persons with strange convulsive motions, and prove sometimes contagious and *epidemical* *.—In some of the heathen mysteries we are assured, that whilst the priests were performing the ceremonies with horrid noises, the fury often seized them that were present; and many, who came only as spectators, were acted in the same manner.

Amongst the popish enthusiasts we meet with several accounts nearly agreeing with what happened amongst the *Methodists*; some of their *Nuns*, they tell us, have been grievously tormented with *laughing fits*; some horridly convulsed, or lying down as dead; others of them seized once a day with monstrous convulsions; and when one of them began to be thus affected, the rest, though in separate apartments, by hearing the noise, were seized in the same miserable manner §. We have an account in history that formerly at *Abdera* (a city of *Thrace*) a strange kind of fever or phrensy raged amongst the inhabitants, which first began amongst some persons at the public theatre, and spread itself through the city; those who were seized with it, were inclined to repeat verses and pieces of tragedies, and all thought themselves under a kind of poetical *inspiration* ¶.

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* As that in particular called *St Vitus' Dance*, which makes persons leap or dance about in an odd manner.

§ See *Enthusiasm of Methodius*, &c. Vol. III. sect 33, 34.

¶ Vid. Voss. de imitat. Poet. cap. 7.—*Casaubon in Enthusiasm*, p. 209, &c.

We are told, that in the assemblies of the *Quakers* formerly, “One, in whom the life was raised, would be as a midwife to bring forth the life in others (just, say they, as a little water thrown into a pump brings up the rest) and that such a one is felt by the rest to minister life to them, and they are secretly *smitten* even without words; and by this means life will become to be raised in all †.” According to this *account*, the operations of the *Spirit* seem rather of a *mechanical* than a *rational* nature.—Thus the communication of *enthusiasm* amongst the heathens is illustrated by the effects of a needle touched by a *loadstone*, which conveys an attractive property to another, and so on.

A writer upon this subject observes, “That the air and tone of a fanatic, when he knows how to manage them well, may work on other people, whose constitution and organs are of an *unison* with his own, in such a manner as to confound the whole frame, extort sighs and tears, and make them take the same air and tone.”—Let a person go into the midst of an enraged multitude, the same rage and fury will seize him in some measure; unless he be particularly on his guard.—He mentions some persons, who were rational people, and had always shewed an aversion to *fanaticism*; and since had done no less, how that mixing out of mere curiosity, some time ago, with an assembly of *Quakers* in *Holland*, and seeing their contortions and grimaces, could not, in spite of all their endeavours, prevent their being seized with the same symptoms *.

The persons hired to mourn at funerals, in ancient times, would do it so naturally and movingly, that

† *Burd's Apology*, Prop. xi. p. 356.

* Mr *St. Paul's Pastoral Letter*, p. 64, &c. See also *Darby's* *Job*, Prop. x. sect. 7. p. 354.

that many who saw them, tho' they knew they were hired with money to *weep*, and might rejoice inwardly, could not yet forbear to do as they did §.

As an instance of the infectious and dangerous nature of enthusiasm, we are informed, that the disciples of *Mahomet*, soon after he set himself up as a prophet, were seized at once with a religious phrensy, as it were by enchantment, which excited them to very cruel practices against those who opposed them; so that he made as many transported enthusiasts as he did disciples; and the same writer observes, "That an imagination, heated with rapid ideas, has been the source of those religious movements which have often shook the constitution of the world *."—Most writers agree that the first inducement to *Mahomet* for setting up as a prophet, sprung from a natural distemper; and that by means of the *epileptical* disease he was subject to, he made many believe that he had divine communications;—nay those airy visions, occasioned by that disease, might be looked upon by him as *real truths* or divine inspirations, as they might leave strong impressions on the brain when the fit was over—so that he might be in some measure deceived or deluded himself, before he made use of other arts and impostures to promote his design. — It is observed also concerning the *Alumbrado's*, or a pretended illuminated sect in *Spain*, who first appeared about the year 1623, that if they had not been suppressed in time, they would have spread their enthusiasm quite through the kingdom: "And I tremble, says our author, when I think that one mad man is enough to infect a province."

§ *Casaubon on Enthusiasm*, p. 125.—So true is the Observation of the Poet,

————— si vis me flere, dolendum est

Primum ipsi tibi. —

Hor. Ars Poet.

* See *The Life of Mahomet*, by Count *Beaumont*, p. 3, 96, 113.

“ province.” — So the enthusiasts, known by the name of *Messaliani*, who prayed themselves into raptures and extasies, began but with a few; but we are told in time so spread and prevailed, that whole monasteries and towns were filled or infected with the same disorder*.

Thus we see enthusiasm acts often upon persons as it were *mechanically* and forcibly; seizes them before they are aware, and even against their wills, as appears by some instances given; so that when persons come in its way they may be in danger of being carried down by the torrent, unless they have great strength to withstand it.—Hence we see how dangerous it is for persons, who are naturally inclined to melancholy and enthusiasm, to be present at such assemblies, where those violent and surprising kind of disorders before-mentioned are represented to be so common; considering that, where the matter is of a combustible nature, a small spark will easily kindle it; mere curiosity may lead them into enthusiasm, and there is no necessity of running this risk, as they may be taught all necessary parts of their duty out of the pure word of God by *pastors* lawfully appointed over them.

That joy must certainly be wrong founded which arises from beholding such miserable objects as present themselves in some congregations of the *Methodists*; such as we might expect to meet with in places where persons are shut up for the loss of their reason, rather than in the house of God:—Shall we reckon the house of distraction for a *porch* (as it were) *of the temple*, or the disturbance of reason as a means of leading us to true wisdom? I should be very sorry to give a false account of, or attribute to a wrong cause, any thing which we have the least reason to imagine is the *counsel or work of God*.

* See *Cassaubon on Enthusiasm*, p. 173, 175, 135.

God for promoting true religion and the reformation of the christian world.—Persons, when they join in public worship, ought to be duly affected with the great truths there delivered; and perhaps a true religious attention, or *inward feeling* about such things, is too much wanted (even amongst some who are careful not to *act* much amiss) this they should earnestly endeavour after and pray for; but then it should be a sober and rational affection and conviction, brought about by the silent influence of divine grace; and not manifested by convulsions of body or disturbance of mind.—And it might discourage several from setting about their duty, if the way to it was so dreadful and affrighting.

In the gospel, I think, we meet with nothing of this nature: There the *unconverted* are represented as being *asleep*, as *dead* in trespasses and sins; but they are awaked, they are raised, not by the noise and terror of *thunder and lightning from the mount*, Exod. xix. 16. but by the gracious calls of divine love. Our Saviour, when on earth, invited the weary sinners *to come unto him, and take his yoke upon them*; assuring them that he was of a *meeke* and compassionate disposition. Can we imagine then, that upon their coming to him they were thrown into frightful agonies and convulsions? Surely no. This would have discouraged converts from coming; nor would it have been consistent with his own declaration to them:—He is still the same gracious master and gentle instructor.—In the gospel the Spirit of God is represented as *descending* like a dove (an emblem of mildness) and lighting upon our Saviour, *Matt. iii. 16.*

We read of three thousand souls who gladly *heard the word* preached by St Peter, and were added to the church, and *baptised in one day*, Acts ii. 41.
Not

Not the least mention made of any violent and tormenting pains in their *new birth*; nor is there any probability that they were so affected; for if so, there could not have been that quick dispatch as to have baptised them all that day. — We read they were touched with an inward *compunction of heart*, ver. 37. but no violent agitation of body.—This represents the gospel in that amiable light in which it ought to be viewed and described, as the great design of it was to *give joy and peace in believing* *.

So little reason, I say, have we to think that the entrance to the true gospel state of light and peace, should be, as it were, through the *valley of the shadow of death*, through gloomy darkness or black despair;—that the *glad tidings of good things, and everlasting consolation promised through grace*, and the gift of *God which is eternal life*, should be ushered in with the most grievous afflictions of body and terrors of mind; or that, before persons *can be born of God, the pains of hell should take hold upon them*, and they should be under the most violent agonies for a long time †; besieged with the spirit of fear, horror and despair, travel and groan as if in the *agonies of death*; and that these and the like dreadful afflictions should be previous conditions of the true christian state, as some imagine.

Some of the popish and *enthusiastic* saints have been likewise affected in the same manner.—They are said to have felt *the throes of regeneration* to be as bad as *hell*; that the devils could not invent a worse torture, and that it was not to be expressed in words;—these kind of sufferings, they say, are designed as blessings to *purge* the soul and bring it

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* See *Rom.* xv. 13. *Eph.* v. 9. *2 Thess.* ii. 16. *1 Pet.* i. 8. *2 Pet.* i. 2, 3.

† As Mr *Wesley* describes his own *New Birth*.—See *Ent. Gains. of Methodists*, &c. Vol. III. p. 263.

to perfection; and that neither natural nor spiritual children can be born again without pain *to the flesh* ||. The famous sister *Catharine of Jesus* (we are told in her life) often saw, and in some degree suffered, the *pains of hell*,—but was afterwards very highly exalted; so that the soul of *Christ* drew hers into *an operation of the holy Trinity* (as they express it) in which operation she continued to the end of her life †.—We meet, I say, with nothing in the oracles of God, which declare to us the necessity or usefulness of such violent sufferings and terrors, in order to become truly faithful and religious christians.

In some of the *heathen mysteries* we are informed, that those who were initiated into them, expected a kind of *regeneration* or purgation of soul, in order to bring it to a state of greater perfection and happiness, and to qualify it for celestial illuminations; this power was particularly attributed to what they called the *eleusinian mysteries*, which became so famous in the *heathen* world, and spread even beyond the bounds of the *Roman* empire; they were looked upon as the beginning of a life of reason and virtue; as a means of drawing the souls of men from a material and sensual life, and joining them in communion with their gods.—But before the persons initiated could attain this state of perfection, they were to undergo great agonies of body and terrors of mind.

The entrance into those mysteries is represented as a scene of horror, a fearful march through night and darkness;—as soon as they were admitted into the *mystic dome* (erected for the celebration of them) they were seized with a total perplexity and consternation; terrified with frightful visions, and
astonished

|| *Ibid.* p. 283, &c.

† See a full Account in *Casaubon on Enthysiasm.* p. 158, &c.

astonished with a variety of uncommon objects; phantasms of monstrous shapes present themselves, as *furies* with their hissing serpents, centaurs, gorgons, harpies, and other dire chimeras; their ears are also pierced with cries and lamentations. In short, every thing wears a dreadful aspect; it is all horror, trembling and affrightment. At length the scene, we are told, is changed; and being now become purified, a divine *light* discloses itself, shining plains and beautiful meadows open to their view, and they arrive at the borders of *Elysium*, and seem to enter into a region all over illuminated. The mind, before obscured with disconsolate *darkness*, now becomes full of light and joy; so that upon account of this quick transition or succession from *Tartarus* to *Elysium*, those rites were described of old, as most horrible and most ravishingly pleasant.—The *initiated* being now come to the abodes of the blessed, they are entertained with joyful hymns, holy visions and sublime doctrines of sacred knowledge. — And as they are looked upon as *born again*, and become perfect and free; they are no longer under restraints, but walk up and down in those happy abodes, and celebrate the sacred mysteries with pleasure, rejoicing in a security of happiness in this life, and the assurance of enjoying divine honours after death.—Thus the initiated were esteemed the only happy men, and they imagined that the day shone benignant only on themselves*.

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* See *Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c.* Vol. III. p. 300, &c. —Dr Warburton's *Divine Legation*, B. II. sect. 4. where he also treats of the *Eleusinian Mysteries*; and shews that *Aeneas's* Descent into the *lower Regions* is no other than an enigmatical Representation of his Initiation into them. Vid. *Æn.* lib. 6.—*Tertul.* advers. Valert. cap. 1.—*St Aug. de Civ. Dei*, lib. 10. cap. 9, 10.—*Dr More's Myst. of Godliness*, B. III. chap. 12.—*Potter's Antiquities*, B. II. chap. 20.

Whatever might be the original design of these mysteries, yet they became at last scenes of the grossest lewdness and debauchery; and as they were celebrated in the night time, this gave an opportunity for such practices; and the secrecy enjoined about them prevented a discovery.—If it be looked upon as very difficult to give any satisfactory reason, how the *initiated* became affected in the manner already described.—It may in some measure be accounted for by considering the strength of an enthusiastic imagination, worked up by a prevailing opinion of meeting with something great and wonderful in the solemnities they were entering upon; and the mind was possessed with an awful regard for them by the preparatory instructions of the *Mystagogues*, or those appointed to preside over the ceremonies.—The mysteries were celebrated in the *night*, which helped to promote more terrible apprehensions, and in a magnificent temple of an immense bigness built for that purpose; in which probably were exhibited variety of shews, or a kind of dramatic representations, as the place was large enough for that purpose.—Thus the initiated might be presented with scenes of heaven and hell, *Purgatory* and *Elysium*; with many mystic sights, monstrous and frightful appearances or *phantasms*; which some might look upon as realities, and not as the effects of art;—or however, they were exhibited with so much *skill*, as greatly to affect the minds of the beholders, and excite joy and terror as there was occasion.—Cries and lamentations, we are told, were heard in the *mysteries*; and the words and manner of singing their *hymns*, were so contrived as to affect and astonish the minds of the initiated as much as possible.—We may add to this the particular *agency of dæmons*, who would no doubt exert their whole power on those occasions.

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The *Papists*, we may observe, seemed to have borrowed from hence several of their notions about *Purgatory*;—and how nearly do some of these descriptions agree with the account of the terrors undergone by some *Methodists*, and by others, who are acknowledged by all amongst us to have been deluded *enthusiasts* in the account given of *their regeneration*.

It may be indeed necessary that persons loaden with the weight of sin should find themselves wearied under the burden of it, and become terrified with the dangerous condition they are in; in order to become true converts and sincere followers of God; but such fears and terrors are not commonly the lot of God's *faithful servants*, or of such christians, who being brought up in a good way, have endeavoured always to continue in it, and many such we hope there are.—Christians may indeed be sometimes under a kind of *spiritual desertsions*; or God may think proper for a while to withdraw in some measure the *light of his countenance* from them, to make them the more sensible of their own weak and frail state by *nature*; and teach them to apply with more earnestness for divine grace, in order to obtain that joy, peace, and other blessed effects, which are *the fruits of the Spirit*, Gal. v. 22.

The instance of *St Paul's conversion*, which some use as an argument in their defence, is nothing to the purpose.—This was a miraculous conversion of one, who had been a violent persecutor of the church, and has not respect to the case of ordinary christians, neither is there any reason to think that he was afflicted in the same manner with some of the *Methodists*. We may also observe, that it does not appear that the persons amongst them, said to be grievously afflicted, have been in general worse livers than several others who are accounted
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good and faithful christians without such trials; so that the difference is not so easily accounted for, when considered in a religious *light*; and several of those seized in this violent manner, we are told, upon examination, were persons in perfect health, and had not been subject to fits of any kind before*; if so, I think it makes *Methodism* the more dangerous, unless we had much greater assurance than we have, that this *was the work of God*.

From such accounts the ways of coming at *Christ* now are very different from what they were in his time; whereas *Jesus Christ*, or the nature of the gospel, is *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*, Heb. xiii. 8.—We read of some persons possessed by *evil spirits*, and grievously afflicted, who were immediately cured by our Saviour and his Apostles; but of none who upon hearing them preach the gospel were seized with *violent agonies and convulsions*.

And there is, I think, no foundation for supposing that the *new birth*, which is of a spiritual nature, should of course be attended with violent pains of the body, because this happens in the *natural birth*.—This comparison, like all others, was not intended to hold good in all its particular circumstances, only as far as it regarded the main point; namely, our entrance into a *new state*.—And, even after their supposed *new birth*, we find them complaining of falling into sin, of being assaulted with doubts, spiritual desertions and strong temptations.—Hence there is, according to them, occasion for a *repeated regeneration* (which seems to be an improper way of speaking, as we can but be *born* once.)—This shews, that by *regeneration* they mean what we more properly call, a *renovation* of
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mind,

* See *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. III. p. 128, 223.

mind, or being *renewed to repentance* by the assistance of the holy Spirit §.

With good reason we date the commencement of our *new birth* from our *baptism*; when we were entred into the covenant of the gospel, and became partakers of its blessed privileges and the assistances there promised. — When the *spiritual life* in persons already *baptised* is decayed by wilful sin, they want to be *reformed* rather than *regenerated*; so that they must be put in mind of the necessity of repentance and amendment; of “*abhorring that which is evil, and cleaving to that which is good; dying to sin and living unto righteousness; putting on the new man; and begging that God would blot out their iniquities, and renew a right Spirit within them;*” this, and the like, is all that can be properly meant by the *regeneration* preached up by some of late:— Now as the ministers of the established church in particular, are careful to give all those necessary directions to the people (though, for the reasons above-mentioned, they do not make use of the word *regeneration* in such cases) it is highly wrong to accuse them (as some do) “*of neglecting to preach a necessary christian doctrine, or denying any kind of regeneration, but what is received in baptism; or supposing that as sufficient for all the purposes of a christian.*” — If persons are agreed about the substance of the doctrine, and only differ in the terms or manner of expression; it is not worth the while to dispute about words; or *whether there is a regeneration distinct from baptism.*—We find in the gospel, that the restoring persons, even *fallen away* from their holy profession or christian faith, is not called *regenerating* them, but the *renewing them by repentance*, Heb. vi. 6.

Thus

§ Heb. vi. 6. Eph. iv. 23. Rom. xii. 2. Tit. iii. 5.

Thus we see the reason for distinguishing between *regeneration* and *renovation*; though we can be but born once, yet our life stands in need of constant support; and in our church we beg of God, “that when we have been *regenerated*, and made God’s children by adoption and grace, we may yet afterwards be daily *renewed* by his Spirit* ; in which necessary work God and man jointly concur; and we are early taught in our catechism to call upon God by diligent prayer for his *special grace*, without which we are not able to do those things which he has commanded.

To preach up *regeneration*, or direct baptised persons to wait for the *new birth* (though done with a pious intention) seems, however, not to be a very proper way of speaking, and may tend in some measure to perplex the minds of several, and perhaps make them slight their *baptism* as an institution of little power or significancy.

As to the accounts of those wonderful and sudden *conversions*, or miraculous changes said to be wrought of late amongst the *Methodists* and others, we may refuse paying any great regard to the accounts, without justly incurring the censure of *unreasonable doubting*, or being blamed for not looking on them *as a revival of what was at the beginning*. —Nor are we to direct persons to judge of their *new birth*, *election*, or *assurance of salvation*, barely from some raptures, warm affections, or sudden transports of devotion, which they may have felt at some particular times; or to expect some kind of private revelations to assure them of their *conversion* and certainty of their *salvation*; to judge by such marks are uncertain and dangerous, as they may be grounded on an unsound or enthusiastic imagination; nay the great adversary of our souls

* Coll. for *Christmas-Day*.

may in some cases be busy in infusing illusions and false joys into the mind, to make persons think that they are secure and out of danger when they by no means are. A virtuous habit or religious disposition of mind, founded on serious reflection and sober judgment, with a constant endeavour to obey all God's commandments, is the best proof that we are God's favourite servants; and will afford the most settled peace and lasting comfort; though it may not perhaps be attended with such extraordinary raptures as some persons boast of, and which may often be in a great measure constitutional, or owing to a quick flow of animal spirits independent of the will. Nor are persons to conclude that they are in a state of *reprobation*, or absolutely cast out of God's favour, by reason of some melancholy fears; or, through want of spiritual joy, imagine that God has quite withdrawn the *light of his countenance*, or utterly *forsaken* them.—*Whilst the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind*, Wisd. ix. 15. Some persons, though truly good and religious, must expect to be affected with this natural infirmity and affliction; and not look for fulness of joy till *this corruptible hath put on incorruption*.—As some persons are diffident about the *indwellings* or assistance of the Spirit, and others too confident and presuming in this case; and as the holy Ghost, who is invisible in his own nature, does not now manifest his presence to the world by wonders and miracles, as he did when the gospel was first preached; the best proof we can have of his presence, or *dwelling* in us, is from his operations, or the effects brought about by his assistance; and as this is a matter of great importance to be well assured about, the scripture has given us several evident marks to judge by; so that we may know
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whether we are *led by the Spirit*, or a contrary principle, as easily as we know *a tree by its fruits*.—“*The fruit of the Spirit is evident in all goodness, righteousness and truth; love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance.*” The opposite works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, “*Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like**.” The surest way then to judge of our spiritual condition is to apply to holy scripture, and our own conscience, and to examine how our lives and actions agree with the directions given in God’s word; and if our *hearts condemn us not in this inquiry*, when sincerely made, then *have we confidence towards God*, 1 John iii. 21. or good grounds to think that we are in a state of grace or acceptance with him.—And when we see persons acting contrary to any of the express duties laid down in scripture, we may conclude that they are not *led by the Spirit*, whatever their pretences may be.

Neither must *conversion* be accounted only as the work of a *moment*, or to come all at once; it is for the most part brought about gradually; and it must be a work of time to make *our calling and election sure*.—We are exhorted to *grow in grace*, to *give all diligence*, to add one virtue to another; and *go on by degrees to perfection*.—And the persons who expect an instantaneous *conversion*, or by an extraordinary compulsion to be forced at once from vice to virtue, from a wicked life to a good one; often neglect the proper and appointed means of salvation.—And we have no authority from scripture to say, that God, by the *irresistible* power of his grace, makes persons good, as it were, by *violence*; or

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* Gal. v. 19, &c. Eph. v. 9.

saves them without any proper desires or endeavours of their own. Such notions seem to overthrow human liberty, take away in a manner the foundation of religion, and we scarce are accountable creatures, or capable of rewards and punishments.—As we are rational creatures, able to distinguish between the *good and evil set before us*, and accountable for our own actions, it cannot well be supposed that the Spirit of God should act upon us in that irresistible manner, as that we should make no use of our own understanding; or that our own care and diligence after virtue should be needless. If this was the case, why are we so often in scripture exhorted, intreated and commanded, to *repent* or be *converted*; encouraged to our duty by the promise of eternal rewards, and deterred from sin by eternal punishments?—And to say that *God works in us* in such a manner as to make our own best endeavours needless, is to say, that we may be *idle*, though God commands us to be active and diligent; or to esteem his commands and exhortations as unnecessary injunctions and unmeaning *forms of speech*.—*No man*, says our Saviour, *can come to me except my Father draw him*, John vi. 44. but not by irresistible force; God draws him by his preventing and assisting grace; and it is the business of man diligently to attend to and embrace this offer, *to hear and learn of the Father*, in order to *come to Christ*, as is expressed in the next verse;—otherwise he will miscarry in the great business of his salvation, *frustrate the grace of God*, Gal. ii. 21. and do despite to the Spirit of Grace, *Heb. x. 29.* which shews his power of resisting the divine favour.

Our Saviour mentions several who prevented their *conversion* by their own obstinacy, *Matt. xiii. 15.*—And it would be easy to prove, from several passages in scripture, that the holy Spirit does not
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work *conversion irresistibly*; and that persons may *fall from grace* after conversion*.

This notion of an *instantaneous conversion* was maintained formerly by some sectaries amongst us; and before they would admit any other into their communion, they were to give a particular account *when and how* they were *converted*; *where*, and by what means the work of grace was wrought in them; and whether they ever *felt* the Spirit of God operate so strongly upon their wills and affections, as not to be able to resist the power of it †.—This doctrine seems to be renewed of late, and much insisted upon by some, who pretend that they certainly know and *feel* those assurances, can tell the particular time and place of receiving them, which they look upon as so many *seals of the spirit*; and that there are many, whose salvation is *written in their hearts*, as it were *with a sun-beam*; that the being born of God is an *instantaneous work*, done at once and in a moment, *as lightning*; and that from that instant they are enabled to be *more than conquerors* over those corruptions which before they were slaves to. — They will tell you the *very day and hour* when they had *assurances* given them, that the *lamb of God* had taken away *their sin*, and the like; — and others, we find, want to *hear Christ speak to them*, that they may be sensible in that *very hour* that *it is he that speaketh*.—Now all this, and more to the same purpose, was as firmly believed, or pretended to, by several *popish* enthusiasts of old;

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* See this point fully considered in Dr Clagget's *Treatise of the Operations of the Holy Spirit*, published by Dr Stebbing, chap. 8, 9, &c. — See also a Book called *The Examination of Tilenus*, printed for Royston, 1658, where the Five Articles controverted between the *Remonstrants* and *Calvinists* are fully examined by Scripture Authority, p. 98, 123, &c.

† See *Continuation of Friendly Debate*, p. 226. — *Examination of Tilenus*, &c. p. 2, 14.

who, we are told, were *made holy in a moment*; received by a *sudden light* faith and compleat perfection of divine sanctity, were *instantly* delivered from the sins they were inclined to before:—Some are said to be *assured of their salvation*, before the *image of the Virgin Mary*, by an internal voice filling them with so much joy, that they could scarce contain themselves; and that they were called with so clear and loud a voice, that they could not resist the call; in which ravishment of sense or extasy they *were out of themselves* and transported to God.—Many other accounts we have to the same purpose*.

Now as I fancy that those amongst us, who pretend to such extraordinary calls and assurances, will look upon the *papists* in these cases as under the power of delusion; this should teach them to be in some fear for themselves, and cautious by seeing the dangerous mistakes others have fallen into.

We have indeed some accounts in the gospel of *conversions* wrought in a sudden and miraculous manner, as was the case of *St Paul* in particular; and in the primitive times we read of some heathens being made *converts* or believers by visions, or some divine impulses, whereby the Spirit of God gave a sudden turn to the mind;—and in those times of persecution, and when the prejudices of the *pagans* run high against the gospel, such extraordinary kind of admonitions became more necessary; and there is reason to believe the accounts §. But there is by no means the same reason to expect such extraordinary assistance where christianity is the

* See *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. I. p. 41, &c. Vol. III. p. 357, &c.

§ See Mr *Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 241.—from *Origen* and *Eusebius*.

the *established* religion; or in the peaceable times of the church.—And though God may, upon some occasions, work so powerfully upon the mind of some persons, as to give a check to their wicked courses, and bring them *at once* to a due sense of their duty; yet this is not the common way of proceeding in the work of our salvation; nor are such instances general rules for us to go by. Where persons, I say, are trained up from their youth in the belief of the christian religion, they are quite in a different state from those Jews and Gentiles, who *were dead* in trespasses and sins, and perhaps *blasphemed* the name of Christ, and were brought up with strong prejudices against the gospel;—they have no need *now* of those extraordinary calls wanted formerly, or at least they have no reason to expect them; if they have abused the blessing offered them so far as to have lost all sense of religion.

The day of grace, *now* like the natural day, may be considered as breaking upon the soul in a serene and gentle manner;—and we are to make use of the several helps afforded us; as *reading* the holy scripture; *attending* to public instruction; these, and the like means (through the divine assistance) will be sufficient to lead persons into the way of eternal happiness, unless by their own fault they wilfully neglect the opportunity offered.

We must not expect to be taken as it were *by violence* into the *kingdom of heaven*; but rather consider that the *kingdom of God* is to suffer a kind of *violence* from us; and that we are to *take it by force*, Matt. xi. 12. or use our utmost endeavours to attain eternal happiness.

As to that *absolute assurance* of salvation, which some pretend to, we may observe, that it seems to be a sufficient motive and encouragement to a
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holy life; and as much as the gospel requires at our hand; if we are fully *assured* in general, that *Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, and that all faithful and obedient christians shall be partakers of eternal happiness through him*; and one might wish that all, who profess themselves christians, were fully persuaded of the certainty of this important truth.— But when persons affirm, that they are *absolutely sure* of their own salvation in particular, and look on others, who fall short of their confidence, as in a dangerous way;—this is a mark of *spiritual pride*; a persuasion rather proceeding from the spirit of delusion than the infallible Spirit of God.—Persons of very different opinions and persuasions, have not only proclaimed their own inward comfort and peace of mind, which they use as an argument that they are in a *right* way; but from hence some pretend also to a *full assurance* of their own salvation. How shall we reconcile these things together, or know which of them are in the right? Unless it could be proved, that if persons have an *assurance* within themselves of salvation, they cannot fail of attaining it; but it certainly behoves them to take care that they do not mistake groundless presumption for full assurance. And those christians who go upon *hope*, built upon their best endeavours to *adorn the doctrine of God their saviour in all things*, are as near, or nearer heaven, than such as are confident about their salvation, and blame others for only *hoping* that they shall be saved. There are indeed degrees of hope, and some of them come near to an absolute certainty; if by *assurance* they mean only this fullest kind of hope, we then dispute chiefly about words;— as faithful christians may have a good assurance of their salvation, without declaring that they are so infallibly certain that they cannot fail of it.—*Hope*, we must observe, is

a necessary christian principle, by which we are directed and comforted in our present state; we are represented at present *as begotten to a lively hope through Christ — to an inheritance incorruptible, reserved in heaven — as saved by hope — abounding and rejoicing in hope — as living in hope of eternal life, and the like**.

The gospel itself is described as *a better hope*, Heb. ii. 19.—*Now* (or in this present state) *abideth faith and hope*, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. both which are indeed to end hereafter in certainty and full enjoyment. All good and faithful christians, I say, may have a well-grounded hope and comfortable expectation of eternal life; but it does not seem agreeable to the nature of christian humility, or the present state of human infirmity, to declare, that we have behaved ourselves so that we are absolutely sure of eternal life.—We are rather to *work out our salvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 12. This, and the like passages in *scripture*, cannot well be reconciled with the notion of making *absolute assurance* a necessary condition of our *salvation*. We are then to make proper use of the grace given us, and desire an increase of it, that we may be enabled to make our *calling and election sure*; considering that persons by their own ill behaviour may have their *names blotted out of the book of life*, Rev. iii. 5. This life is not the proper time of having an infallible assurance what sentence the great Judge will pronounce in particular cases, as we are at present in a state of trial only.

St *John* says, *If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God*, 1 John iii. 21.—by which is not to be understood *an absolute* certainty, but only a good degree of hope, that we are in a state of acceptance with God.—As this *confidence* depends

* See 1 *Pet.* i. 3. *Rom.* viii. 24. *Rom.* v. 2, 15, 13. *Tit.* i. 2.

depends on the impartial examination we make of ourselves; we do not go therefore on an infallible certainty, as we may be mistaken in the judgment we make of our own conduct; and the degree of *assurance* arises in proportion to the evidence we have of having kept the commandments of God, and preserved a *conscience void of offence*.

It is then a very rash declaration to pronounce those as *damm'd already*, who only say they *hope to be saved*, but do not pretend to an absolute *assurance* of it; which sentence has been actually pronounced by some chief leaders amongst the *Methodists*, and has been the occasion of great doubts and fears, terrifying some so much, that they could not recover their right mind again for a long time*.

The gospel no where teaches us that this absolute assurance is to be one of the conditions of our salvation, or a necessary motive or means of comfort for the due performance of our duty. Nay such an *assurance* might tend to make some rather careless than diligent in their obedience;—and the joy founded on the assurance of eternal happiness, or that we cannot possibly be deprived of it, is a joy rather proper to those who have *finished their course*, and are going to *receive the crown of righteousness at the Lord's hand*,—than to those who are yet *working out their salvation, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling*,—and only *going on to perfection*; who are exhorted not to be *moved from the hope of the gospel*—to beware lest they *fall from their own steadfastness*—to *look to themselves that they lose not those things they have wrought*—not to *turn from their righteousness, lest they die in their sins*—and to *take heed lest they fall, although they*

* See *The Bishop of Exeter's Letter to Mr J. Wesley, 1752*, plainly proving, *where and to whom*, he said such Things.—And also *Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c.* Vol. III. p. 5, &c.

they think that they stand firm †. These and the like passages do not seem to favour the doctrine of the absolute assurance of salvation in this present state, which *certainly* some pious martyrs indeed and eminent christians might have given to them by *revelation* on particular occasions; but it was not to be expected by all christians, as there was no absolute necessity for it.

These notions of *irresistible* grace, absolute *assurance* of salvation, and the like, have been, and are *still*, attended with dangerous mistakes in different extremes.—Hence some have laid claim to *absolute perfection* or living without sin, as was the case with most of the enthusiastic founders of religious orders amongst the papists: Thus their St *Francis* in particular is said “not to have transgressed one jot or tittle of the gospel;” and a party sprung from that *order* affirmed, “that as persons may in this life attain so great *perfection* as to live without sin, they are then above *ordinances*, they need not fast and pray as do others; sacraments were to cease amongst them, and every one was to be saved by the inward grace of the Spirit, without any external actions; — that such as are *perfect* have the spirit of liberty, and are not subject to any human ordinances of church or state; and that they have enough by a *light within* to make them happy, and wanted no external light in order thereto*.”—How nearly do some sectaries amongst us, who sprung up about a century ago, agree with them in several of their notions ‡.—Some enthusiasts also of a later date, in the church of *Rome*, have affirmed, that those

† *Phil.* ii. 12. iii. 14. *Heb.* vi. 1. *Col.* i. 23. *2 Pet.* iii. 17. *2 Ep. of John* 8. *Ez.* xviii. 24. *1 Cor.* x. 12.

* See Bishop *Stillingfleet on the Idolatry and Fanaticism of the Church of Rome*, ch. 4. p. 238, 256.—*Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. I. p. 47, &c.

‡ See *Snake in the Grass*, sect. 1, 4, 13.

those who are *truly born again* possess all the sacraments in themselves, and need not seek them elsewhere; that they are reformed to the state of *innocence* wherein *Adam* lived before his sin ||.—And no wonder if we meet with the same kind of opinions amongst modern enthusiasts.—We are informed that some of the teachers amongst the Methodists have asserted, that after they have received the Spirit, they *cannot sin* §. — Others of them have complained, “that to their surprise they have met with persons amongst them, who have thrown away their Bibles, declaring, that they were good enough, and desired to be no better; that they were *saved*, and ailed nothing, and had no need to read or pray any more!—That others, lifted up with the abundance of *spiritual joy*, given as they imagined by God, had fallen into strange blasphemies; — became wise far above what was written,—declared, that hitherto they had been taught of man, but now they were taught of God only;—and that God had told them not to partake of the Lord’s Supper any more, since they fed upon Christ continually*!” —Mr *Whitefield* declares of himself, “That it was suggested to him by Satan, *as an angel of light*, that he must leave off *public worship* and his religious friends for *Christ’s* sake; and that for some time he resolved to do so, till, by the advice of some of his friends, he was delivered from the wiles of Satan †.” — And amongst the popish enthusiasts we are told, that a young woman being *assured* of salvation by following the rules of *St Francis*, the Devil

|| As Mrs *Bourignon* declared. See *Preface to Snake in the Grass*, and *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. III. p. 271.

§ *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists*, &c. Vol. III. *Preface*, p. 30.

* *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 46. Vol. II. p. 26, 142. as taken from Mr *Wesley’s Journals*.

† *Ibid.* Vol. II. p. 65.

vil appeared to her in the shape of that faint, persuading her to make sure of heaven, by instantly hanging herself; which she accordingly did.—Accounts of this nature even forced a famous enthusiast of that church to observe, that the *presumption of assurance* is the Devil's device, deluding people by sensible consolations, and bringing them to the utmost peril ‖.

Others there are, who from the imagined assurance they have of their election and salvation, and that they cannot fail of attaining everlasting happiness, become the more careless in several necessary duties of religion; as their sins cannot *finally* endanger their salvation. — One would think, indeed, that no christians could entertain such dangerous opinions; yet it has been done formerly, and may be so again; and corrupt nature will plead strongly in behalf of such doctrines.

We read of some popish enthusiasts of old, who looked upon it as an argument of a state of imperfection to live in the strict exercise of *moral virtues*; fancying that they were above them; accounting all actions indifferent which were designed to satisfy natural inclinations; and so we find they became guilty of very gross sins, which they looked upon as nothing*.—Some others, who have withdrawn themselves from the church of *Rome*, have been also represented as careless about several religious duties, from the pretended certainty of their election; and no wonder it should be so, for as when they are *once* certain they are *ever* certain; therefore, if they fall into any kind of wickedness, they will look upon themselves as in no danger, nor stand in awe of future punishment; which is
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‖ Ibid. Vol. II, p. 26. Vol. III. p. 9.

* See Bishop Stillingfleet on the *Fausticism of the Church of Rome*, chap. 4. p. 238, 256.

one great preservative against sin. Some of this opinion were charged formerly with declaring, that their sins differ from sins of the same kind in the *reprobate*; and that *their* sins are but fatherly chastisements, though in the wicked they may have the nature of punishment;—that as *all things work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. viii. 28. so do their *sins also*;—and that they cannot die in them without repentance; but if they should be suddenly cut off before *repentance*, yet would they be pardoned at the instant of death, and so saved; as God knew they would have *repented*, if they had more time; or that they were virtually penitents, and would have become so actually †.—Such doctrine as this is very dangerous to those who rely upon it, and may betray unwary souls into eternal misery.

Amongst our modern enthusiasts we are informed, that some of their teachers have asserted, “that after persons have received the Spirit, if they commit any sin, it is only an error in such, and let them do whatsoever they please after their adoption, however sinful the act is, they are sure to *be saved* notwithstanding ‖.” — We may the sooner give credit to such accounts, because this has happened before amongst former enthusiasts; or the persons who have agreed with them in some of their particular opinions.

The doctrine of *Quietism*, we find, was attended with very dangerous and wicked consequences;—some of the teachers of it insinuated to their disciples, “that the saints had different ways of attaining the kingdom of heaven than those usually practised;

† See *An Apology for Tilenus against Mr Baxter*, 1659, p. 47, 381, 416, 491, &c.—See also *Nichols's Def. Ecl. Ang.* Part I. cap. 4, 5.

‖ *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, Vol. III. Preface, p. 30

practised; and that the greatest pitch of *spiritual perfection* consisted in delivering themselves up to a *silent obedience* to the workings of *the Spirit*.—That prayer and other outward actions were things quite indifferent, after they had attained this *spiritual union*; and that they were arrived at a state in which they could do no evil.—And many were deluded into this false security, and had their minds filled with enthusiastic notions destructive of *moral virtue* *.

Methodism is a good design, so far as it tends to *reform* the lives of mankind, and induces them to live *soberly, righteously and godly*; when it is also conducted by those ways and means which God has plainly declared in holy scripture, and consults peace and order in the church of *Christ*, and due obedience to proper authority; — the persons who have lately appropriated this title to themselves seem wanting in these last particulars, whatever they may be in others.—And it may be questioned whether, by the progress of *Methodism*, there be much improvement in true practical *christianity*; nor are the *fruits* of the spirit so visible amongst them as they would have others imagine. Though, in some of their enthusiastic raptures, they may think themselves as it were in heaven, and far above the rank of common christians; yet upon inquiry they may perhaps be found no better than many of those whom they despise. New converts, and those especially amongst them, who have been affected in so uncommon a manner as was before-mentioned (if they consider this as the work of God) will shew at first a great *zeal* for religion; but it may be doubted whether or no it be according to knowledge, or the rules of God's word — And their own teachers

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* See the Case of Mrs *Cadiere* and Father *Girard*, as brought before the Parliament of *Paris*, in 1728.

declare, “ That there are several amongst them, whose warm emotions of mind often proceed from the state and disposition of body, the temperament of the blood and animal spirits; that young converts are apt to ascribe to the operations of the holy Ghost what is owing to the mechanism of the body; and that the hasty, careless and unguarded, are most in danger of being carried away with *false joys* and imaginary transports †.”

Thus may they be seduced to *popery*, or persuaded to embrace the tenets of the most mistaken *heretics*, just as those are inclined who have the power over them; and though they may fall into better hands, yet have we reason to question, whether their religious affections will be of any lasting continuance, or lead them into a true settled way of godliness. — The Moravians, who were once reckoned by the *Methodists* as the *best* of men, are now, we find, become hateful to them; and blamed for *their guile, hypocrisy, profanation of God's ordinances*, and the like †.—And some of their congregations are charged with several superstitious practices agreeing with *popery*; as having in their public places of worship “ various kinds of pictures, tables covered with artificial flowers, altars surrounded with wax-tapers, on which stood crosses composed of, or surrounded with, real or mock *diamonds*; organs, illuminated with several heights of wax-tapers, tied with red ribbons, and the like *.—In the church of *Rome* we are assured, that they have *lamps* and tapers constantly burning before some of their favourite images, placed on stately altars,

† *Tracts of Methodists*, &c. Vol. II, p. 106.

‡ As Mr *Wells* describes them. See *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. III, Preface, p. 9.

* See Mr *Wells's* Explanatory Letter to Count Zinzendorf, 1753.

altars, before which they solemnly bow themselves as soon as they enter into the church; and, if you are well disposed, they say, “ a holy fear and trembling seizes you, as when *Jacob* saw heaven opened, and said, *How dreadful is this place* § ?” — Their public places of worship are also set off with the most pompous ornaments and gaudy pageantry; which many weak minds are apt to look upon as the *beauty of holiness*, an emblem of heaven, and a sure way to it; and by such like artifices unwary profelytes are often drawn in and detained. — That there ought to be a proper decency and comeliness observed in the house of God, and in his worship, is evident both from reason and scripture, as this may be a help to devotion. — But that superfluity of outward shew and pomp in the *church of Rome*, must tend to dissipate and disturb the thoughts, and be a hindrance to spiritual devotion and rational piety; which is the great end of public worship.

But to return. — The *Methodists* themselves complain “ of great disorders, irregularities, and falling away amongst them. — That in many the seed has withered away — scarce one in ten retained his first love — That many are wholly unsettled, and lost in vain reasonings and doubtful disputations, and not like to come to any true foundation; have disputed away their faith and love — That great numbers had left their *societies*, and amongst those who remained, the hearts of several were estranged. — They own that there are amongst them sinners of every kind — that there was a change in several, but it was but *for a season*. — That they say and do not — that some were fallen after their assurance that the Lamb of God had taken away their sins. — Nay, that several had turned to a new gospel, embracing a false unscriptural *stillness*, ceasing from

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§ See Dr *Bre:nt's New Ways of Salvation*. &c. p. 348.

outward works and means of grace; such as prayer, sacraments, reading the holy scriptures, as thinking they were good enough without them*.”— Thus, we find, it was the opinion also of some *heretics* of old, that when by prayer they had driven away the *evil Spirit*, which every one, they said, brought into the world with them; and the *good Spirit* had taken possession of their soul, by *sensible* marks of his presence, that then there was no occasion for *sacraments* or *preaching the word*; and that the persons thus made perfect had extraordinary gifts bestowed on them, as *prophecy*, and the like †.

By the accounts here given we see then, that the persons we are speaking of have made no great improvement in true godliness; that many of them are like the *fig-tree*, upon which nothing could be found but *leaves only*, Matt. xxi. 19. *that their blossom is gone up as dust*, Isa. v. 24. and *they bring no fruit to perfection*.

And we have reason for calling in question those informations which assure us how much the power of godliness is increased amongst them; and that after experiencing those *horrors* of soul, they have walked suitably to the gospel of *Christ*.—That the slavery of sin, and depth of sorrow and despair, have changed into a love for *holiness*, great joy and comfort;—that supposing there is any thing above the common powers of nature (in this mysterious part of Methodism) let every wise man judge of what kind that power must be, by which a sinner is turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God ‖.

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* *Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c.* Vol. II. p. 63, 140, &c. where this, and much more to the same purpose, is collected from Mr *Wesley's* Journals.

† Vid. *Theoder. Hist. Eccl.* l. 4. cap. 11. de *Har. Mesiliar.*

‖ See Mr *Perrone's* Third Letter to the Author of *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*; p. 16, 19.

That some persons amongst the Methodists, who were before careless livers, may have turned from their *evil ways*, no body denies. — But they have little more to boast of in these respects than other denominations of christians. — And several of those, whom they looked upon as true *converts*, have (as we find) *fallen away* from their seeming good *beginnings*.

We are also informed by their own writers, “ that a general temptation prevailed amongst them of leaving off *good works* in order to increase their faith; and to cry out, *no works! no law! no commandments!* And that several of the *Moravian Methodists* in particular were for trampling down *morality*, teaching *justification by faith* alone, not only to the *exclusion*, but *condemnation*, of *good works* *!” — This is renewing the *Solifidian* and *Antinomian* notions, which prevailed here about a century ago (when enthusiasm triumphed amongst us) and were accounted the only spiritual doctrine; when a bare *faith* was preached up as the whole of religion, and one of the first things persons were taught was renouncing their own righteousness *without limitation*; and *morality* was despised, by the elevated enthusiasts, as a dull and low thing †. — As this is a very dangerous error, and what many have been inclined to, and as it destroys one great design of the christian religion, it will not be amiss to consider this point more fully.

There are many who seem to have a mind to get to heaven by an easier way than that of obedience; for which reason they cry up *faith*, and run down *works*; and some may be led into this error

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* See *Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c.* Vol. II. p. 142, 147. — Also Mr *Stinstra's Pastoral Letter*, p. 21, 35. and the following *Appendix* from Mr *Rimus*.

† See Mr *Glanvil's* Seventh Essay about *Antifanatical Religion*.

by not making a proper distinction between the slavery of the *works of the law*, and the *good works* of the gospel, where the service is *perfect freedom*; — not considering that *obedience* is one necessary part of the *christian faith*, or covenant of grace, in *which we are created in Jesus Christ to good works*, Eph. ii. 10. *Faith*, in order to make it *perfect*, Jam. ii. 22. or such as may be relied on with assurance, must be considered as a means to some farther attainment, or produce *holiness* of life, an obedience to the will of God, which was the great intention of our Saviour's appearance in the world ||.

By this means our *faith* becomes visible and fruitful; for if *while we seek to be justified by faith in Christ, we ourselves are found sinners*, Gal. ii. 17. or live in wilful disobedience to any of God's commandments, our *faith cannot save us*, Jam. ii. 14. as one great end of it was to enforce the practice of moral duties. — We must therefore carefully remember the duties belonging to a true faith, as well as the promises annexed to it.—And if there can possibly be any mistake in affirming that obedience must necessarily be joined to faith, in order to secure our salvation, we need not doubt but that it is a very pardonable error, as it seems to be a duty so evidently pointed out in the gospel; and as it is done with a pious intention to promote the glory of God and real good of man.—When St Paul says, *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved*, Rom. x. 13.—More than a bare outward confession was here meant;—and we must explain the Apostle's meaning by the whole *tenor* of the gospel, and the express declaration of our Saviour; namely, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven,*

ven, Matt. vii. 21.—So also, when we read of salvation promised to persons upon their *faith* and *baptism*, Acts xvi. 30, 33.—Such instances are not to be so understood as to lessen in the least the necessity of obedience to any of God's laws; a duty so fully insisted upon in many other parts of the *New Testament*. — We cannot indeed in the least doubt of the salvation of such sincere converts or believers in *Christ*, as died immediately after their *baptism*, before they could have an opportunity of shewing *their faith by their works*.—Thus the penitent thief was, upon his sincere profession *only* in *Christ*, admitted immediately into heaven. — In cases of this nature, persons may be said to be *justified* and *saved* by such a faith, as some plead for, not including *works*:—But in the common case of christians, though they are admitted by faith and baptism into a covenant of grace and pardon, or into a justified state (and we find justification and salvation are joined to baptism as following from it) *Tit. iii. 5, 7. 1 Cor. vi. 11.* Yet, unless they are careful to perform their part in the covenant, as soon as they have an opportunity, and continue constant in their christian obedience, they can expect no advantage from it.—Nay their *faith in Christ*, and knowledge of their Master's will, without a sincere endeavour to fulfil it, will only increase their guilt.—Such an unfruitful faith cannot *save* them, or finally *justify* them at the day of judgment;—and we may observe, that *St James* seems to understand by *justification* the same thing as *obtaining salvation at the last day*; to attain which, *faith* alone will not do exclusive of obedience, *Jam. ii. 14, 24.*—We are here speaking of the case of *grown persons*, and not of *infants*, who may be said to be *justified* in baptism, or *saved* through *Christ*, without either *faith* or *works* of their own, both

which become necessary to their salvation, when they come to years of understanding.

If then, according to the terms of the gospel covenant, obedience is as plainly enjoined as faith, in order to secure our eternal salvation, or our faith is not a *saving one*, unless we apply ourselves diligently to practice what we *believe*; to what purpose is it to raise disputes about their distinct offices, powers or efficacy?—And if *good works* are only reckoned signs or fruits of *justification*; yet is it necessary that christians should *abound and be filled with such fruits*, in order to promote the *glory of God* and attain *eternal life*, John xv. 8. Rom. ii. 6. Phil. i. 11. — Our business is therefore to endeavour to adorn a *lively faith* by a good practice, and not to put afunder what God hath firmly joined together.—This account of our duty keeps up an evident consistency or agreement in holy scripture; but if we make one part of the gospel oppose another, it is a sure sign that we mistake the true meaning and design of it; as we evidently do, if we hope to be *saved* by a *bare faith*, without having a proper regard to the terms of obedience, which are as plainly required as the other, and by which our *faith is made perfect*, as St James assures us.— And here we may just observe, that there is no disagreement between the two Apostles St Paul and James on this point, but their writings may be easily reconciled*. — St Paul, arguing with the Jews, tells them, that we are *justified by faith in Christ*, without *the works of the law*, Gal. ii. 16.—But he does by no means exclude the works of *christian obedience*, as his other writings fully demonstrate; and the safest way must be to explain the Apostle's meaning

* Vid Bull. Harmon. Apost. &c. — Et Examen Confut., &c. where this point is largely treated of.—See also Dr Wetstein's *Views of the Doctrine of justification*.

meaning *here* by his own writings, and in general to interpret the more obscure parts of scripture by such as are more plain; which would be the best way of clearing up several difficult passages, and determining many controversies in religion.—And in this particular point we are speaking about, we must explain *St Paul's* words by those of *St James*, as he wrote after *St Paul*, and very probably with a particular view in this place to remove the errors of some christians, who mistook *St Paul's* meaning about the doctrine of *justification* or nature of *faith*.—He plainly informs them, that *faith without works is dead* (or of no value) *being alone*, Jam. ii. 17.—Or that *a saving faith* cannot be separated from *christian obedience*.—And this express declaration ought, I think, to put an end to disputes of this nature, when we find also, that this doctrine exactly agrees with what *St Paul* teaches in other places; as where he tells us, that *the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness*.—That he will render to every man according to his deeds — eternal life to every one that worketh good, or continues in well doing; but tribulation and anguish to every soul of man that doth evil.—That without holiness no man shall see the Lord.—That our Saviour became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.—That nothing availeth in Christ but *faith working by love* or obedience; and that the great design of his giving himself for us, was to purify himself a peculiar people zealous of good works *. The nature of which works our Saviour sets before us in his famous Sermon on the Mount; towards the conclusion of which he declares, *That not every one who saith, Lord, Lord,* (or proceeds no farther than to a dead unactive *faith*)

* Rom. i. 18. Rom. ii. 6, &c. Heb. xii. 14. Heb. v. 9. Gal. v. 6. Tit. ii. 14.

faith) shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, Matt. vii. 21. — So that we must shew our *faith* by good actions, as well as by pious words. — This doctrine is farther enforced by our Saviour in another place, and made one of the conditions of eternal life, Matt. xxv. 31, &c.

St Paul, by *faith*, then means the same that St James does by *faith and works together*; and St James more fully explains the intention of the other Apostle, as he was the later writer.

There is such an insuperable union and alliance amongst the graces of the Spirit, that where one really is, there all the rest must be;— upon which account (as a learned author observes) the writers of the New Testament express the whole body of practical divinity sometimes by *faith*, sometimes by hope, sometimes by repentance, and sometimes by love; because the combination of these saving graces is such, that the mentioning of one implies all the rest.—He observes also, that when St Paul mentions the *gift of faith*, 1 Cor. xii. 9. he is not speaking of a *justifying* or *saving faith* (which is a common gift to all good christians) but of the *faith of miracles*, or a supernatural assurance wrought by the Spirit in the mind of man; that he was enabled to do such and such miracles before he attempted to do them †.

To receive our Saviour by *faith* in such a manner as may justify us, or secure our salvation according to the terms of the gospel, is to receive him as our *King* and *Lawgiver* (as He is described in holy scripture) which must imply obedience to his commands; without which care our greatest pretences to love and loyalty can be nothing but hypocrisy,

† See Dr Hicks's Sermon on 1 Cor. xii. 4. called *The Spirit of Enthusiasm exercised*, p. 8, 12.

hypocrisy, and our Saviour can take no pleasure in such servants or subjects. Thus we see the close connection betwixt gospel faith and christian obedience or works; a sincere obedience manifests a true faith, and is essentially annexed to it; and *disobedience* (whatsoever pretences it is covered with) must be looked upon as next to *unbelief*. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments*, 1 John v. 3. and it is here made one of the tests of *trying the Spirits, whether they are of God*, ch. iv. 1. — Hence then it appears, that *evangelical justification*, in the full extent of the word, or as it includes the pardon of our sins, and a title to salvation, must be founded on such a faith as takes in the whole of the christian belief; or has a regard to the several parts of the gospel. And the word *faith* properly implies all this, as it is our first and necessary guide to heaven, the root or foundation of all christian graces and virtues.

In order to see more plainly St Paul's design, in insisting so much on the doctrine of *justification by faith in Christ*, we may observe, that several of the *Jews*, especially the *Pharisees*, were at that time so much puffed up with spiritual pride, and the opinion of the great privileges they enjoyed, as to think they wanted nothing more to make them acceptable in the sight of God; and so claimed *justification* rather as a debt than a favour*. — Amongst the heathens also, many gloried in their own virtue or righteousness, as entirely owing to themselves, and not to any divine assistance; nay they insolently boasted, that in these respects they equalled the gods themselves, and vainly pretended to be *free from sin* †. — Upon this account they could not imagine

* Luke xvi. 15. xviii. 11, &c.

† See Dr Jenkins on the Reasonableness of the Christian Religion, Vol. I. Part 3. ch. 5. p. 372, 388. where several instances are given.

gine that they wanted a Saviour and Redeemer for the pardon of their sins, or to justify them in the sight of God; and indeed this seems to be the case at present with some, who set up natural reason as a sufficient guide; and pretend to want no other assistance besides their own knowledge, or any other merit to rely upon but their own.—In opposition to such vain and dangerous opinions, the Apostle urges the necessity of looking out for a more perfect knowledge and *righteousness* than their own; which were attainable *only* by a true faith in *Christ*, or being partakers of the *covenant of grace*, founded on the merits of *Christ* our Saviour; and as a necessary preparation to embrace the gospel, and receive advantage from it, we must acknowledge our own natural unworthiness, and look upon our own *goodness as a morning cloud* †. Upon this account *St Paul* desires to be found in *Christ*, not having his own *righteousness*, which is of the law, but that which is through faith in *Christ*, the *righteousness* which is of God by faith, Phil. iii. 9. — So that *justification by faith*, according to *St Paul*, seems to be a relying on the gospel covenant for salvation in opposition to those proud and ignorant boasters, who thought there was no necessity for it.—And this Apostle indeed, in some places, uses the word *faith* in the same sense as we do the *gospel*: Thus, says he, *before faith* came (or the gospel dispensation took place) *we were kept under the law* — *but after that faith* is come, *we are no longer under a school-master*, Gal. iii. 23, 25.

Now one of the terms of this *covenant of faith*, as we have observed, is a sincere endeavour to pay obedience to the commands there enjoined, which
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† See *Job* xv. 14. *Psal.* li. 5. *Psal.* cxxx. 3. *Psal.* cxliii. 2. *Ecc.* vii. 20. *Isa.* lxxv. 6. *Hes.* vi. 4. *1st* xiv. 3. *Rom.* vii. 13. *Rom.* iii. 9, 19, 23. *Gal.* iii. 22, *James* iii. 2. *1st* j. v. i. 3.

service, though imperfect in itself, is yet required at our hands, and will be kindly accepted in and for the sake of *Christ* our Mediator and Redeemer; whose merits, by a true *faith* in him, will make up what is wanting in us.—Our *faith in Christ* doth not then *make void* any part of the *law of God*, Rom. iii. 31.—And we may urge the necessity of works or obedience, as one of the conditions of our salvation required in the gospel, without pleading the perfection or *meritoriousness* of them; or that they are so valuable in themselves that we can be *justified* by them.

Neither faith nor obedience together, we may observe, can of *themselves* merit *eternal life*; this is *the gift of God through Christ*, Rom. vi. 23. And we are justified freely by his *grace*, Rom. iii. 24.—And the sacrifice of Christ was the meritorious cause of our justification; but then faith and obedience are made conditions of our salvation by him, who hath the power of doing so; and may therefore in this sense be accounted as necessary for attaining this great end.

There is a wide difference between pleading for the necessity of works, as one of the terms of salvation enjoined by our Saviour, and saying, that we *merit* salvation by them; or that they from their own worth deserve an eternal reward. It was to guard against errors of this kind, which the church of *Rome* was fallen into, that our church declares, that we are *justified by faith only*; which was a distinguishing principle in other reformed churches.—But our church never designed to exclude *good works* from being conditions of our *justification*, which she all along supposes and insists upon; only instructs us, “ that they cannot of themselves put away our sins, or endure the severity of God’s judgment;—and that we are accounted righteous before God
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only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, and not for our own deservings, *Art. xi. xii.*" So that by *faith* here is meant *a relying on the merits of Christ*, as opposed to any supposed merit of our own. — And good works are not excluded as *conditions*, but only as the *meritorious* cause of our justification and salvation.

A judicious author heartily wishes, that it was so ordered by public authority, "that no man should preach or print this doctrine; that *faith alone justifies*, unless he joins this together with it; namely, *that universal obedience is necessary to salvation* *." And another eminent writer observes, "that our complete justification and salvation go both upon the same terms; and the same faith which is sufficient for one, must be sufficient for the other also; what care then, says he, ought men to take, lest, by misunderstanding the notion of *believing*, they live in a neglect of that holy obedience, which the gospel requires, and so *believe* themselves into eternal misery?" — Again, "Such, who make no other condition of the gospel but *believing*, ought to have a great care to keep their hearts *sounder* than their heads; for their only security will lie in this, that they are good, though they see no necessity of being so †" — We see then how dangerous those opinions are, which some seem to have entertained of late; namely, "That as Christ hath fulfilled the *whole law in their stead*, there is nothing necessary for them to do, but *love and embrace Christ, be clothed with his righteousness*, and the like;" and upon this account they have slighted good works or moral duties; — not considering that *Christ became the author of eternal salvation to all those that obey him*, Heb. v. 9. and that though God be *gracious*
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* Mr *Chillingworth*, chap. 7. part i. sect 32.

† Bishop *Sherburne*, *sermon on the law*, p. 10.

and merciful, yet he will by no means clear the guilty, or those who live in disobedience to his commands. — And when he is said to *justify the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5. it is meant, we must suppose, of those who had been ungodly, and perhaps *idolaters*, but had now repented of their sins, and determined to obey God's commandments; strictly speaking indeed there is no *one that sinneth not*. In this sense must be understood some other passages in this chapter; as in the next verse, where the man is pronounced *blessed to whom God imputeth righteousness without works*. — This is indeed a great encouragement for sinners to repent and turn to God; who will pardon them *through Christ*, though they have no right to it from their own merit or *former righteousness*; — but we are not to expect to have our *iniquities forgiven*, and our sins covered, *ver. 7.* if we continue in the *commission of them*; or trust, that *Christ was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification*, *ver. 25.* unless we are heartily sorry for our offences, and *cleave to that which is good*. — *Know ye not*, says the Apostle, *that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness*, Rom. vi. 16. — And though justification may not depend on any preceding obedience, yet will it not be *complete*, or our *faith* effectual to salvation, without *good works* following; as soon as there is an opportunity offered. — The idle, the indolent, have no just pretence to be esteemed *God's peculiar people*; this title belongs only to those who are *zealous of good works*, Tit. ii. 14. — Not only the positive precepts, but also the *parables* and similitudes made use of in the gospel, shew the necessity of an active state; — thus the life of a christian is often compared to *digging in the vineyard*, plowing, sowing, and other employments of husbandry; and our fu-

ture reward is represented as a *rest from our labour*, the end of *our race*, and the like; all which imply *industry, fruitfulness* in religion, and *running* in the way of God's commandments.

As this is so evidently the case, to what purpose are those warm disputes about the distinct powers of *faith and obedience*? The surest way of shewing our love to *Christ* is by *keeping his commandments*, or *bearing much fruit*; hereby we become, according to his own declaration, his *disciples* and *friends*, John xv. 8, 14. and are owned for his *relations*; whosoever will *do the will of God, the same*, says he, *is my brother, and sister, and mother*, Mark iii. 35. — And if any persons lightly regard the practical duties of the gospel, their greater zeal in other things will stand them in no stead; but prove only an empty *form of godliness without the true power* of it. — And it is indeed a pity that a duty of so great importance and necessity, as that of adding obedience to *faith*, should ever be called in question by any christians; as it is not only dangerous to themselves, but has also done much mischief in the world, and tends to bring a disgrace on the christian profession. This notion may be looked upon as one of the dictates of corrupt nature, which is ready to lay hold on every opportunity of lessening the number of religious duties; and endeavouring to reconcile *sinful pursuits* with the hopes of heaven.—It will then prove a dangerous mistake to neglect any part of our christian service out of an *humble*, or rather *idle*, pretence of resigning our *own righteousness*, and being *found in that of Christ*, Phil. iii. 9. in order to magnify the power of grace and *faith*.—The *righteousness*, which the Apostle there speaks of with some slight, is that of the *law of Moses*; by the *deeds of which*, as he says in another place, *no flesh can be justified*,

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Rom. iii. 20.—This was of little value, when compared with the *righteousness* taught by *Christ*; or that of the gospel, which necessarily includes inward holiness and *obedience*. It is necessary indeed that *Christ's righteousness* and obedience be imputed to us, not in such a manner as to excuse us from doing any thing ourselves, but in order to make up the great defect of our own obedience, as was before observed, and render our service *acceptable to God*; who, upon this account, is willing to pardon returning sinners, and pass over the *frailties* of his faithful servants; and look upon their imperfect righteousness or obedience as if it was complete. Thus are they *justified*, or accounted *just* and righteous in the same manner, as if they had perfectly fulfilled all God's laws. — As it is God *that worketh in us both to will and to do*; this must not be looked upon as an argument for our own idleness, but rather as an encouragement to the greatest care and diligence; that so we may cooperate with the divine help, and *work out thereby our own salvation*; though we can do nothing to *merit* it, yet is it necessary to do all we can to secure it; for which purpose, we must not fail to add to *our faith, virtue or obedience*; and look upon our *good works* as acceptable through the merits of *Christ*; this is evidently the true and complete religion of the gospel; the only safe and infallible way to heaven; and was so esteemed by the primitive church*. — In short, *faith* and *obedience* are both of them necessary and inseparable; they assist

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* It is excellently expressed by *St. Austin* in the following words—*Si se homo justificaverit, & de justitiâ suâ præsumit, cadit; si considerans infirmitatem suam, & præsumens de misericordiâ Dei, neglexerit vitam suam mundere à peccatis, & ipse cadit.—Ne declines in dextram aut sinistram.—ne præsumas ad regnum de justitiâ tuâ, ne præsumas ad peccandum de misericordiâ Dei, &c.—Aug. de Enervat. in Ps. 31. Tom. Octav.*

and complete each other; thus we must become partakers of the ransom paid by our Saviour for our redemption, by a *lively faith*; this is the foundation of our hopes, the great instrument by which salvation is conveyed to us;—but then our faith will not be accounted lively or *saving*, but only dead and unprofitable, unless it abound with the *fruits of a good life*.—And our Saviour gives this as a distinguishing mark between his true and pretended disciples, namely, *by their fruits ye shall know them*, Matt. vii. 20.

A learned and pious writer, treating of this doctrine, says, “ I wish there was nothing harder than this to be understood in the book of God; — it is not a truth which we cannot, but which some *will* not understand.—It contradicts their pleasures, their unlawful gain, or some such thing, which they are loth to leave; and if there was any honesty in their hearts they would easily see, that *Christ* could not die merely to procure us a pardon; much less that men might sin with more security, or without any fear of punishment; and that it was not a thing worthy of the Son of God to come and die for any less end, than to make the world better, and render it obedient to the Creator †. So that we must not only rely upon our Saviour’s death, but we must also endeavour to *crucify* our own sinful wills and affections; and desire to be made conformable to his death and resurrection, by *dying to sin, and rising again to newness of life*.

We evidently see then that it is in vain for persons to flatter themselves, that they are *born of God*; —are in the number of *the elect*; *assured of their salvation*, or *fully justified by faith*; so long as they live in wilful disobedience to any of *the laws of God*,

as

† See Bishop Patrick’s *Parable of the Pilgrim*, chap. 38. p. 507, &c.

as given us in holy scripture, or look upon obedience as a thing of no absolute necessity to salvation.—True regeneration must manifest itself by a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ, a sincere endeavour to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*. And though it is said *that we are saved by grace through faith, and not of works* (or by any absolute merit of our own, which words indeed chiefly relate to God's gracious offer of salvation to the heathen world by the gospel) yet it is declared in the same place, *that we are created in Jesus Christ to good works*, Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10.—If then we be *new creatures* in the gospel sense of the word, we must be diligent in our christian obedience; our actions must be an evidence of our nature, or the change that is effected in us; *as the tree is known by its fruits*; and trees of a good kind, if they prove *barren and unfruitful*, are to *be hewn down and cast into the fire*.

I have been, I am afraid, almost too tedious to some on this point, in order to make it as plain as I could. — But to proceed to some farther considerations about the conduct of our new sectaries. — It seems to be a great abuse of christian liberty, and of that indulgence designed to scrupulous consciences, when several persons (amongst which we find are many of the *lowest of the people*, 1 Kings xii. 31.) spurred on either by *enthusiasm*, vainglory, or self-interest, make it their business to wander from place to place; disturbing the peace of the church of *Christ*, setting up new appointments and constitutions of their own, in opposition to, and contempt of, those publicly established and wisely designed, as means of promoting religion, and preserving peace and order *; drawing weak and ignorant persons after them; upon which ac-

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count

* See a Quarto Tract called, *Observations upon the Conduct of the Methodists*, &c. p. 20, &c.

count many of them not only neglect their proper business, and care of their families (which is an injury to the good of society) but also fall into dangerous presumptions; or are driven into despair and madness by the tenets or doctrines which are taught them.—We are told of a person, who, after he followed them, was out of his senses, though before he was a very reasonable man; and the account sets before us the very dangerous consequences which sometimes proceed from enthusiasm (as was before observed) as this person declared, “that an angel appeared to him in a vision, commanding him to kill his mother, if she would not come to the society of the *Methodists*; and this he actually attempted to do; and, upon a second vision, he again attempted to kill her †.” — We have also several public accounts given us of persons amongst them who have destroyed themselves. And this was the misfortune amongst the *Montanists* of old, who were great enthusiasts: It is reported that *Montanus* himself and his prophets *Maximilla* hanged themselves, being drove on by that furious spirit which possessed them;—so that false extasies, proceeding from enthusiasm, differ little from *madness*; whereas those true ones, proceeding from the *Spirit of God*, are *calm and mild*, and no ways disturbing the reason †. — A learned writer mentions some heretics of old, who went about in quest of fools, whom they had the art to turn into *madmen* *. And some have observed, that as feeble brains cannot endure the perpetual transports of an imagination continually agitated and in disorder, no wonder

† See *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, Vol. III. Preface, 29. and p. 12. &c.

‡ Vid. *Enth. Hist. Eccl.* l. v. cap. 16.

* *Homines profus ex rullis infans. faciunt* — An Art, as he observes, not to be reckoned amongst the *Dependia*. Mr *Jort.* s *Remarks on Eccl. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 10.

der that several lose their understanding and become *mad*; and that when persons, who have a turn for melancholy, fall into the delusions of *enthusiasm*, and do not feel any *lively impressions* of the *Spirit*, they begin to think that they have no grace; and, as *reprobates*, are eternally excluded from God's favour*. Thus they sink under the weight of despair, as experience has too often manifested:—And we had a melancholy instance of this nature in our neighbourhood a few weeks ago, in a person, who, by the fatal influence of such a persuasion, put an end to his life.

We may observe in the next place, that the ministers of the established church in particular do not escape the severe and uncharitable censures of many of those *itinerant reformers*; they are represented as careless and wicked; as if they did not either understand, or else kept from the people the knowledge of several gospel truths. — It would indeed shew prejudice and partiality, to attempt to defend the conduct or abilities of all the ministers of our church, as the number is so large; and they are men *naturally of like passions* with others: But to throw out general reflections upon the whole body of the *clergy*, must be looked upon as an uncharitable and wicked practice, considering the hurt it may do to religion, and the insufficient grounds this accusation is built upon;—many who do this, must know very little of the general character of the clergy, or what doctrines they preach; and they must take their accounts from some of their bigoted disciples.

The primitive christians, we find, were more than ordinarily severe in their censures against those who slandered or *falsely* accused the clergy †.

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* See Mr *Stingsia's* Pastoral Letter, p. 47, &c.† See Dr *Cave's* Primitive Christianity, part 3, ch. 1. p. 363.—
Conc. Elibert. Can. 75. Caranz.

Whatever is profitable for doctrine, for reproof and instruction in righteousness, is taught by the ministers of our church, I dare say, in as full and clear a manner as in any other place of christian worship. The several duties of the *christian life* are sufficiently explained and enforced, in order to promote the great design of the gospel, and teach men to *live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world.*—And we have reason to hope that its ministers are not only as much *illuminated with true knowledge* and understanding of God's word, as any other teachers of a different persuasion; but that they also in *general* set it forth to as much advantage by their *preaching and living*; — and are also as *much animated with a true zeal for religion*; notwithstanding what has been objected to the contrary.

By a pretence indeed of greater zeal than common for religion, some of our modern enthusiastic leaders have imposed upon their fond admirers, and made them believe that they are come to shew them the true way to salvation: But their several pretences and practices (how fit soever they may be to amuse and captivate weak minds, and draw together confused multitudes) cannot in the opinion of serious persons be put in the balance, in point of *edification* and instruction, with a grave, serious and regular worship, accompanied with sound doctrine and exhortation, methodically explained and enforced, in a clear and affectionate manner, though without the melting terms and extravagant flights of the other, &c*.

If those new teachers are *lights*, they are of the *wandering kind*, *Jude 13.* like *meteors*, suddenly raised, which glitter for a while but soon vanish: And I am well assured, that some of their ignorant and uncharitable followers do not stick to declare openly, that

* See *Observations on the Conduct of the Methodists*, p. 17.

that the members of the *established* church are in a dangerous or damnable way.

Such like practices as we are here speaking of, were the beginnings of those troubles and confusions, by which our religious and civil constitution was unhappily overthrown about a century ago; the ill consequences of which do in several respects yet remain. — Many sober and religious ministers were then reckoned as scandalous, ignorant and *malignant*; that by this means their enemies might bring them into discredit among the people, and thereby more easily succeed in their own designs*. — An eminent writer complained of the behaviour of the first beginners of those troubles in the following words:—“ It is their manner, unless you please their humour in all things, be you never so well learned, never so painful, so zealous, so virtuous, all is nothing with them; but they will deprave you, rail on you, backbite and invent lies on you, and spread false rumours, as though you were the vilest person on earth †”.

Every one then should discourage the like practices, who has a real concern for public peace and order, to take care to prevent in time a distemper, which may otherwise prove very dangerous.—*Seducers may wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived*, 2 Tim. iii. 13. — The *cloud*, which appeared at first only as the bigness of a man's hand, soon increased to that degree, as to make the *beavens black*, and brought on a great *storm*, 1 Kings xviii. 44.

I hope we shall not be *found to fight against God*, though we do not *refrain from these men, nor let*

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them

* See *Mercurius Rusticus*; or, *The Country's Complaint's of the barbarous Outrages committed by the Sectaries of that Time*, p. 19, &c.—*Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy*, Part 1. p. 41, &c.

† Archbishop *Whitgift's Defence of the Answer to the Admonition*, &c. Tract 2th, p. 423.

them alone, (I mean by inquiring into their practices and pretences, and opposing them by the strength of reason and arguments drawn from scripture); and though *their work may of itself come to nought*, yet may it occasion, upon some accounts, much disturbance or mischief before that time comes, if they be wholly *let alone*, Acts v. 38.—“Sects already spread in a state (as an ingenious writer observes) are to be *tolerated*, because it would not be agreeable to a mild government, or so pure a religion as ours, to use violent methods against mistaken persons, whilst they do not endanger the constitution; but all, who will grant that it were better for the peace of a state, that there should be no sects, will allow, that they ought to be checked in the beginning*.”

Another eminent writer, who declares himself an enemy to persecution, observes, “That all care should be taken to stifle new controversies in their birth, to check new opinions and vain curiosities †.”—When persons make it their business to travel from place to place, disturbing the people, endeavouring to draw them into separate parties from the ministry under which they are placed, and set them against their instructors regularly appointed over them; who are also ready and able to teach them all things necessary for their salvation;—this practice is certainly an abuse of the liberty and indulgence granted to scrupulous consciences, and tends to breed confusion and disorder.

We find that the *mendicant friers*, in the church of *Rome*, formerly occasioned great disturbance, by going about preaching where they pleased, and encroaching upon the office of the parochial clergy; boasting

* See Dr *Steuft's Sentiments of a Church of England Man*, Misc. Vol. I. p. 62.

† See Dr *Burner's Covulsion to the W'ors of his own Times*.

boasting that they were providentially designed to supply the defects of all other *religious orders*; and by their insolent behaviour they raised great confusion in *this nation* about *five hundred years* ago; requiring of the people, where they preached, to receive them as *ambassadors* or *angels of God*.—They represented the established teachers, or parochial ministers, as ignorant and *blind leaders of the blind*; pursued them with *hatred*, and found great fault with their lives and conversations; and bid the people “come to them to be *instructed*, as they were acquainted with all arduous and difficult points in religion, and the very secrets of God!” By this means, we are assured, they imposed upon many of the people, and persons of rank and distinction were drawn into their party ||. Their proper ministers, we are told, were then despised, which was of great disservice to religion. Those itinerant preachers were described, by some of the writers of that church, as a kind of hypocritical sectaries, who abused the people under a fair shew of religion; as familiar enemies, who do mischief under the pretence of kindness; that their way of proceeding was first with the *women*, and by them seducing the men; and then tying their converts by *oaths* and vows, not to hearken to their proper governors and teachers; from professing *poverty* they became very rich; and they were looked upon as busy-bodies and false teachers*.

It is remarkable to see the great agreement between some enthusiasts in the church of *Rome*,
and

|| *Uxores nobilium, &c.* Vid. *Usser de Christ. Eccl. Successione*, cap. 9. p. 271, &c. *Ex Mat. Paris.*

* See Bishop *Stillingfleet on the Idolatry and Divisions of the Church of Rome*, ch. 6. sect. 7.—*St Austin* speaks of some wandering and hypocritical Teachers in his Time, as *circumcivites provincias, nunquam missos, nunquam fides, &c. de Opere Monachorum*, cap. 28. t. m. 3.

and several who have sprung up amongst ourselves at different times, and have been the promoters of sects and parties.—This has in some measure appeared already;—and I shall make a few more observations to the same purpose.

Ignatius, the founder of the order of the Jesuits, was a great enthusiast, and at first wandered about the country with some few of his disciples, preaching in the *streets, market-places and fields*; drawing great multitudes of people after him. He pretended to have sudden impulses of mind to direct him in his actions; to revelations and visions; appointing his disciples to preach through the whole world, and that it was *revealed* to him from the Lord, “that every corner of the earth was to hear the sound of their preaching.”—It was also his custom not to give men any *titles of respect*, but to call them only by their *common names*, nor *put off his hat* when called before his superiors.—When he was committed to prison for making such public disturbance, he preached to the people, and gloried in his sufferings.—Afterwards going to *Rome*, and submitting himself to the Pope, the society of *Jesuits* was confirmed by the *Pope’s Bull*; and *Ignatius* was made General of the *Order* in 1540.—A learned writer, speaking of him, observes, “That *fanaticism* is a kind of ebullition or critical ferment, which a vigorous nature can work through, and by slow degrees be able to throw off: This, says he, eminently appeared in *Ignatius Loyola*; he began his extasies in the *mire*, and yet ended with the execution of his counsels, that even in his own life-time began to give the law to christendom †.”

If some of our enthusiasts had lived in popish countries, and in communion with the church of *Rome*, they might probably have attempted to found

† *Dr Warburton’s Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 300.

found some new religious orders, and would have been looked upon as *saints*.— Their St *Francis*, founder of the order called by his name, pretended that his conversion was owing to *visions* and dreams, and that he was taught by immediate inspiration, and had a revelation for his very manner of saluting the people. His zeal was so great, “that being *drunken* in the *spirit* (as it was called) he *stripped off his cloaths* and went *naked* for *Christ’s sake* *.” — He was so ignorant an *enthusiast*, as to advise his monks, who could not read, not to learn, but to wait for the *Spirit of the Lord*; and he reckoned it an ill sign, if a *frier* was given to read and got many books §.

Some of his followers maintained the doctrine of *perfection*, or that persons in this life may attain to that state, as to live *without sin*; and having attained to such a degree, they are above ordinances, they need not fast, pray, and the like, as others do; that every intellectual being hath enough within itself, or a *light within*, to make it happy. — They had, we are told, a great zeal against what they called the *carnal church*, and reckoned all those *blind* who were not of their way; and affirmed that *Christ* was *spiritually crucified* in them.—There were others also of the same opinions, who said, that they were the only *spiritual congregations*, sent and chosen of God to bear testimony to his truth in the last ages; raising objections against paying *tithes* to any priests, who did not live in the same perfection with the Apostles. — They are represented as full of pride and disobedience to superiors; and obstinately

* See *Foulis’s History of Popish Corruptions and Impositions*, &c. p. 4, 17.—This was practised by some *Anabaptists* in *Holland*, and *Quakers* in *England*, at their first Rise. See *The Fanatic History*, published 1660, p. 52, 112, &c.

§ Vid. *Regul. S. Franc.* cap. 8. p. 28, 91. as quoted by Dr *Comber* on the *Ordinations of the Church of England*, p. 72.

nately adhering to their illusions, and despising the use of *sacraments* ||. — St *Bridget* was said to have the gift of *smelling souls*, and could not endure the stench of wicked souls †. This is a degree of *enthusiasm* above the spirit of discerning *who are saints*, and who are *apostates*; which some amongst us have pretended to*. — Some of those persons in the church of *Rome*, were by many of their own communion accounted *mad*; and indeed enthusiasm may properly be considered as a kind of madness.

The sect of the *Alumbrado's* (or *Illuminated*) had their rise in *Spain* a little before the *Quakers* appeared in *England*. They pretended much to extasies and mystical unions; — that *mental* prayer only with *contemplation* was necessary; that certain arduous, tremblings, or quakings and swoonings, (which they found themselves subject to) were a sufficient token of grace; and that they, who had attained to them, needed nothing else; that all things ought to be done by *immediate motions* and inspirations. There was in many things so near a resemblance betwixt them and the *Quakers*, at their first rise, as to give us ground to think they had but one beginning §.

As to the point of *religious silence*; this was not only in great esteem amongst some heretics of old, but also amongst the heathens; so that the very *silence* in their *sacred groves* was looked upon as the object of adoration †; and they commonly erected their

|| See Bishop *Stillingfleet* on the *Fanaticism of the Church of Rome*, where all this, and much more to the same Purpose, is made evident from Popish Writers.

† Ibid. 215.

* See *Snake in the Grass*, sect. 6.

§ *Casaubon* on *Enthusiasm*, p. 173, &c. — Bishop *Stillingfleet* on the *Fanaticism of the Church of Rome*.

‡ Lucos & in his *silentia ipsa* adoramus, *Pila. Nat. Hist.* l. 12. cap. 1. — *Tertullian* describes some Rites amongst the *Valentinian Heretics*;

their temples and altars in thick *groves*, that the solitude and gloominess of the places might create a religious awe or veneration in the minds of the people; and by this means make them fancy that some deity inhabited there †.

We find that the *mystics*, and some of the religious orders of the church of *Rome*, enjoined absolute *silence*, at some stated times, as a thing greatly tending to *perfection*. — And we are told also, that some spiritual casuists, amongst the *Methodists*, have advised them to observe a very high degree of *silence*; and that *silent prayer*, and quiet waiting for God, were the only way of attaining a *saving faith*. — This seems to lead to the popish doctrine of *Quietism*, or that of the *Molinists* *.

As to *mental prayer*, which is described as *too big* for expression or words, and is called *the most sublime kind of prayer* §; it may rather be considered as *devout contemplation*, the silent workings and admiration of a religious mind, occasioned by a serious meditation upon some divine subjects of the most

Heretics, as, *Sancta silentio magno; solâ taciturnitate cœ'elia*, adv. Valent — Vid. Irenæ. adver. Hæret. lib. 1. cap. 1. where we have their strange fabulous Accounts of *Bythus* and *Sige*, or *Silentium*, &c. which they represented as *divine Persons*.

† *Namen Inest*, &c. Ovid. Fast. lib. 3. ver. 295. — See Mr Evelyn's *Sylva* concerning the *Sacredness and Use of Standing Groves*. — Kennet's *Antiquities*, Part 2. chap. 3. — Petter's *Antiquities*, Vol. I. B. II. ch. 2.

* About which, See *Supplement to Bishop Burnet's Letters*, I. et. I. — Bishop *Stillingfleet on the Fanaticism of the Church of Rome*, ch. 4. sect. 14. — *Voltaire's Age of Lewis XIV.* Vol. II. ch. 34. of *Quietism*. — *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. II. p. 61, &c. — And *Bugg's Pilgrim's Progress*, &c. ch. 3. of the *Silent Meetings amongst the Quakers*.

§ See *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, p. 98. a Book which contains a great many excellent Directions for promoting a holy Life. — It might perhaps as well have been called, *The Divine or Spiritual Life of Man*; as this is what seems to be meant by the *Title*; and it would have been better understood by common Readers.

most interesting and affecting nature.—Thus we behold with pleasure several *beautiful objects* presented to our view, without expressing our admiration in words; or perhaps we are not able fully to describe the inward delight they give the mind.—What is properly meant then by *mental prayer*, is a duty which every religious christian is acquainted with; though some persons of an enthusiastic turn of mind seem to have appropriated it lately to themselves, or to their own party; and represent it as a thing not understood or regarded by several christians:—Thus are persons often led into disputes one with another about *words*, when perhaps they mean pretty much the same thing. Hence then it is not proper to explain known and common duties by new terms, which are apt to mislead the ignorant, or occasion some confusion in their thoughts.

As the world is very wicked, and stands in great need of a reformation, all faithful christians should earnestly desire to see this good work brought about, and contribute their own best endeavours for accomplishing it; but persons are not to take any unjustifiable methods of doing it, or *run* when God has *not sent them*: “If sinners will not listen to the Spirit of God speaking by the scriptures, or by a regular *ministry*, they will not listen to the same Spirit, *but vainly supposed* to speak in the undigested, incoherent, extemporary effusions of raw teachers.” — We must rest contented with God’s appointed methods of reforming the world, and proceed no farther than he has given us leave.— And they who will not be *converted* by calm and rational measures, will not be wrought upon as to any good and lasting effect by eagerness and passion *, nor by any enthusiastic means; which will
rather

* Dr *Waterland’s* Sermons, Vol. II Ser viii. on 1 *John* iv. 1.
—His Piece upon *Regeneration*, p. 51.

rather be a hindrance to the true progress of religion.—And the dressing up or expressing several plain scripture truths or doctrines in a kind of unintelligible language, and affected mysterious expressions, must rather perplex than enlighten common understandings, and obscure the gospel, which was designed to be so plain as to make the ignorant wise to salvation; much better must it be to recommend to the people a serious perusal of God's own word, as the *way to divine knowledge*, than to refer them to the *mysteries of heaven revealed*, to some wonderful men of their own party; or to be forward in preaching doctrines from a *vehement impulse*, which they know not how to resist †.

Calvin observes, that enthusiasts do great hurt to the cause they would advance; or overthrow the true foundation of piety by false pretences to *revelation*; and by not making the holy scriptures their only rule ‡. — The enemy also of mankind may perhaps sometimes find his account in carrying *christianity*, which was designed for a rule to all stations and conditions, to such heights as to make it practicable by few in comparison, or rather by none.—Such extremes may lead some into a disregard of religion, through despair of attempting such exalted heights; and others, who have imbibed those notions, may be thereby led into a disregard of several of the common duties and offices of life, which Providence has made necessary to the well-being of private families and public societies.—And their exalted strains in religion, and imaginations of being in a state of *perfection*,
may

† See *The Way to Divine Knowledge*, in several Dialogues, as Preparatory to a new Edition of *J. Behman's Works*. by *Mir Law*, 1752, p. 2, &c.

‡ Vid. *Instit.* l. 1. cap 9.

may be apt to lead several to *spiritual pride*, and contempt of their fellow christians §.

Well designing persons may sometimes be deluded, or led into errors, by distempered or unguarded imaginations; — it may indeed be very difficult to convince them that they are wrong; and they will be ready to despise or *condemn* those as irreligious persons perhaps who attempt to do it; — seeing they are so fully assured in their own breasts that their intentions are good, they scarce think that they can be mistaken in the means they take to bring them about. An eminent person observes, that the *strongest opiates* in the world are *enthusiasm and popery* *.—A writer upon enthusiasm declares, “That his directions were chiefly designed as a *preservation* against *fanaticism*, and that as to those, who were already the sport of *illusion*, he fears that they will rather be exasperated the more against him; — that the strongest arguments will prove in vain to those who imagine they *feel within* themselves the contrary.—That when a man is come to that pass, we must expect his recovery only from the *grace of God*, from *lucid* intervals, which gives his imagination room to cool; — in short from sorrowful conviction of his folly, produced by experience †.”

A plain *narrative* of the extravagances which persons have been driven into by the power of *enthusiasm*, will sufficiently shew the danger of it.— And the best way of working conviction in the minds of those *enthusiasts amongst us* (who approve of the *reformation* from popery) will be to set before them the practices and behaviour of several in the church of *Rome*; whom they must allow to have

§ See *Observations on the Conduct of the Methodists*, Part 2.

* Archbishop Tillotson.—See his *Life* by Dr. Barrow, p. 74.

† *Stillingfleet's Posthumous Letter against Fanaticism*, p. 93.

have been erroneous enthusiasts. By this means they may be better enabled to judge of their own conduct; and by plainly seeing how near they come to, and how far they have been overdone in their own way by several *popish enthusiasts*, and others, who were as fully persuaded that they were in the right way, as they themselves can be; and boasted of the sensible evidences of extraordinary spiritual assistances; who were also very numerous, continued a considerable time, and gave as good proofs of their inspirations as any now a days do:—All this may teach them, to suspect at least, that those extraordinary favours, revelations and *assurances* of salvation, which they have boasted of, may only be delusions of their own brains; and we may look upon several of their pompous declarations as only *swelling words of vanity*, 2 Pet. ii. 18.—and this should be a warning to others not to be led away by them. — As we find that enthusiasts of very opposite opinions, have been affected pretty much in the same way, this *operation* could not proceed from the *Spirit of truth* in all of them however; and as one can give no better proof than another of its being so, we have reason to reject it in all.—And as by this historical account given of *enthusiasm*, we find, that it has appeared pretty much the same in different ages, and amongst persons of different religions; it may be a proper means of keeping persons from being deluded by the same spirit of *enthusiasm*, which now again seems to make its appearance amongst us.

One of the chief leaders amongst the *Methodists*, by some of his late concessions and retractations, has indeed, in a great measure, owned the charge, and given up some of the chief pretences of the party; namely, the extraordinary evidence and calls *of the Spirit*. — He confesses, “ That he has

used a stile too apostolical; had been too bitter in his zeal, and mixed wild-fire with it; — that he had often written and spoken in his *own* spirit, when he thought it had been intirely by the *Spirit of God*; that he had mentioned divine communications with some degree of vanity; sometimes mistaken nature for *grace*, *imagination* for *revelation*; — the fire of his own temper for the sacred flame of holy zeal; — and that he claimed no extraordinary *call*, otherwise than from the Apostle's injunction; *as we have opportunity let us do good unto all men* *."

By these concessions he owns, that he has been frequently mistaken in many things, and so probably may be in more; and so must have misled his followers. — Publicly to retract any errors shews a commendable honesty of heart; and one might hope that persons who do this, would make it their business to undeceive those whom they have misinformed, and endeavour to lead them back to the *fold* that they brake out from, those particularly who have been members of the *established church*; in which we have *assurance*, built, I hope, upon very plain and rational grounds, that every thing may be met with which is necessary to our salvation; though some, through ignorance or a worse motive, declare otherwise. — Persons may in our communion be *Puritans*, *Pietists*, or *Methodists*, in the true, and best sense of the word; that is, they may live according to the exact *method* and rules of duty given us in holy scripture; be truly *pure* and pious in their lives and conversations, *abstaining* from all *appearance of evil*, and going on to christian

* See *Enthusiasm of Methodists*, &c. Vol. II. *Preface*, and p. 107, &c. where this, and more to the same purpose, is evident from Mr *Whitefield's* own writings. — See also *Observations on the Conduct of the Methodists*, p. 13, &c.

christian perfection, if it be not their own fault. —But party-names and needless distinctions have been ever hurtful to the peace and good of the *church of Christ*, from the times of *Paul* and *Apollos*, 1 Cor. i. 12. down to our own.—And those who have affected them most, or been fond of a kind of *separated sanctity*, have been commonly branded with hypocrisy, pride, and private design, and often not without reason.—Thus the *Pharisees* of old were remarkable for the appearance of great zeal and sanctity; they valued themselves for being *holier than others*, and better skilled in understanding God's laws;—they affected to distinguish themselves from the rest of the world by their *dress*, their looks, and several austerities of life, by which means they were held in the highest esteem amongst the common people; and yet for all this, they were full of *pride*, *covetousness*, and *hypocrisy*; and our Saviour, we find, is more severe against them than against any other sect of men*. The enthusiastic followers of *Montanus* put on a great appearance of sanctity above others, and sorrowful countenances †.

Zeal, and an outward appearance of *righteousness*, (though commendable in themselves) are yet no sure *marks* that all is right within, or that persons designs and intentions are good; upon this account our Saviour compared the *Pharisees* to *whited sepulchres*, which appeared beautiful outwardly, but were within full of uncleanness, *Matt.* xxiii. 27.

Christians truly sincere do not desire to distinguish themselves by any peculiarities in names, outward dress and manners, or by any affected and uncommanded austerities of life; they are not wise

* Vid. *Joseph. Antiq.* l. 18. cap. 2.—*De Bell. Jud.* l. 1. cap. 4.—*Matt.* ch. xxiii.

† Vid. *Carv. Hist. Liter.* A. D. 172. *De Mont.*

in their own conceits, or vainglorious, but choose to be chiefly known by their religious practice and good example, as the tree is known by its fruit §.

Religion shews itself best to advantage by an humble, modest, and charitable behaviour; in a regular piety and uniform course of obedience. “Christianity is a quiet, peaceable and orderly religion; not noisy or ostentatious, not assuming or censorious, not factious or tumultuous; they who think otherwise of it, know nothing of the life and spirit of true christianity *.”

Persons of great learning and good intentions have been sometimes sadly imposed upon by deceivers (who have put on the appearance of great sanctity) and have fallen into dangerous delusions, leading others after them; for want of paying a due regard to this necessary caution, *believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God*, 1 John iv. 1. as false spirits or prophets are permitted to appear in the world as trials of our faith.—A remarkable instance of this we have in the learned *Tertullian* of old, who became a great encourager of the extravagant heresy or enthusiasm of *Montanus*, whom his followers looked upon as the *Comforter*, and whose chief disciples pretended to extraordinary revelations and prophecy.—But as persons, when they let go the anchor of truth, cannot tell whither they shall be driven; so *Tertullian* left this party, and set up a new sect called after his name, which continued at *Carthage* till the time of *St Austin* †.

It has been observed, by way of apology for him, “That his intentions were good, but misguided ;

§ Nos non habitu sapientiam, sed mente præferimus.—Non eliquimur magna, sed vivimus—was the Character of the *Primitive Christians*, vid. *Minucii*, Octav. cap. 38.

* Dr *Waterland* on *Regeneration*, p. 50.

† Vid. *Aug. de Ilcr.* cap. 86. *De Tertullianistis*.

guided; that he gave way to private revelations out of an unguarded zeal for religion;—and that he took a wrong way to keep up the reputation of the primitive severity and discipline, of which he was an eager asserter;—that some persons otherwise of worth and abilities, through mere ignorance of *natural causes*, have been seduced by supposed raptures and *enthusiasms*, and made shipwreck of true faith;—and that *Tertullian* had never been a *heretic*, had he been a better *naturalist* ¶.” As an instance of his credulity and want of *philosophy*, we may take notice of that regard which he seemed to pay to the strange visions of an illuminated or *enthusiastic* woman, concerning the particular *form* of the soul, as it appeared to her, in order to prove it *corporeal* *.

Hence we see how great prudence and judgment is required in reforming any thing which we think is amiss.—And as want of zeal for religion is highly blameable, so an unguarded zeal may drive persons into dangerous extremes and great errors; we learn also, that not only a diligent use of our reason, but also a due inquiry into the nature and cause of things, is highly proper to preserve us from the dangerous illusions of *enthusiasm*.—“Our zeal must be kindled with pure fire from God’s altar, that it may rather warm than burn, enliven rather than inflame §.”

From what has been observed in this treatise we find, that there is good reason to reckon the *temptation to enthusiasm* amongst those which we *daily pray against*; and how necessary it is to beg of God,

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that

¶ See *Seller’s Life of Tertullian*, p. 228, &c. *Cesaubon on Enthusiasm*, p. 13, 90.

* Inter cætera ostensa est anima corporaliter, non inanis, & vacuæ qualitatis; Lucida & ætherii coloris, et formâ per omnia humanâ. Tert. de Anima, p. 646. Frob. ed.

§ Dr *Hibbert’s Moral and Religious Aphorisms*, published 1753.

that he would deliver us from all dangerous delusions; and bestow upon or preserve to us the great blessing of enjoying *a sound mind in a sound body*; which we must also study to promote by our own best endeavours.—Those who, by natural constitution or some indisposition of body, are inclined to *enthusiasm*, must use the best means in their power to remove the disorder; or take care at least to keep, as much as they can, out of danger of the reach of the infection.—This advice, though perhaps displeasing to those who are already carried away by the force of enthusiasm, and look upon themselves alone to be in the right way, may yet, I hope, be of service to others, who are only inclinable that way. — A judicious writer observes, “That where natural causes, or particular habit of body, incline to enthusiasm, yet those causes do not act *irresistibly*, unless a person by his own fault gives way to them; and by way of cure he advises them, that, to a sober and discreet devotion, they add *temperance, humility and reason* *.”

As our christian duty is a *reasonable service*, we must exercise our reason, and improve our understanding, in the best manner we are able; and make use of their assistance in our religious inquiries, as we employ them in all our other concerns, they must be highly serviceable in our spiritual pursuits, the most important of any other; and it will be very dangerous to reckon the use of them, as opposite to the *grace of God* or *spiritual assistance*, as such a neglect would make persons liable to be carried away by the force of strong imaginations and passions; and have their heads filled with dreams or groundless fancies, which they may look upon, perhaps, as divine communications; and by
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* *De More on Enthusiasm*, sect. 51, &c.—See also *Mr Sturges's Postoral Letter*, p. 83.

this means be sometimes led into dangerous errors or evil practices.—When persons then can give a good account or reason for what they do, they have the best grounds to hope, that they are directed by the *Spirit of God*, and not by private fancy or humour.

To guard against enthusiasm, we must seriously consider how dangerous it often is to true religion; what great mischiefs it has occasioned in the world; as has in some measure appeared from what has been already observed.—We must also have a sincere regard to the whole *will* of God, as plainly mentioned in *holy scripture* (which is the rule of our *faith*) and diligently endeavour to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*, Tit. ii. 10.—If we find ourselves thus disposed, we have reason to conclude, that *the Spirit of God dwelleth in us*; and if we find any persons teaching doctrines contrary to what the scripture directs, or speaking with slight or indifferency about any of the duties there mentioned, we must conclude, that they are deceivers, or are deceived, or deluded themselves; notwithstanding the pretences they make to greater degrees of piety than others.—The Apostle observes to the christian disciples in his time; *there are some who trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ; but if an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*, Gal. i. 8. — And this he repeats in the next verse to make them take the more notice of this important direction:—The gospel is then the standard of religious truths, by which we must prove all doctrines, *and try the Spirits, whether they be of God*.—And the best means of putting a stop to enthusiasm would be by a diligent practice of the several duties of religion, and being *an example to others in word, in conversation,*

in charity, in faith and purity, 1 Tim. iv. 12.—As it would appear from such a conduct that there is no necessity for *new revelations* or extraordinary assistances, in order to make *religion* and *piety* flourish amongst us:—“And when persons have once tasted the comforts of true virtue, and the peace of conscience administered by it, they will make little account of those tumultuous *emotions of soul*, that are the mere effects of passion and imagination, though those pretended lively sensations are the baits and allurements of *fanaticism* *.”

As a preservative against *enthusiasm*, particularly amongst those who are members of the *established church*, I must earnestly recommend to them a due regard and diligent attention to its doctrines, public service and instructions; and they will then find, that there is no occasion to go any where else in pursuit of religious knowledge; or to inquire after the doctrines and opinions which have sprung up of late; nor will they be in any great danger of being led away by them.—By an account sent a few years ago from one of our plantations abroad (where *enthusiasm* had prevailed) we are informed, “That the tempest of enthusiasm being blown over, a great number of well-meaning persons, who had been affected with it, upon their return to sober thinking, repaired to our communion, as the best refuge from their wild principles and practices, which had raised such great confusions amongst them †.”—And the poor unfortunate man in our neighbourhood, before-mentioned, who was drove to distraction by such means, and lived a day or two after he had stabbed himself,
advised

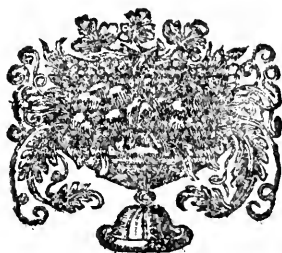
* Mr *Stinstra's Pastoral Letter*, p. 87.

† See an Account from *New England*, in the Proceedings of *The Society for Propagating the Gospel*, annexed to a Sermon preached by the Lord Bishop of *Lincoln*, 1746.

advised his wife to stick to the *established church*, and *bring up her family in that way*.

Persons will there meet with as good helps and assistances for increasing in *the knowledge of God*, and being *fruitful in every good work*, as in any church or religious society whatsoever; and this good effect, I hope, is visible in great numbers of our communion; and, if the rest be not so good as they ought to be, the blame is not to be laid on *that church* to which they pretend to belong; or on the want of proper instruction to put them in mind of their duty; but the fault is intirely their own, by not making proper use of the advantages they do or may enjoy.—And though the true spirit of *primitive christianity* seems indeed very much decayed in the world; yet I am fully persuaded that it might revive in our church, and recover its former strength and lustre, if the members of it would be careful, by the divine assistance, to live according to its sound doctrines, and the wise and pious directions there given; as it is blessed with as true, full and rational a knowledge of the christian religion, as was ever enjoyed since the times of the Apostles; and in it is taught all *things pertaining to life and godliness*; as every wise and unprejudiced member must be fully sensible; and there wants nothing but a suitable practice to make it the *glory of the reformation*, and the ornament of *christianity*. So that, upon a due inquiry, persons would find good reason for saying, *It is good for us to be here.—Here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.*—And a *conversation* suitable to what this church requires, will give a better evidence of the *divine operation* upon their souls, than the *agonies*, *tremblings*, and other violent effects, said to be so common amongst some, who pretend to a greater share of spiritual assistance than ordinary.

If by means of the directions given in this treatise, or by any other of the like nature, we can, through the divine assistance, preserve ourselves from *error* and *delusion*, and come to the knowledge and practice of *pure religion* and *undefiled*; this must be looked upon as one of the chiefest attainments; as it will yield true peace and comfort at present; and give us a *good assurance of eternal salvation in the life to come*.





A P P E N D I X.

An E X T R A C T *from* Mr RIMIUS'S
 Candid Narrative of the Rise and Progress
 of the Moravians, &c.—*With Remarks or*
Observations.

OUR author informs us, that he attended for a considerable time the public preachings of the *Moravians*, and consulted the writings of some of their chief leaders (to which he refers us for most things he says of them) by which means he acquired a due knowledge of their doctrines and particular tenets; so that, as he observes, it is not he that charges the society with the several gross errors and practices mentioned in this treatise; but the writings and conduct of their own teachers are their *sole accusers*.

This sect, we find, is but of a late date, and began only in *Germany* about the year 1722, and owes its rise to Count *Zinzendorf*; under whose protection

protection several people from *Moravia*, and elsewhere, sheltered themselves, and flocked to the new settlement he had set up; — and he has been always at the head of this *sect*, both in temporals and *spirituals*. From the age of seventeen, we are told, he believed that he had a *call* from Providence to preach the gospel; he preached at first in some of the *Lutheran* churches, and got himself consecrated Bishop of his Party; he afterwards laid down his episcopal dignity, and took up other titles; as that of *Minister Plenipotentiary*, *Lord Advocate of the Brethren*, and the like; pretending that he had a *call* to all the world. We are farther assured by our author, in a piece lately published, that the *Count* and his associates have stuck at no *arts* to propagate their doctrine; and that their favorite stratagem hath been to impose upon the unwary (in which they have succeeded) by taking upon them the title of the *Moravian Church*, which they have not the least pretence to; and which our author seems to have proved by several arguments. — The few natives of *Moravia*, which came over to the *Count*, according to his own report, were unconverted people or papists, whom he first brought over to the *Lutheran* doctrines; so that they could not be reckoned any part of the ancient *Moravian church*; however those people were looked upon as proper instruments to serve his end, or recommend, under the sanction of the *Moravian* name, the sect he had set up. — And we are also assured, that, by a method hitherto unheard of, the *Count* has imposed upon the public by *certificates* from men of repute, nay from whole colleges; who, on his bare word, without any farther proof, have asserted, that he and his people were of that *ancient church*; and by this means, and many encomiums bestowed on that church, he has gone from one country to another, affirming that he
and

and his people belong to that body, and makes profelytes under that specious pretence; — and that he might have remained undiscovered, if he had not, by too hasty a publication of his sermons, and other writings, betrayed himself, and caused persons to inquire into the bottom of the matter.—And it is observed,—“That could the ancient *Moravians*, who so generously spilt their blood in defence of the purity of the gospel, but come back and behold the impiety of these pretenders to their church, and the ridicule they bring down on the *christian faith*, I am confident, says our author, that they would hardly be restrained from running into extremes against them, in abhorrence to their doctrines, and out of resentment at the notorious innovations made under the sanction of their names*.”

The present *Moravians* are then, we find, a people drawn from all religions, a sect new broached; whose true name from the founder should be *Zinzendorfsians*; as our author observes “the King of *Prussia* properly calls them in his *Memoirs*.—They have also taken the name of *The Church of the Brethren*, from those *protestant* congregations, which, they say, for three hundred years past have been named *The Brethren* †.

The *Count*, we are told, has sent his fellow-labourers throughout the world; and that the society has settlements or establishments in many different parts of it; and he himself has been all over *Europe*, and twice in *America*.—The *Moravians* had made, as they tell us, two hundred voyages by sea some years ago; and we are assured, that they have no where met with better success than in the *British* dominions, and the *United Provinces*; but that where their views were discovered, they have again lost ground.

In

* *Solemn Call to Count Zinzendorf, &c.* 1754, p. 21.

† See *A Manual of Doctrine, &c.* lately printed for J. Beccrest.

In regard to *discipline*, we find, that submission to the will of the superiors of the society is made a very essential article of their system; and, to make this *implicit obedience without reserve* the more tolerable, it is given out, that their superiors receive from *Christ* himself all the orders that are given; and this notion is inculcated with great care. — *Jesus would have it so; the Lamb commands it*; is the stile of the ministers of the society ||.—Herein, we may observe, they agree in sentiments with the great enthusiast *Henry Nicolas*, founder of the sect called *The Family of Love*, “who exhorts his followers not to hearken to nor believe any other information but what is given by the *elders* in the *House of Love*; enjoining them to give up their understandings wholly to such elders; nay not to judge themselves by their own consciences, but only by the elders; concerning whom they must not have the least suspicion of error or unfaithfulness! *” This comes up fully to the claim of *popish* infallibility, and makes great numbers of *Popes*.—The *Pharisees*, we are told, paid so great a regard to the counsels of their elders, that they hearkened implicitly to them, or relied upon what they said, without any contradiction †.

As money is reckoned the sinew of all great schemes, the *brethren* soon established a fund, which they called the *Lamb's*, or *Saviour's Chest*; which is now become very considerable by the donations of their profelytes: The *Count* has had always the principal direction of it, and he himself declares, “That the stewards of the society may say to a young rich man, Either give us all thou hast, or get thee gone, thou canst not be one with us §.”

The

|| *Candid Narrative*, p. 28.

* See *Dr More's Grand Mystery of Godiness*, B. vi. chap. 12.

† Vid. *Joseph. Antiq.* l. 18. cap. 2.

§ See *Candid Narrat.* p 33. from one of the *Count's* Sermons.

The *Montanists* of old, we may observe, had also their *chest* for the same purpose, and some principal person amongst them was appointed *procurator* or *steward*; and their leaders, though they pretended so much to extraordinary assistances of the Spirit, were remarkable for their covetous disposition, and chousing the credulous multitude of their money ||.

We are informed, that whoever desires to be received as a *brother* amongst the *Moravians*, is not welcome, unless he contributes to the *chest*; out of which they are furnished for all their sundry undertakings.—They have a company called *The General Deaconskip*, which takes care of the public stock; and we are assured that this company has the disposal of above two millions of money for the benefit of their colonies in *Europe* and *America*; this helps better to explain to us by what means they are enabled to support the several distinct societies set up in so many places. And one of this sect in *Germany*, upon account of a law-suit he had, declared, the *General Deaconskip* already looked upon itself more powerful than the greatest Duke in *Germany*. If they should then be allowed to carry on their schemes without interruption, how dangerous, as our author observes, might they soon grow in several states where they reside? So that it may be proper to make an inquiry into their policy in due time.

We are informed, that the founder of their sect, when he went in *Holland* to gain disciples, was much in debt, and that he found means thereby to satisfy his creditors; and that his followers had been particularly attentive to make profelytes amongst the *Mennonists* there, who were a very rich people. We are also told of his drawing a very rich merchant

|| Vid. Cav. Hist. Liter. A. D. 172. De Montano. — Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 5. cap. 16.—Cum Valis. Not.

chant into his party, and sending him afterwards to *Algiers* to convert the *Moors*, where he died. And there are many other charges relating to sums acquired from people who came over to that sect*.

As to some of their *tenets*, by accounts taken from the *Count's* sermons, we find, that he speaks with great flight of the holy scripture; and that the reading of it appears to him to be more dangerous than useful to the society; and he makes mention of its defects and imperfections: And, in order to serve his own private purpose, we are also told, that he has made a new *translation* of the *New Testament*, in which he has often left out many words, nay whole sentences and verses; and by this attempt, and the vast number of faults in the translation, he has given great offence to all *Germany* †. He audaciously charges the Apostles with spoiling *Christ's plan* from the very first preaching of the gospel, and that the *clergy* have to *this time deceived the world* ‖. The design of this, we may imagine, is to induce the people to depend on him as an *infallible guide*. — The protestant religion is represented by him as a *Samaritan constitution*, a *Laodicean*; but his sect as the church of *Philadelphia*, and himself the *angel* of it, *Rev.* ch. iii. He gives the world to understand, that his sect will so far weaken the protestant constitution, as to leave nothing of it but a *caput mortuum*, or useless substance.—And he boasts, that from him a new *period* shall begin in church history §. Upon this, and the like accounts, our author observes, that the controversy is not to be considered on the footing of an ordinary

* See *Preface* to Mr *Stinsira's* *Pastoral Letter*.—*Solemn Call to Count Zinzendorf*, p. 13.—*Candid Narrative*, p. 28,—51, &c.

† *Solemn Call*, &c. p. 14.

‖ *Candid Narrative*, p. 38, 39.—*Solemn Call*, p. 14.

§ See *Solemn Call to Count*, &c. p. 13, &c.

nary one, as it is carried on against a person who pretends to *new gifts*, and seems to aim at a revolution in the church.—That when a person attempts such things, speaks in such lofty strains, and pretends to such an extraordinary call, his life and conduct ought to be examined into, as well as his doctrines.

In regard to the doctrine of the *Trinity*, he declares, that to avoid idolatry, persons ought to be taken from the *Father* and *holy Ghost*, and conducted to *Christ*; with whom *alone*, he says, christians have to do, and that we have no business with any body else; that God, the *Father* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, is not our direct *Father*; and this he calls *one of the capital errors in christendom*.—Thus the Son is the chief object of their worship; and yet he speaks of Him with a kind of disrespect or contempt, in regard to his human appearance*.

Several of them have great devotion for the *five wounds* of the *crucifixion*; and many of their hymns on this subject are full of such insipid, childish, absurd expressions, and rapturous nonsense, that they are rather like the dreams even of a *delirious person*, than the pious ejaculations of a sober christian. — Nay some of the expressions are indecent and very offensive †.

The *Count*, we are told, has the art of bringing over people to his sect, not by *instruction*, or by enlightning their understanding, but by the more prevailing art of *persuasion*; by winning upon their imagination and passions; and making use of his doctrine of the *blood and wounds of Christ*, as a kind of opiate or charm †.—Thus we read of some *heretics*

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* See *Solemn Call*, &c. p. 18.—*Candid Narrative*, p. 46.

† See *Candid Narrative*, p. 43. where you have a Collection of many Expressions of this Nature.

‡ See *Solemn Call*, &c. p. 4.

tics of old, who had the art of inducing persons to be of their society, before they instructed them in their particular opinions, which were kept from them, till after they had engaged themselves in the party §.

They reject reason and philosophy; *faith*, they say, does not require any demonstration; it is brought forth in the heart by the Spirit.—*Regeneration* they affirm is brought about suddenly all at once; and that such as are not children of God, are not to prepare themselves for it by *good works*, or good resolutions, as such preparations for coming to God are rather an obstacle to salvation*!—This seems contrary to the account which the gospel gives us of *Cornelius* a devout heathen, to whom an angel was sent to assure him, that his *prayers and alms were come up as a memorial before God*, Acts x. 4.—A person *regenerated*, they say, enjoys great liberty, “as he does what the Saviour gives him an inclination to do; and what he has no inclination for, he is not obliged to do. The Saviour, says the *Count*, can change the oeconomy of salvation every hour; he can make laws and abrogate them; he can make virtue vice, and vice virtue; and properly speaking the regenerate person *does nothing*, it is the Saviour that acts in them.”—How dangerous are such opinions? When once persons fancy themselves *regenerated*, they may be easily tempted to do whatever comes into their heads, though contrary to reason and holy scripture, and say they are acted by *the Spirit*.

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§ Ne discipulis quidem propriis antè committunt, quàm suos fecerint;—habent artificium, quo prius persuadeant, quàm edoceant; veritas autem docendo persuadet, non suadendo docet. *Tertul. adver. Valentin.*

* As appears from one of the *Count's* Sermons. *Candid Narrative*, p. 46.

As the *Moravians* are made to believe that the Saviour rules them by their *Chiefs*, whose orders must be executed the moment they are given, how arbitrary and unpleasent soever they may appear:— Our author justly observes, that this tenet must be dangerous to government; as the will of a few persons is sufficient to make a number of people act even against their own inclination; nay against common sense, upon being told, *that the Saviour will have it so.* — May not the safety of a government depend on their good will? Which I think, says he, is a very precarious security. For this reason, we are told, some *protestant* Princes, after having found that the *Count* exercised more than a *papal* power over his society, and that blind obedience was paid him in whatever he directed, chose to part as soon as possible with such subjects, rather than by keeping them longer be at the mercy of their rulers.—These people, as our author observes, openly declare, *That they are a leaven mixed with a quantity of flour, till it shall have leavened it all through.* It is doubtless then incumbent on every good christian, says he, to be upon his guard, and prevent, to the best of his power, the fatal consequences which such a *leaven* will probably produce, if not checked in due time*. Again, they are to be suspected on account of the *secrecy* they affect in their doctrines; that government, which grants liberty of conscience to a society, should be informed of the most minute parts of their doctrine and discipline; know whether the security of the realm is like to be affected thereby, or not.—It is true the *Count* says, “Come and see in what manner we pray, and perform the public offices of religion, and you will find that we are a peaceable people.” But our author assures us,

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that

* *Solemn Call*, p. 21.

that besides their public meetings they held private ones, to which only approved members were admitted; and that their teachers took care to profess publicly only such things as every body might hear, whether *Moravians* or not; and that when he at first attended their sermons, he could not give credit to the charges brought against them; but now and then strange doctrines, he observed, unwarily dropped from their teachers; as, *that transgression and sin were now no more*, and the like; which made him suspect that there must be amongst them doctrines of a dangerous tendency.—He tells us also, that their leaders inform the ignorant and unwary amongst them, “That should their tenets be handled in public writings, *christianity* would run the risk of being *ridiculed by unbelievers*,” which seems to be an acknowledgment, that they hold doctrines, such as they are conscious afford a handle for *ridicule*, which the true doctrines of the gospel do not.

The *Count* himself declares, “That he finds it necessary to speak paradoxically to such as are not initiated into his *mysteries*. — That he has different kind of instructions or doctrines; some not to be preached from the pulpit, but in private congregations; or to be delivered *only into one’s own ear*.—And he almost glories in having a new language not understood by others.”—And he has long ago enjoined his disciples “to give no answer to what is wrote against their doctrines, should even the charge be true; he observed that their affairs had suffered by such means;—and that very likely such writings against *them would soon be forgot* *.”

From the fair pretences of the *Moravians*, many Princes have received the society in their dominions;

* See *Schemm Call to Count Zinzendorf, &c.* p. 2, &c. where his own Writings are referred to.—*Ibid.* p. 23.

nions ; but time has shewed, says our author, that even those Princes found themselves at length under a necessity to cause their *emigration* ; that they shewed things only on the fairest side ; and no more of their doctrines than what they thought fit should be known ; and the answers they gave to the questions proposed to them were full of evasions.—We are told their teachers in general affect great obscurity, and speak often in such a manner as to leave some way for evasion ; and that, when upon some occasion the government, where they were settled in *Germany*, was for looking more narrowly into their plan, all means imaginable were made use of to prevent this step ;—and that when they were by a public edict ordered to withdraw, the leaders of the sect made the followers believe, that this was persecution ; which, as martyrs, they ought to suffer for *Christ's* sake ; and so the people, we are told, rejoiced at it †.—And our author observes, that their leaders induced the legislative power of this kingdom to believe, that their tenets do in no respect differ from other protestants. Upon which account an Act has passed in their favour, which grants them leave to settle in the *British Dominions*.—He takes notice in another place, “ That as the Act of Parliament, which was surreptitiously obtained, only allows them a settlement in the Colonies abroad, whether or no Count *Zinzendorf* doth not inroach on the *toleration* granted his sect, by assuming an authority to convoke and hold *general synods* of his party in *England*, and by sending out orders, dated at such *synods* in *London*, not only throughout all *Great Britain*, but to all parts of the world* ?

† *Candid Narrative*, p. 57, 99, &c.

* *Solemn Call*, &c. p. 22.

The teaching persons *to give up their reason* may prove pernicious to government, as it follows from hence that they are liable to be exposed to all manner of delusions; there being no absurdity, no doctrine so extravagant and pernicious, that may not find entrance into their minds. — And who can tell to what a length such delusions may be carried, or what use may be made of them by the chiefs of a people, who, as it is observed, are guided only by *feeling*, imagination and passion, as the *Anabaptists* of *Munster* were of old? — Another doctrine, equally pernicious to government, is the *Count's* assertion, that *Christ* can make *virtue to be vice*, and *vice virtue* †. — This seems to be borrowed from what *Bellarmino* declares to the same purpose concerning the power of the *Pope*; namely, if he should command the practice of vice, and forbid virtuous actions, the church is bound to believe vices to be good, and virtues to be bad †. — As reason is given up by those who submit themselves implicitly to their *chiefs*, it is easy for their rulers to make them perpetrate even the most horrid enterprizes whenever they please; *virtue* is not virtue at all times, and vice must be virtue, when they will have it so.

They also, like other *enthusiasts*, are guilty of great *uncharitableness* to those who differ from them; they boast that they are a *chosen flock* and *race*; and look with disdain upon all other christians, esteeming them people only *who pretend to christianity*, and are guided by a *clergy*, whom, they say, *are Satan's professors*, and *have deceived the world to this day*: — And when *Christ* comes to judgment, “ We, says the *Count*, do not propose to ourselves to be on *the right hand, or the left*; but we are to be
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† *Candid Narrative*, p. 46, 64.

‡ *De Pontif. Rom.* lib. 4. cap. 5.

amongst those saints that accompany him, and are to come along *with him in triumph.*”

We have observed before that *enthusiasts* had been often very fond of the *nuptial stile*, and were inclined to some *licentious practices*. — The truth of this seems to be too plainly confirmed by some accounts given of the *Moravians* out of their own writings in this *Narrative*; and in another piece lately published by the same author*. — There we find, “ That marriages are looked upon by them as the capital article of their society, as the most precious *depositum* from the hand of the Lord; the great mystery of all human things, whereof the key is given to them; not indeed, as they pretend, on account of the exterior circumstances, but for the sake of the principal plan which the Lord had in his own breast †. The husbands are called *Vice-Christis*, *Christ's-Legats*, and the like.— Their elders, we find, have the sole right of making matches, and no promise of marriage is valid without their consent; so that the authority of parents is quite excluded in this society, and they are to marry only such persons, whose *regeneration* God hath with certainty made known to them; and instructed in the importance of the *conjugal* state.— And the state of unmarried persons after such an age is represented as *brutish*, or a *state of madness*.— The expressions they make use of on these occasions are so gross and obscene, that they cannot be represented to the reader in a decent dress, but must be offensive to chaste ears; they are deformities which no veil can cover; and some of their hymns upon this account cannot be read without blushing.— One could scarce give credit to the accounts,

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* His *Solemn Call to Count Zinzendorf* to answer the Charges brought against the *Moravians* in the *Candid Narrat.* p. 19, &c.

† *Candid Narrative*, p. 52, &c.

but that they are evident from the writings of some of their principal leaders, and from some of their *public hymns* *. Sensual desires seem to be gratified and indulged under the cloak of *spiritual love* and pretence of religion; and doctrines of this nature must excite such ideas, amongst the younger sort especially, as will not be very consistent with *pure religion and undefiled*.—We are told indeed, by one of their writers, that they frequently give very strict exhortations in regard to the article of *purity* †. And indeed there seems to be great occasion for it: But why should they kindle a dangerous fire without any necessity, or only for the sake of trying their skill in putting it out, or keeping it from doing any hurt?

They are also charged with such ceremonies at the celebration of their marriages, as, if true, suppose them given up to all sense of shame; some of these things, we are told, are kept secret from their new converts, or common sort of brethren. This is laid to their charge by grave persons who had proper opportunity of knowing the truth, and who challenged them to proceed against them by due course of law, if they could convict them of falsehood †; and offered to produce before a court of judicature undeniable proofs of what they advance §.—Our author had good reason therefore to question, “Whether examples are to be found of a *fanaticism* more extravagant, and a *mysticism* more gross and scandalous. But he charitably believes, that many of the *Moravians*, or of the *Count’s* followers, are men of much better principles than their leaders would instil into their minds; and are

* See *Candid Narrat.* p. 54, &c.—*Solemn Call*, p. 16, &c.

† *Modest Plea for the Church of the Brethren*, p. 4. 1754.

‡ *Candid Narrative*, p. 54, 90.

§ *Solemn Call*, &c. p. 12.

are rather guided by the rules of *Christianity* formerly taught, than by this new instruction he gives them *.”

The accounts here given put us in mind of those unclean rites said to be made use of in some of the *Heathen Mysteries*, which they also kept secret from those who were not *initiated* into them †. And some of their obscene representations were defended under pretence of being only *emblems* of that *mystical regeneration and new life*, to which the initiated had engaged themselves ‡. Some heretics of old, we are told, “ prepared a *nuptial* bed, and performed a secret ceremony by pronouncing some words over such as were to be *initiated*; and the marriages then were reckoned *spiritual*, and conformable to the celestial *nuptials* ||.—The great adversary of our holy and pure religion could not take a more effectual way, than what has been here mentioned to bring it into contempt, and make it the sport of *atheists* and *libertines*.

It affords rather matter of *pity* than *mirth* to find the chief leader of the *Moravians*, with so much earnestness declaring, “ that all souls are of the *feminine sex*, as they are *to be married to Christ*; that to imagine a human soul to be *a male one*, would, says he, be the greatest folly, and a fancy *that could not enter into a Christian even in a high fever* §. But no person, except one in a *fever* or some worse disorder, would, one might imagine, talk at this rate.

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* *Candid Narrative*, p. 55.

† Nam & illa *Eusefina*; *Hæresis* & ipsa *Atticæ* superstitionis, quod tacent pudor est. *Tertul. advers. Valent.*

‡ See Dr *Warton's Div. Legat.* Book II. Sect. iv. p. 167.

|| Vide *Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* Lib. IV. cap. xi.

§ The Saviour has created no *Animos* but *Animas*, she-souls, which are his *bride*, she *candidates to rest in his arms*, and in the *eternal bed-chamber*, &c. from a Sermon of the *Court's*, vid. *Cand. Narrat.* p. 49.

We are farther assured by several foreign divines, who were employed to make a strict search into the principles of the *Moravians*, that in this case we are speaking of; “under pretence of religion, they have interlaced in *matrimonial* matters (or in their directions about that state) so many scandalous, false, and singular opinions and instructions; (which they give out as most holy) and in many of their public *hymns* have made use of such a number of crude, lascivious, and scandalous expressions, that a person, who makes but little account of religion, would be quite ashamed to mention them openly to others;” so that their conduct in this respect may be looked upon as one of the most glaring scandals given by them;—and we are assured, that this is a charge which is not so much as denied by the society, but openly defended in their public apologies, and declared holy and innocent; and they say that none can be offended therewith, but those whose *hearts are not yet purified by the blood of Christ* *.

The same divines have also collected several more of their doctrines and tenets—They tell us, that some principal persons amongst the *Moravians* being asked if their society could err; it was answered, “that *Christ* was its head, and consequently so far enlightened it, that it could not err; and that the society was perfect and infallible.”—Another of their society, who had been several years amongst them, declared, “that many of them had lived *without the Bible*, and such as have it *sell it*, or give it away; and persons of the first rank amongst them boasted, that they had never read the *Bible*; others affirm-

* See *Candid Narrative*, p. 115, &c. from the letters wrote by the divines at the university of *Tubingen* to the Duke of *Wurtemberg* against *Court Zinzendorf*.

affirming, that it was not a whit better that every body had it in his power *to read the Bible.*" Thus we find how prejudicial *enthusiasm* is to the true *revelation* of God's word in holy scripture.—They have declared also, that *liberty of conscience* was pernicious, and that it was not well every one should have *the Bible.*

Concerning the doctrine of the *Trinity*, those divines shew from the writings of the *Moravians*, "that they esteem the œconomy of the *Trinity* hitherto believed; viz. *that God the Father* is the Creator, *the Son* the Redeemer, and *the Holy Ghost* the Sanctifier, as a capital error in the *Christian* world;—and that he, who knows nothing more of the *Godhead*, only believes in the *man Christ*, can be saved; no other *Godhead* ought to be taught, save that which was in *Christ*, who is the *officiating God* of the whole world*."

They have asserted in an insulting manner, "that the whole doctrine of *warring against sin* is a human fiction; what kind of war, say they, can a *dead man*, a miserable sinner, in a word, a child, be supposed to carry on?"—And they speak of *conversion* as effected in an hour, or a minute.

It is observed, that there is not much hopes that the *Moravians* will hear what is charged against them; as their records shew in what an odious insulting manner all those divines and writers have been treated, who from an honest heart have wrote against them: And they boast, that no member of their society reads such writings; no wonder then if they can keep the people in such servile dependances; and that they should look upon what is alleged against their chiefs as downright calumny.—
"It will always remain, as our author observes,
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* *Candid Narrative*, p. 113.

an incontestable truth, that *the tree is known by its fruit*; when men therefore broach any doctrine concerning the Deity, that must be shocking to the ears of all true Christians; when they teach that *reason* must be given up; or pretend to immediate orders from *Christ*; and under that colour impose upon their deluded followers whatever they please; when they teach that *Christ* can make the most villainous act to be virtue, and virtue to be vice; when they openly profess that the divines without the pale of their sect have to this time deceived the world; when those things which decency forbids to mention, are lasciviously commemorated in their *hymns*; when these and the like things can be made to appear, will any body believe that the religion of such a society is a true one, or is to be countenanced?"

Thus have I given a brief description of some of the gross and dangerous opinions of the *Moravians**; related without any aggravation, or deviating, I hope, from the sense of my author; having added some few observations of my own in proper places.—And this may be of use to undeceive some of their deluded followers, (who might be ignorant probably about many of the things here mentioned) and to prevent others from being imposed upon by them; and to let us see how fit it is to discourage a sect which maintains opinions of this nature; as this nation has already smarted severely from the madness of *enthusiasts*: And if it be afflicted again in the same manner, it must be looked upon as a punishment in some measure due for the neglect and contempt of religion, and not making a proper use of those great advantages we at present enjoy.

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* Collected from all parts of the *Candid Narrative*, and the *Solemn Call to Court Zirzendorf*, by the same author.

If the accounts above mentioned are true (as we have great reason to think they are) no wonder that several of this society should deny many of the things laid to their charge, as being ashamed to own them publicly; and indeed the very mention or bare description of them, may serve in a great measure to confute them.—This we find was generally the case of the heretics of old.—Thus the *Messalians* either denied or concealed their most dangerous and corrupt doctrines*; which was also the case with the *Valentinians*, a branch of the *Gnostics*; they gave ambiguous answers, and declared, that they adhered to the common faith with other Christians. And when they were charged with holding contrary opinions, they denied them; being apprehensive that a public discovery would overthrow their doctrines†.

We might wish that several of the things laid to the charge of the *Moravians* were not true:—The *Papists*, we find, by some of their superstitious and unchristian practices, give great offence to the unbelieving nations, and make them have an aversion to the Gospel; and what would some of them say, if they were told that the gross opinions and practices before referred to were approved of by those, who look upon themselves as the most perfect amongst the professors of the gospel?—*Tell it not in Gath*, lest unbelievers rejoice and triumph; and *the name of God be blasphemed* amongst them on this account, 2 *Sam.* i. 10. *Rom.* ii. 24. This ought to put the more religious part of those, who incline

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* Vide *Theod. Hist. Eccl.* Lib. IV. cap. xi.

† Doctrinas abscondunt, scientes casum & ruinam doctrinæ suæ. *Irenæ. adv. Her.* Lib. IV. cap. lii.—Si subtiliter tentes per ambiguitates bilingues communem fidem adfirmant; si scire te ostendas, negant quicquid agnoscent, &c. *Tertul. advers. Valent.*

to this sect, upon their guard; and induce them to make a strict inquiry, whether or no *these things are so?* and be a warning to others how they engage amongst them.

Their *apologists*, instead of replying to the particular charges brought against them, have only, we find, given high encomiums on their party in general terms, without answering any one accusation, which they pretend indeed to have done several times; but they are still challenged to do it by the author of the *Candid Narrative* in particular, who declares, that he cannot rest satisfied, till the public has a fair and explicit answer to the several charges there brought against them; which it has indeed a right to expect at their hands* :—they are required by him to quote distinctly one article after another, and give a clear answer to each; and not to pick out passages here and there, just what suits their purpose best; or ask a few questions; or call their adversaries names; and represent their writings as *libels*, though ever so well supported by proofs.—This, he observes, cannot be deemed *answering*; and in this manner have they answered many times:—And the *Count*, we find, has expressed himself in the spirit of persecution against some who have attacked his favorite tenets; as *that they deserved to have their tongues plucked out, or destroyed with a thunderbolt*; this, as our author observes, is *answering with a vengeance* †.

In regard to the *Candid Narrative*, we are assured by good authority from abroad, “that the author of it has taken his materials from the best sources, and
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* See Mr *Rimius's* *Solemn Call to Count Zinzendorf*, p. 22. and also Mr *Frey's* account of his coming amongst the *Moravians*, and his reasons for leaving them.

† *Solemn Call to Count Zinzendorf*, &c. p. 10, 11.

accurately rendered into *English* the original *German passages*, in his notes; by which means, as they observe, the eyes of many in *England*, especially among the clergy, are opened; who hitherto wanted an opportunity of viewing this sect in its *true light*:—and that such instances are the fittest for opening the eyes of a nation, which on admitting this sect promised itself great advantages from their establishing *manufactures*, and peopling their colonies*.” They farther observe, “that the *Moravians* would fain have suppressed Mr *Rimius’s Narrative*; and for that purpose a person was sent to the publisher to insinuate that it would be some hundred pounds in his way, if he would comply with their desire.”—Our author also tells us “that having failed in endeavouring to suppress his book, they sought to disparage its contents by slander, and attempts to do him a prejudice †.”

Though in charity we may hope that great numbers of that party disallow several of the tenets of their principal leaders; yet by not expressly declaring so, they in great measure make them their own; thus some, who have lately offered pleas in defence of this sect ‡, speak of their *first leaders* with the greatest regard, which could not well be done if they condemned several of their opinions.—They excuse the apologizing for themselves, by observing, that when persons are prepossessed against truth, apologies are read: as many came to hear our Saviour, only to make some objection, and as upon this account he made the following answer to the chief

* See an abstract of the literary *Gazette*, published at the university of *Göttingen*, &c. July 21, 1753,—as set down in the *Solemn Call*, p. 24, &c.

† *Ibid.* p. 9.

‡ See *A modest Plea for the Church of the Brethren*, Lond 1754.

chief priests and scribes, “ *If I tell you, you will not believe me; when they asked him, Art thou the Christ?* Luke xxii. 67.—Hence, say they, the *brethren* cannot be blamed for following for the future their *Lord’s* example more strictly, and not suffering themselves to be drawn from their great design by the useless and endless labour of defences, and the like *.

But it shews great presumption, I think, to draw such *parallels*. Nor will this answer be looked upon as sufficient in them; and what they call only *embarrassed innocence* will still pass for guilt with a great many, unless they clear it up better than they yet have done.—Nor will it be sufficient only to declare in general, “ *that they are a city set upon a hill*, and that our Saviour and his chief favourites were misrepresented by the *Pharisees*, and looked upon as *sinners*, and so it is enough *for the servant to be as his master*, and the like †.—A more particular answer is expected from them in regard to some of their doctrines and practices, and the *charges* laid against them; which are not built on bare groundless surmises, but on their own writings.—Nor is it satisfactory only to compare the books which come out against them, *to the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth*, Rev. xii. 15. and hope, that at length they shall prove *victorious* ‡.—Perhaps some of their teachers may have attempted to reform several of their erroneous doctrines and practices, and like the *Marcionites* of old they may be daily changing their opinions, as their weakness is discovered by the arguments brought against them §.

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* See *A modest Plea*, &c. p. 10, 11.

† Ibid. p. 11, 13, &c.

‡ Ibid. p. 15.

§ Quotidiè reformant illud, prout à nobis quotidiè revincuntur. *Tertul. adv. Marcion. Lib. IV. p. 506. Ed. Rigait.*

We may observe, that their chief leaders boast much of being descended from the ancient *Moravian church*, (though we find without any sufficient reason) yet supposing their claim just, and that they hold the same opinions with that ancient *Protestant church*; is this any true reason, why they should go about with such zeal amongst us, making divisions, and drawing persons into separation from the established worship; where the protestant, and all true christian doctrines are taught in as great perfection as they can pretend to?— They should rather endeavour to keep the unity of the *Spirit in the bond of peace, striving together with us for the faith of the Gospel*, Phil. i. 27.

They bid us consider, “ what an arduous task they have, to superintend and manage such a rising *body* as theirs; such a select congregation for *Jesus*, brought together by the holy Spirit, and overruling providence out of so many different nations, religions, and sects; that the powers of darkness are employed against them, and they are as it were in the front of the war against the world, the flesh and the devil”*. — But what sufficient authority have they for this declaration? And till we see more clearly the necessity of such a society as theirs, and the good effects produced by it, they cannot reasonably expect, “ that persons, instead of cavilling at, publishing and exposing whatsoever in them could be represented as a fault and nakedness, should rather truly pity their condition; wondring, and praising God, who has enabled them thus far to stand their ground;” or that, “ let the defects in their church be what they will, yet she really is, and ought to be owned a very *valuable branch*, or sect of Christendom, a divine

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* *Modest Plea for the Brethren*, page 14.

apparatus for the advancement of our Redeemer's Kingdom." *

This writer indeed declares, that when the sect of the *Moravians* was first embodied together under *Count Zinzendorf*, they aimed with an earnest zeal at *christian perfection*, and pursued all common measures to compass so great an end; labouring after the highest summit of *human righteousness*; namely, orthodoxy of doctrine, and holiness of life. Yet one thing, and that the *cardinal point*, (we are told) was still wanting; till at length, God taking pity on them *revealed* his son *Jesus*, and his *all-atonement sacrifice* in their hearts; and that they now stand as living witnesses hereof in all the world; recommending the inexpressible benefits of this powerful redemption of sinners on the cross to all sorts of people, that for this testimony's sake they are popularly hated;—Why should it be thought a thing incredible, say they, that we owe our whole salvation solely to the *blood of the cross*? But experience shews that all men have not *faith*;—they own, that they themselves verily thought otherwise *within themselves*; till on a *certain day*, never to be forgotten in the *annals of their church* (as they declare) the *power and brightness of their Redeemer's blood shone out upon, melted, and united all their hearts in a sensible, yet ineffable manner*, when they were receiving the *Lord's supper*; and they have not been disobedient to this *heavenly call*, but have ever since had the *blood of the Lamb*, as the only foundation and happiness amongst themselves; and in due time declared it to all denominations of christians. †

This, we find then, is the great *discovery* they seem to value themselves upon. Now as for immediate and extraordinary revelations about such things

* *Ib.* p. 11, 23.

† *Method Pica*, &c. p. 2, 3, &c.

things as are already plainly set down in holy scripture, we are not to expect them; (as has been observed before) — And in regard to the particular case here mentioned; if they mean only, “that *Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.—That he has given himself a sacrifice to God for us; and washed us from our sins in his own blood—* that his death is the *meritorious cause of our Salvation*, and the like;” this necessary doctrine is so plainly declared in the new testament, that I hope few, who profess themselves christians, are ignorant of or disbelieve it; (though many may not consider this, and other important truths in scripture so seriously as they ought to do) — So that the dispute here is rather with *Deists* and *Socinians* than with any others.

In the established church in particular, our Saviour’s *meritorious cross and passion* is expressly mentioned “as that whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made partakers of *the kingdom of heaven.*” * — And I do not doubt but that it is a truth inculcated frequently by most of the denominations of christians amongst us, who only differ from us in things of much less importance.

When we are assured “that the direct tendency of the *Moravian* constitution is to bring about first the knowledge of our *crucified Redeemer*, and pardon of sins in his blood; and then a freedom from their dominion, and doing what is well pleasing to God;” if this be only their great and real design, it is what all good christians are as much engaged in as themselves; so that they must not complain that persons on this account “shut their eyes against the light, or oppose their opinions;”

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nor

* *Exhort.* in the Com. Office.

nor was there in this respect any necessity to beg of those, who were not of their party, “not to let any bad principle so far work upon them as to induce them by word or deed to oppose their arduous task, in promoting the knowledge of our crucified Redeemer in the world;” nor was there any need for setting up a new sect in order to teach this part of christian knowledge amongst us, *as being a neglected or unknown truth*; or any reason for looking on themselves, as *particular instruments of this blessed preparation of God*; where they say, *his finger was so plainly discovered amongst them*;— or of complaining “that persons of piety and seriousness became their adversaries, upon their insisting on surrendering up the whole heart to him, whose right it is by the dear purchase of his own most precious blood;”— nor if their society should fail or be suppressed, “would the sincere christian sustain any great loss thereby, (as they declare) or be cut to the soul to see so admirable an *apparatus* for the advancement of our Saviour’s kingdom, and so many worthy witnesses defeated; or look upon this as a precedent for the *gates of Hell* to boast of in future ages.” They have also told us, “that many at their first awaking, and looking into the Bible, have made this melancholy reflection; namely, Either this is not christianity, or we are not *christians*; which can no more be said now with truth, (as they give out) since they have informed the world better.*

Such declarations shew too fond an opinion of their own wisdom; and their great ignorance of the knowledge and design of other christians; or they are made with a view to draw to their party such as have never examined into the great truths of the Gospel, or spent any time in listening to the voice of *religious wisdom*.

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* See *Method Plea*, &c. p. 12, 20, 21, &c.

But if any of their sect apply this truth of pardon and salvation *through the merits of Christ alone*, in such a manner, as to think that they are thereby excused from a diligent performance of any of the christian duties, as we have reason to think some do; they then indeed *dishonour God*, and dangerously deceive themselves. — The apostle having mentioned “*grace as reigning to eternal life by the righteousness and obedience of Christ our Lord, asks, What shall we say then, shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.*— As Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so should we walk in newness of life. — Knowing that in him, our old man is crucified, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.” — The whole sixth chapter to the Romans, from which these passages are taken, sets the necessity of christian obedience in a clear light. — *If we walk in the light*, says St John, *then the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin*, 1 John i. 7. to walk in the light is here opposed to the walking in darkness or sin, as mentioned in the verse before. — And we read in the next chapter, *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* — “*It behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name,*” Luke xxiv. 46. as our Lord himself declares. — *Sin*, we find, will not be pardoned without *turning unto God*, and *doing works meet for repentance*, Acts xxvi. 20. But then this *forgiveness* upon repentance and amendment, is founded on the gospel-covenant, or the *merits of Christ*; we have *redemption through his blood, even the forgive-*

givenness of our sins, according to the richness of his grace, Eph. i. 7. Matt. xxvi. 28.

Without diligent care in point of obedience we see then that none of the brethren (or any body else) “ must imagine that they gather with Christ, or that he will confess them to be his; have complacency in them, or that his blood will speak for them better things than that of Abel; nor must they look upon themselves yet as heartily attached to, and true disciples of Christ*.” — So necessary is it for us sincerely to endeavour to do the will of our father which is in heaven, or obey his commandments; seeing our Saviour has made this general declaration; *Depart from me, all ye that work iniquity*, Matt. vii. 23. — Though we must not pretend to an angelical perfection, or rely on our own merits, but still own ourselves unprofitable servants †.

The persons we are speaking of, declare themselves “ sworn enemies of self-righteousness under every guise; as it is a *satanical delusion*, and a dishonour to the *bloody righteousness* of our Saviour (as they express it) freely imputed to, and put upon the naked sinner as he is. — And that sinners are to apply to Christ with all their sinfulness and misery, just as it is, supplicating at his pierced feet for pardon of all sins †.

If they here mean by *self-righteousness*, a depending on our own merits for salvation; this we disown as well as they do. Or if they affirm, that sinners must, upon a hearty sorrow for their offences, apply to Christ for forgiveness, with a firm resolution of amendment of life; we say the same,

* *Modest Plea*, p. 9, 14.

† See what has been observed before about *Justification by Faith*.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 19, 14.

same, and have not the least dispute with them about such things. These are truths, we hope, generally allowed of amongst christians, — and they have nothing to value themselves on particularly above others upon that account. — But if they separate *Justification* or *Salvation through Christ*, from that obedience to his commandments which he has so expressly enjoined, they then advance dangerous doctrines, and impose upon the ignorant and unwary in matters of eternal importance; and it is very necessary to give them the most public warning of the danger they are in.

They pretend indeed to value themselves upon their *holiness of life*; and we are told, “that a great perfectionist in his own conceit, who had clamoured against their holiness, after his coming amongst them, was forced to confess, *I found them too holy for me**.” This we have only their own word for; and there is reason to suspend our belief in this point, when we consider the contrary accounts, seemingly so well attested; — though it is hoped that there are several good and well-meaning persons amongst them. — But by their speaking so much against any *righteousness of our own*, and by not expressing themselves so clearly as they might or ought to do, (if they allow of the necessity of diligently endeavouring to pay obedience to all God’s commandments) several of their party, it is to be feared, mistake their meaning, and draw licentious consequences from the doctrines they hear; neglecting or disesteeming practical religion and moral virtues, which are so essential a part of the christian dispensation; and hoping to get to heaven upon easier terms.

We cannot say too much of the great advantage of a true *faith* in *Christ*, and relying upon his *merits*;

* Ibid. p. 20.

rits; if this argument be not urged with a view of taking away the necessity of obedience.

We may here just take notice, that there are some who seem to prefer the character or state of the *returning prodigal* to that of the *dutiful son*, who had been always with his father, *Luke xv.* — And this is a favourite subject with them; — this parable indeed, and the *joy in heaven* upon the *conversion* of a sinner mentioned in the same chapter, is matter of much comfort to returning sinners; and they have the greatest reason to be thankful to God for his mercies declared unto them, and have sufficient encouragement offered to induce them to forsake their sins. — But then persons are not to value themselves more upon their *conversion* than if they had never gone much astray; or think that this should recommend them more particularly to the public notice and esteem of the world; which is an advantage that some would make of it. — They, who have endeavoured to go on in a constant course of obedience to the will of their heavenly father, are to be considered surely as great objects of God's love, as the others; and have the greatest reason to be thankful for the constant supplies of divine grace afforded them; which they have made so good use of, as to be preserved from falling into any great danger in their *spiritual state*. — Great sinners, as it is observed by some, often make the greatest saints upon their *conversion*: this rule may indeed hold good sometimes; so that they will love most, to whom most is forgiven, *Luke vii. 43.* But he who was the pattern of perfection, and left us an example that we should follow his steps as near as we could, had always been free from the least transgression or stain of *sin*, and cannot therefore be supposed here to prefer the state of a converted sinner to that of the person who

who had always endeavoured to go on in a constant course of duty ; which practice is the more necessary in places where the christian religion is established, and persons are instructed in its doctrines from their infancy. — Though *St Paul* after his conversion *laboured more abundantly* than other christians, and shewed the greatest and purest zeal for religion, yet his case differed much from the generality of converted sinners ; what he did amiss in his *unconverted state*, he did it *ignorantly* ; he acted then with a design to promote the honour of God, though he greatly erred through a conscience wrongly informed ; which is not the case of wilful and presumptuous sinners now a-days. — Far be it from me to throw the least stumbling-block in the way of *returning sinners*, or to lessen the mercy of God manifested on such great events ; (considering how much wickedness, and infidelity prevail in the world, and the necessity there is for *the return of many to the Lord who redeemed them*, *Isai. xlv. 22.*) only we should consider that *humility* rather than *triumph* becomes a truly converted sinner ; and any kind of spiritual pride gives us ground to suspect the reality of such *conversions*.

The following reflection made by an Apologist for the *Moravians* seems to be of no real advantage to the honour or interest of religion ; namely, “ our Saviour’s friends and favourites were for the most part sinners, the common people or vulgar ; hardly any *reputable* man, or strictly religious person of his time, had so much as a common friendship for him, these being almost to a man his bitter and avowed enemies.” We have several instances in the new testament to the contrary* ; and this application to themselves is very ground-

* See Luke ii. 27. Acts ii. 5, 41. x. 2. xvii. 4. xxii. 12. Luke xxiii. 50. John iii. 1. xii. 42, &c.

groundless and assuming; namely, “If the Lord and master of the house has met with this treatment in his day, how shall his * servants and those of his household meet with better in theirs?”

Some there are, who have melancholy and despairing thoughts about God’s mercy and pardon, (occasioned in some measure perhaps for want of *that absolute assurance of salvation* in their own breast, which they are taught to look upon as necessary) which has made them sometimes lay violent hands upon themselves. — For the comfort and direction of such we may just observe, that the scripture assures us, “that the Lord is plenteous and rich in mercy, — his compassions fail not, he is good and ready to forgive — not willing that any should *perish*, but that all should come to *repentance*. — He waiteth that he may be gracious. — He hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon †.”

No persons ought therefore to exclude themselves from mercy, where God has not excluded them; and he shuts out none whom he thus lovingly invites to repentance and salvation. — To *despair* is to reject the divine mercy offered; to question the veracity and deny the goodness of God, and look upon him as cruel and unmerciful; though he has fully assured us to the contrary.

If any persons who join themselves to the societies we are here speaking about, declare, that they condemn some of the opinions which we have mentioned out of those writings of their first leaders, there will be the greater reason for suspecting the truth of what they teach in other points; and that
by

* *Modest Plea for the Church of the Brethren*, p. 13.

† Psal. ciii. 8. Lam. iii. 22. Psal. lxxxvi. 5. 2 Pet. iii. 9. Isai. xxx. 18. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Isai. lv. 7.

by following such guides, they may be brought to forsake the *fountains of living waters*, (or plain directions given in holy scripture) *and bew to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water*, Jer. ii. 13. And what is there to be found in their preaching and doctrines, that can induce a conscientious prudent christian to leave those guides regularly appointed to teach and instruct them? or what necessity is there *for going* to any others to be taught the things that belong to their true peace and salvation?

I shall conclude the whole with a few suitable passages from *Holy Scripture*. — “*Beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. — Let us stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. — Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. — Considering that in Jesus Christ nothing availeth but faith, which worketh by love*, (or obedience to all commands of the gospel) *that Christ became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. — And that he himself hath declared, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my father which is in heaven. — As he therefore, who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. — Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue think on these things; — for he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men *.”*

* See 2 Pet. iii. 17. Phil. i. 27. Eph. iv. 3. Gal. v. 6. Heb. v. 9. Matt. vii. 21. 1 Pet. i. 15. Phil. iv. 8. Rom. xiv. 18.

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