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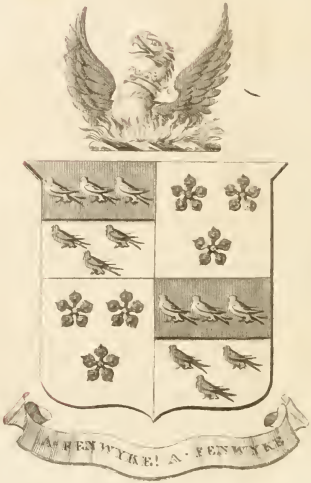
A PENRYRE! A PENRYRE

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IMPRIMATUR,

Nov. 7 1668.

Tho. Tomkyns, *Reverendissimo in Christo Patri ac Domino, Dom.* Gilb. Arch. Cantuar. *à Sacr. Dom.*

Simon Patrick

A Friendly Debate

BETWEEN A

CONFORMIST

AND A

NON-CONFORMIST.

The Third Edition.

LONDON,
Printed for *Richard Royston*, Bookseller to the King's most excellent Majesty,
1669.

Book

Friendly Debate

Betwixt two Neighbours,

The one

A CONFORMIST,

The other

A NON-CONFORMIST,

About several weighty matters.

Published for the benefit of this City, by a Lover of it, and of pure Religion.

Prov. 15. 32.

He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

To the Reader.

Reader,

DO not throw away this little Book as soon as ever thou meetest with something that offends thee; but sit down rather, and consider upon what account thou art offended. If it be onely because the Author contradicts thy Opinions, and perhaps accuses them of folly, thou hast cause to turn thy displeasure from him upon thy self, for presuming so much of thy own infallibility: which if thou wilt not pretend unto, then read on further, and consider whether he contradicts thee with reason, or without: and howsoever it prove, thou wilt not repent thee of thy pains. For if he reprove thy Opinions without reason, thou wilt be more confirmed in them; if with reason, thou maist

exchange them for better. It is possible, indeed, that some things may seem to be expressed too tartly and severely, and others too lightly and merrily: but let not that put thee out of humour neither, nor make the reason which is offered less considerable. For the Author (I can assure thee) hath no gall in him, nor was in any passion when he write these things: but intended onely (as naturally as he could on a sudden) to express such Discourse as Neighbours are wont to have in their private conversation; in which if there be nothing that is smart or pleasant, they can scarce keep one another from sleeping. He is very well aware under what great prejudices we all labour; and considers how hard it is to dispossess an Opinion, though false, nay ridiculous,

ridiculous, which a man hath ſuck'd in with his mothers milk, and which hath been impreſſed on him by education, confirmed by cuſtom, much encouraged by the conſent and practice of thoſe with whom he daily converſes, and hath perhaps his complexion and natural temper to befriend it, and incline him to it. Upon ſuch conſiderations as theſe he cannot be angry with thoſe againſt whom he writes; but rather pities them, and is ſorry they conſider not ſuch things themſelves; and ſo repreſs that heat and paſſion wherewith they advance their own private late inventions, againſt publick Decrees and ancient Conſtitutions. One ſort of men (he confeſſes) are apt a little to move his indignation, who pretend to the greateſt niceneſs of conſcience, and

have

have handled the matter so as to be thought the most religious of all others; and yet make no scruple to do those things continually which are utterly contrary to good conscience. (So, I believe, an understanding Heathen *or* Turk *would resolve, were he made judge in the case, and had first their Principles, and then their Practices, laid before him.) Such the Author thinks deserve to be rebuked; and if there be any thing spoken with sharpness in the ensuing Discourse, it is when he hath to do with them. Yet in that case he hath used due moderation, not studying to vex men, but onely to awaken and convince them. For he is very sensible that when we go about to displace any Opinion, and introduce another in its room, we usually*

lose

loſe our labour, if we either fail to propound our mind dexterouſly, or uſe not ſuch meekneſs as may ſhew we have a good will to thoſe from whom we differ. Where theſe are wanting, inſtead of inviting men to receive a Truth, we find they are commonly further alienated from it. Now he hath ſome confidence he is not much defective in the firſt, having taken care to expreſs his mind clearly and in plain words, and contrived his Diſcourſe into the form of a Dialogue, to make it more eaſily apprehended. As for the Later, he cannot but think that he hath done his duty, and teſtified his kindneſs every where, even to thoſe againſt whom thou mayeſt think him moſt ſevere. But if thou judgeſt otherwiſe, then he earneſtly beſeeches thee

to

to overlook it and pass it by, as an inconsiderate and hasty expression; and to weigh rather what Truth is here presented to thee, than in what manner it is delivered.

In short, If it had not been to fill up some vacant pages, he had made almost as short a Preface as those words of the Son of Sirach *(according to which he expects the success of his labour)* Ecclus. 21.15. If a skilful man hear a wise word, he will commend it, and add unto it: but as soon as one of no understanding heareth it, it displeaseth him, and he casteth it behind his back.

Examine all things, and judge righteous judgment.

*Octob.*20.1668.

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A Friendly Debate

BETWEEN

A *Conformist*, and a *Non-Conformist*.

Conf. GOod morrow, Neighbour: I am very glad to see you, and you are welcome home.

Non-Conf. I thank you kindly: But I do not understand your Salutation, not having been from home this twelvemoneth.

C. No? what's the reason then that we have not seen you at Church of late?

N. C. I believe you did not see me: but I assure you the Church never wants my company.

C. How can that be? Are you there, as the Angels are, after an invisible manner?

N. C. Pish! you do not apprehend me. Do you take your house of stone to be a Church?

C. Yes indeed do I: and (as I have been inform'd by them that know it) it is more properly called so, than your Assemblies. For the English word *Church*, Originally signifies an house of the Lord for Christians to worship in; as I have been told by your Minister.

N. C. Minister? he may be the *Kings* Minister, perhaps, but he is none of *Christ*'s.

C. My good neighbour, do not grow warm so soon; for you and I must have a great deal of Discourse together. Pray walk in here to my house.

N. C. Well, what have to say for your Minister?

C. This I say, that he is both the *Kings*'s Minister and *Christ*'s also: whereas I have reason to fear he whom you follow is neither.

N. C. Fare you well.

C. Nay, stay a little, and hear me out. How can he be the Minister of *Christ*, who is disobedient to his Sovereign, whom *Christ* bids him obey?

N. C. Disobedient? Yes, in those things which *Christ* hath forbidden him to do. And therein I hope you will be content he should *obey God rather than man.*

C. I knew this would be your answer. But, what if I prove that he is disobedient even there where *Christ* and his Laws are not at all concern'd?

N. C. You cannot do it.

C. Why, what Law of *Christ* is there that requires him to live in *London*, or at least within five miles of it?

N. C. None that I know.

C. But the Law of the Land forbids him to live in this place, or within such a distance. And

yet

yet notwithstanding he lives here in defiance of that Law (which you confess is not contrary to *Christ's*. And being here, he lives also in the breach of a great many other Laws.

N. C. That was a Tyrannical Law.

C. Very good. But it is not repugnant, you are convinced, to the Commands of *Christ*; and therefore he is not a good Subject, and consequently not a good Christian; much less such a person, as a Minister of *Christ* ought to be.

N. C. Would not you think it hard to be so abridg'd of your liberty?

C. Yes, without doubt. But, if we must never submit to such things, as we count harsh and rigorous, then farewel all the Doctrine of *Christ* concerning *taking up our cross*, and *suffering patiently, &c.* Which Doctrines, if you had studied, you would not have uttered such a word as implies the *King to be a Tyrant*.

N. C. Pray pardon me that rashness.

C. *I* do most readily, and hope you ask God pardon for this, and all other your rash words and actions. But that *I* may a little further convince you of that we were speaking of; *I* beseech you tell me, what Law of *Christ* is there that enjoyns him whom you follow to hold his Assemblies just then, when the publick Service of God, establish'd by Law, begins? Is not this sufficient to convince any unprejudiced man, that he is not content to enjoy his own way of worshipping God, but he would also destroy

ours? That is, not only to act contrary to a Law, but to endeavour to subvert what is enacted by it? Else, why might it not suffice him to begin when the publick Service is done;

N. *C.* For that I cannot tell what to say.

C. Then *I* can make an answer for you. Your Minister is afraid, lest any of you should go to Church, and like our Minister so well, that you should think there is no need of him.

N. *C.* Away, away! There is no danger of that. He so far excels yours, that if we should come to hear him, it would onely make us like our own the better.

C. Wherein (*I* pray you) doth this excellency consist?

N. *C.* O Sir, he is a very *powerful man*. Yours is a meer Dr. *Dulman* in compare with him.

C. What do you mean? that he hath a louder voice, that he is more vehement, and lays about him more than ours? Or what is it? If you take *him* to be powerful, who presses his Doctrine with strong and powerful reasons, such as we cannot gainsay or resist; *I* believe our Minister will prove the more powerful of the two.

N. *C.* *It* may be so. *I* have heard indeed that he is a man of Reason: but what is that to the *Demonstration of the Spirit, and of power*?

C. True: there is no compare between these. But hath your Minister that Demonstration

tion of the Spirit and of Power?

N. C. Yes sure, if ever any man had.

C. That's good news; for then we shall *see* that which before we only *believed*. Hath he the gifts of the Holy Ghost? Can he speak with Tongues, and Prophesie, and work Miracles, and tell us the thoughts of mens hearts?

N. C. What do you mean?

C. I mean that which the Apostle Saint *Paul* meant, who had this *Demonstration of the Sipirit, and of Power*; which he gave the world, to convince them that *Jesus* was risen from the dead, and was made Lord of all, whom they were therefore bound to obey.

N. C. But I mean something else.

C. Pray tell me what that is. Only let me desire you not to use words, without the sense belonging to them; and to intreat your Minister. that he would hereafter forbear to pray to God that he may speak in the *Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power*; for no body now can hope to do it.

N. C. I mean, that he is spiritually enlightned to *search the deep things of the Spirit of God, which the natural man cannot discern.*

C. I wonder at you, that you should not discern the Apostle there speaks of the Holy Ghost (*i.e.* the wonderful Gifts of it) in them, which assured them of those things that no meer natural Reason could prove. I doubt your Minister is not spiritually enlightned, because he doth

not instruct you better in the Scriptures.

N. *C.* Scriptures? He never says any thing but he quotes a place of Scripture for it. All his Sermons are nothing else: whereas yours are but Rational Discourses.

C. I remember I have heard a wise man say, that one may talk nothing but Scripture, and yet speak never a wise word. And I verily believe it; for it is not the Word of God when we mistake its sense, as you commonly do.

N. *C.* Doth yours do any better?

C. Yes: he seems to me to make it his business to let us into the meaning of the holy Book. And he backs his Reason, not with phrases snatch'd from thence, but with such places as manifestly speak the same sense that he doth.

N. *C.* I have heard him sometimes endeavour to open the Scripture, but methinks he doth not do it in a Spiritual way, but onely Rationally.

C. My good Neighbour, consider what you say. Do you think that these two words, *Spiritual* and *Rational* are opposed the one to the other? If they be, then *Spiritually* is as much as *Irrationally* and *absurdly*.

N. *C.* No, pardon me there. I do not think those two are opposite; but Carnal Reason is opposite to the Spirit.

C. To speak properly, you should say that Carnal Reason is opposite to Spiritual Reason:

That

That is, a Reason that is guided by Fleshly lusts is opposite to that which is guided by the Gospel of *Christ*.

N. C. *I* say, as *I* said before, it is opposite to the Spirit.

C. You must either mean as *I* do; or else that it is opposite to the Gospel, which is frequently called the *Spirit* in Scripture. But, pray tell me, how shall we understand the Gospel, by our Reason, or by something else?

N. C. By the Spirit.

C. What, must we have an immediate Revelation to make us understand its sense? or must we study and consider, and lay things together, and so come to know its meaning?

N. C. Yes, we must give our minds to it, and then the Spirit enlightens us.

C. That is, it guides us to reason, and discourse, and judge aright. *Is* not that it you mean?

N. C. No; *I* mean it shines into our minds with its light.

C. These are phrases which *I* would have you explain if you can. My Question is this, Doth the Spirit shew as any new thing, which is not the conclusion of the Reasonings and Discourses in our minds about the Sense of Scripture?

N. C. *I* cannot say it doth.

C. Then you confess that the Scripture is to to be interpreted in a Rational way; we not

having that which is truly to be called Spiritual in distinction from the other, *viz.* the immediate revelation of the Holy Ghost, which the Apostles had.

N.C. Still I cannot think that this is Spiritual.

C. That is, you are prejudiced : or else you phansie every thing that you do not understand to be Spiritual.

N.C. No, not so : but the manner of understanding the things of God, methinks, should be other than you conceive.

C. Truly, if you have any other manner of understanding besides this, and have not the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; I conclude you take the sudden (and many times pretty) suggestions of *I*magination to be *I*lluminations from above.

N.C. Now you have hit on something that *I* would have said : The Spirit doth often dart things into my mind.

C. How know you that ? Do you take every thing that comes into your head you know not how, to be an *I*rradiation from the Holy Ghost ?

N.C. No, *I* dare not say so.

C. Then you examine it, and consider whether it be rational and coherent, or no.

N.C. Yes.

C. Then you fall into our way whether you will or no. And whatsoever you think of us, we do not deny but God's good Spirit puts good

thoughts

thoughts oft-times in our minds, and represents things more clearly to us than we could make them by all our reasonings: which is as much as to say, that it lets us see the reasonableness and aptness of such a Sense (for instance) of the Divine Writings as we discerned not before.

N. C. Well, I am glad to hear you speak so much of the Spirit.

C. You might hear ten times as much, if you would but frequent our Assemblies. For there we are constantly taught, that the very ground and foundation of our Faith in *Jesus Christ* is the *Spirit*, *i. e.* the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven upon our Saviour and his Apostles.

N. C. You mix so much of Reason with what you say, that I am afraid you are not in the right.

C. You should rather conclude the contrary, and not believe any thing but what you have a good reason for.

N. *C.* Say you so? How then shall I believe that *Jesus Christ* is the Son of God? Can Reason tell me this?

C. I am sorry to see you so ill instructed. If you had continued to hear our Minister, he would have made you understand before this time, that though our reason could not find out that Truth, yet God hath given us the highest reason to believe it. And this I told you is the Spirit; the Spirit in *Christ* and in his Apostles.

N. *C.*

N. C. Pray explain your meaning, for I understand not these new Notions.

C. The Holy Ghost (*I* mean) descended on our Saviour at his Baptism, with a voice from Heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* This is one reason we have to believe on him. Then he wrought miracles by the power of this Spirit; and though he was killed, yet he was raised again from the dead by it; and after that he sent the Spirit upon his Apostles, who thereby *demonstrated* that he was *the Son of God with power.* Which are all reasons for my belief; and if you have any other I would gladly hear them, or know whether you believe without any Reason at all.

N. C. These are Spiritual Reasons.

C. I like your Language very well: only remember that these are the Divinest Reasons which cannot be resisted. For thus our mind argues with it self: That which God testified by voices from Heaven, and by a world of Miracles, is to be believed; that *Jesus* is his Son, he did in this manner testifie; therefore we are to believe that he is God's Son.

N. C. Who taught you to reason on this fashion?

C. Is this such a mighty business, that you wonder at? We are taught continually to give our selves these reasons, why we should believe: And methinks it is the most powerful preaching in the world. For, if I believe firmly that

that *Jesus* is the Son of God, is risen from the dead, and will come to judg the world; how can I chuse but obey him with great care and constancy?

N. C. You say true. But me thinks there is more Spiritual Preaching than this.

C. What should that be?

N. C. To preach the great Misteries of the Gospel.

C. *Is* not this the first great Mystery of Godliness, *God manifested in the flesh?* (1 *Tim.* 3.16.) and is not this the next, that he was *justified in*, or, *by the Spirit*; which we give as a proof that he was manifested in the flesh? Read the rest, and then come and hear our Minister, and you shall find them all unfolded one time or other in a plain and ample manner.

N. C. These methinks are no such great Mysteries.

C. No? sure you know not the meaning of the word *Mystery*, but live onely upon phrases. Was not this a Secret kept in the breast of God from ages and generations?

N. C. Yes.

C. Then it is a Mystery, and the chief and first of all. That God hath sent his Son into the World. As for the ends of his sending him; if those be they you call Mysteries, they are as much declared among us, as among you; and perhaps a great deal more.

N. C. What do you mean?

C. I mean, his dying for our Sins, and rising again for our Justication, and Intercession on our behalf at God's right hand. I dare say these are as well opened to us, as ever they have been to you.

N. C. I am glad to hear it; for I alwayes thought there was little but Legal Preaching among you.

C. You mean, we are taught to obey the Commands of *Christ*.

N. C. No: the Doctrine of *Good works* is always sounding from your Pulpits.

C. These are the same thing: for no other Works are taught us, but such as *Christ* injoyns. As for the Works of *Moses* his Law, we never hear of them, but only that they do no longer oblige us. If we did, I assure you we should call our Preachers Legal as much as you can do.

N. C. But I am afraid the insisting so much upon Good works, is Legal.

C. You should rather fear that the Preaching of them so little, leads men to Libertinism.

N. *C.* We are tender least the Grace of God should be impeached, by putting men so much upon Doing.

C. Then, it seems, you think it peculiar to the Spirit of the Law, to be very sollicitous about Doing well.

N. *C.* Yes.

C. Now I see you are in very gross darkness.

ness. For certainly both the Law and the Gospel put men upon doing; but not the same things, nor with the same dispositions.

N. C. Explain your self; for methinks you are in the dark.

C. The Gospel give us better rules of life, and gives us power to do according to them with a more willing and chearful mind, than the Law did.

N. *C.* Where then is grace all this while?

C. It was the Grace of God that gave us the Gospel; and it is his Grace that accepts of our repentance and obedience after we have offended him; which pardons also, and passes by our failings and imperfections, when we sincerely design and study to obey him in all things.

N. *C.* You do not think then that you can deserve any thing of him.

C. No: how should we, seeing we are his Creatures, and owe him all the Service we can do him? Which makes us believe, that if we had been born in innocence, and continued so till this time, we could have merited nothing; much less can we pretend to it, now that we are Sinners.

N. *C.* But you think Good works are necessary to our Justification.

C. Who ever doubted of it that understood himself?

N. *C.* That doth many a Godly Divine; whom *I* have heard say, that they are not requisite

quisite to our *Justification*, but only to our *Salvation*.

C. I am loath to say, that those Godly Divines did not mind what they said, because I ought in modesty to suspect my own Understanding, rather than theirs: But to me it seems a strange thing, that they should not observe *Salvation* to be nothing else but our final and absolute *justification* at the day of Judgment. And then I am sure our Saviour saith he will examine what men have done; and according as he finds it good or bad, pronounce the sentence of Absolution or Condemnation. Read the 25. of S. *Matthew*, from the 31. verse to the end.

N. C. What do you conclude from thence?

C. What? That if good works be necessary to our Justification then when we come before the Judge; they are necessary now to the beginning of our Justification, or (if you would have me speak other words) to enter us into the state of Justified persons.

N. C. How can that be, since we are justified by Faith only?

C. Very well. For it is not an idle ineffectual Faith which justifies us; but that which *works by love* to our Saviour: and love is the keeping of his Commandements.

N. C. I see one shall not want rational discourse at your Church (as you call it:) but methinks I nevr found that life and power in your Ministry which I have in ours.

C. I

C. I told you before, that I find nothing so powerful as the Christian Doctrine rationally handled. And if the Faith of *Christ* be not so preached as I now told you, for my part I feel no force in the loudest words that I hear; but am apt to say as the man did when he shear'd his Hogs, *Here is a great deal of noise, and little wool.*

N, C. My meaning was, That ours move my affections very much, and yours stir them not at all.

C. I have been taught, that there are two wayes to come at the Affections: One by the Senses and Imagination; and so we see people mightily affected with a Puppet-play, with a Beggar's tone, with a lamentable Look, or any thing of like nature. The other is, by the Reason and Judgment; when the evidence of any Truth convincing the Mind, engages the affections to its side, and makes them move according to its direction. Now, I believe your Affections are moved in the first way very often; by melting Tones, pretty Similitudes, riming Sentences, kind and loving Smiles, and sometimes dismally sad Looks; besides several Actions or Gestures which are very taking. And the truth is, you are like to be moved very seldom in our Churches by these means. For the better sort of Hearers are now out of love with these things: nor do they think there is any power either in a puling and whining, or in roaring and

and tearing voice. But if you can be moved by such strength of reason, as can conquer the Judgment, and so pass to demand submission from the Affection; you may find power enough (*I* think) in our Pulpits. And let me tell you, the Passions thus excited differ as much from the other, as the motions of a Man do from them of a Beast, if not more. For one may be affected, whether he will or no by Objects of Sense: but Reason convinces and moves us by sober consideration, and laying things seriously to heart. And *I* wish heartily you would examine whether the cause why you was no more affected with our preaching, was not this, That you took no pains with your self; *i. e.* you would not be a Man, but was contented to be moved in Religion like a meer Puppet, whose motions depend upon the power of other Agents, and not its own.

N.C. You need not have made so long a discourse in this business; for when you have said as much as you are able, *I* can answer all in a few words: Assuring you that I am moved with *the things* they say; for I think they are the most *soul-searching* Preachers in the world.

C. It is an hard matter to understand your Phrases. If you mean such Phreachers, whose Doctrine touches the Conscience, letting men see their duty and their sins plainly; I think none are to be preferr'd before ours.

N. C. Pray, Sir, consider what you say.

C. What

C. What I have said, I say again. And I must add, that I have cause to believe some of you have left our Congregation, because the good man's Doctrine searched into you too far, and came too near the quick.

N. C. I understand you not.

C. Have you never heard any man say, that he would come no more to Church, because his Minister ript up his sins of Disobedience to Governours, Faction, Rebellion, Reviling Superiours, rash Censuring and judging their actions, immodest and malapert Disputing with Spiritual Instructors, Meddling with other mens matter, Gadding from house to house, to hear or tell news, if not to talk against the Court and Church; with other such like things that are too common, but not commonly reproved?

N. C. Yes, I cannot deny it.

C. Then no doubt he search'd to the bottom of that man's heart; who finding himself wounded, instead of seeking for a Cure, kick'd at him that shot the arrow, and flung dirt in his face; calling him Railer and Reviler, when he only told him the plain truth.

N. C. You are angry.

C. No truely, I am only desirous you should understand things nakedly, as they are in themselves.

N. C. Do you think that our Ministers do not inform their Auditors of the danger of these sins?

C. If they did, I believe they would have fewer come to hear them.

N. C. You are uncharitable.

C. No such matter. I know many of those that flock to them are not able to bear such Doctrine. But they call those plain and searching Preachers, that rip up other mens faults, and that discover to them some kind of sins, which they have heard the Godly most bewail and complain of: for instance, Deadness of heart in duty, Spiritual pride, and unprofitableness under Ordinances, though so powerfully administred.

N. C. Well: and are not these home-truths?

C. But I doubt many of those you call Godly are troubled with other diseases, which had need be look'd narrowly after. And besides, methinks your Ministers do too plainly commend themselves, when they tell you what powerful Ordinances you live under, and how you are fed with a feast of Fat things; whilst other poor Souls are even starv'd in other Congregations; meaning such as ours.

N. C. You might as well say that they commend us, when they caution us so much against Spiritual pride.

C. You are in the right. It doth too palpably suppose you to be endowed with great gifts; and so is apt to put you into a high conceit of your selves, notwithstanding all their caution against

against it. And therefore my opinion is, that they had better teach you all your duty; and then finding how short you are of Perfection, that will be a more effectual means to keep you humble, than all their Declamations against Spiritual Pride.

N. They do tell us our duty. And I assure you some preach even against those sins which you say we do not love to hear of.

C. I'l take your word for it. But they are rare men, and they do it rarely. I could tell you also of one, that doing thus, was forbid by his Auditors to proceed, if he intended to have their company.

N. C. Methinks you should not suspect any of them to be guilty of negligence in these matters: Do you not take them for conscientious and good men?

C. Yes truly, I think there are many good men amongst them. But, to deal plainly with you, I look upon most of them as very imperfect and in a lower form of goodness.

N. C. Strange! What reason have you for this?

C. They do not govern their Passions, nor reverence their Governours nor Elders, nor fear to make a Schism in the Church; being furiously bent to follow their own fancies, impatient of Contradiction, conceited of their own Gifts, too ready to comply with the Peoples follies, and to humor them with new and affected phra-

ſes; nay, to gratifie their rudeneſs with moſt unſavoury, clowniſh and undecent expreſſions, not only in their preaching, but in their Prayers. And eſpecially they ſeem to me to have little and narrow ſpirits, wanting that great Charity which our Saviour commends, and confining Godlineſs to a ſmal Sect and Party.

N.C. O Sir, how much are you out of the way! If they were not the beſt men in the world, they could never come ſo cloſe to us in their *Preaching*, and ſearch the very Heart, as we find they do.

C. Now that you repeat this again, you force me to tel you that, which otherwiſe *I* would have concealed.

N.C. What's that.

C. That if we may judge of the Sermons you hear by thoſe we ſee in print; *I* think many of them are ſo far from ſearching into the Conſcience, that they rather dally and play with mens childiſh phanſies.

N. C. Are you in good earneſt?

C. Why ſhould you make a doubt of it? You know *I* do not uſe to jeſt.

N C. *I* do not believe you can give me one inſtance of any ſuch thing.

C. Yes but *I* can, and more than one. What do you think of the Doctrine of *Repentance*? Is there any thing deſerves to be more gravely handled? or can one ever expect to be pierc'd & wounded by that *Preacher*, who treating of that argument doth

doth not touch the Soul in a lively manner?

N. *C.* I acknowledge it is a most weighty Doctrine: but what then?

C. I'll tell you, I never met with any Treatise (in so serious a subject) more light and toying, than a Book which came lately out of the *Press*, called *The Doctrine of Repentance, useful for these times*, by *T. W.*

N. *C.* You are prejudiced.

C. I doubt *you* are; and yet I believe I shall make you of my mind. Look you; here is the book, which one lent me. What think you of the very beginning of the Epistle to the Reader? *Faith and Repentance are the two wings by which we fly to Heaven.* Doth not this look like a School-boyes phrase, which he applies to every Subject? For at another time *T. W.* would tell you, *That Prayer and Meditation are the two wings whereby we fly to Heaven.* Now as for Repentance, he tells you presently it is a *Purgative*, and bids you *not fear the working of this Pill. That moist tears dry up the rheums of sin, and quench the wrath of God.*

N. *C.* Let the *Epistle* alone, and go into the body of the Book: there you will find it more powerful.

C. Truly I have not read it over; but I opened it in several places, and I met only with a jingle there, where I expected a clap of thunder.

N. C. That's because you had not a fancy to it.

C. I assure you I brought an indifferent mind to it, being glad if good things be said by any body. But I could not but be disgusted when I read this, *page* 16. *That holy Sorrow is the Rhulark to purge out the ill humours of the Soul*, &c.

N. C. You take little bitts, and mind not his continued discourse.

C. Read then what he saith of an Hypocrite, *pag.* 89. 90. and you will think you are reading one of *Blunt's Characters*, if you ever saw that Book. I expected to have found him cut up and anatomiz'd; whereas in truth he doth but stroke him, and play with him. For thus he says; *The Hypocrite is a Saint in jest; he makes a majesticck shew, like an Ape cloathed in Ermine or Purple. The Hypocrite is like an House with a beautiful Frontispiece, but every Room within is dark: he is a rotten Post fairly gilded. Under his mask of Profession he hides his Plague-sores. The Hypocrite is against painting of Faces, but he paints Holiness: he is seemingly good, that he may be really bad. In* Samuel's *Mantle he plays the Devil; therefore the same word in the Original signifies* to use Hypocrisie, *and* to be prophane. But at this present we will let the rest alone, and only observe how he concludes what he says of him: *Hypocrites are far gone with the Rot, and if any thing will cure them, it must be feeding upon the salt Morshes of Repentance.*

N. C. Why do you look me so in the face?

C. To

C. To see if you did not smile: as sure you would do, were you not angry with me for laying open this Childishness. Nay, do not frown. I appeal to your Conscience, whether you feel any more force in such words as these, than in a Feather, blown with a great blast against your face, or in a Straw trust with a strong arm against your Breast.

N. C. I cannot commend them; but you ought not to examine Books (writ with a good intention) so severely.

C. I am far from that humor, and have only exercised a little of that liberty which he gives us in the second page of his Epistle; where he tells us, *He thought to have smothered these Meditations in his Desk, but conceiving them of great concern at this time, he rescinded that first resolution, and exposed them to a critical view.* Now if I had a mind to play the Critick, as simple as you think me, I could shew you that he ought to have exposed them only to the view of his very good Friends, and not to Criticks.

N. C. That was only a careless word.

C. Being one of his friends, I am willing to believe so; else I should have thought it an affectation of a fine expression.

N. C. I wish you had never seen the Book.

C. So do I wish too, provided no body else had seen it. But pray be not troubled, nor interpret this as any disrespect to him; for I should not have given notice of any of these things to

you, but that you would needs make Comparisons, which are alwayes odious. And you may make a good use of this freedom which I take: for I perswade my self, if you would but compare some of our Books, which you despise, with this now mention'd, you would find there is as much difference between the jingling and rimeing of this and their solid sense, as between the noise of a Jews-trump, or Bag-pipe, and the grave sound of an Organ.

N. *C.* But have not your men that quibble, and hunt after little Sentences and fine Words, like him whom you condemn?

C. I had no intention to deny that; but only to shew that there is trifling every where. And therfore that you ought not to be so partially affected to all your own, and so unequal to all ours.

N. *C.* What's one to so many, as are among you, whose Books also are licensed to pass the Press?

C. To answer the last in the first place: I can tell you upon my own knowledge, that such simple Books have been rejected: and if any of them have chanced to pass, you shall seldom find the Preface of some other grave Divine, much less of three or four Divines of note, set before in commendation of it.

N. *C.* Why? no more hath that, you have been speaking of.

C. True; but no doubt he might have had those Ornaments, if he had pleased: For I have seen many pitiful Books that have had great Com-

Commendations prefixed. And as the Dunghil-cocks have the largest Combs; so commonly the meanest Books are set off with the largest Praises.

N. C. I perceive you still persist in your confidence, that you know more Books of this nature.

C. Yes: But I do not delight to muster up all the folly that is in Print; and therefore shall only take notice of one Book more, writ in another way; and (if you please) try whether it deserve the Commendation which the Preface bestows upon it.

N. C. What Book is that?

C. It is called *Christ and the Covenant, &c. in ten Sermons*, by *W. B.* which pretends to be full of Mysteries; and, as we are told in the Epistle to the Reader, gives us the very marrow and quintessence of the Gospel. Upon which account he exhorts us to buy it, and makes us believe it is worth any money.

N. C. And you bought it.

C. No, I did not think it worth any thing, when I had once perused a little of it.

N. C. What part did you peruse?

C. I thought that the Marrow I was told of might be found (if any where) in that Discourse which he calls the *Way and Spirit of the New Testament*. But as far as I examin'd it, I met with nothing but a great many bones to pick, and they had little or nothing on them.

N. C. Pray forbear this merriment; and let

us

us seriously consider what he saith.

C. That's my desire. And for your satisfaction read that part where he tells us what the way of the Old Testament was, and what the way of the New is. I believe I shall convince you, that he is not only out of the true way, but also describes his own way after a poor and wretched manner.

N. C. Be not so earnest.

C. He tells us in the first place, *That the Old Testament Legal spirit serves God upon the account of Rewards mostly, or chiefly, or only* : But the New Testament spirit doth not. Whereas there is nothing plainer, than that Rewards are propounded in both Covenants to encourage our duty. And the Gospel urges us so frequently with the consideration of the rewards it promises, that I question not but he that hath them always in his mind, and serves our Lord *Christ* out of those hopes, as his chief motive, pleases him very well. For the true difference between the Covenants is not, that the one sets rewards before men, and the other not; but, that the old Covenant made with the *Jews* propounded Temporal Rewards, and the Gospel propounds Eternal; which are as often repeated in the Gospel as the other in the Law. And therefore he hath discovered a New-nothing, when he saith, *that to serve God for Rewards mostly*, &c. *is plainly Legal.* Nay, it is absolutely false. For if a man be moved (as I said) only by hopes of unseen things in another

ther world to obey God, and quit things present for his sake; no doubt he serves him in an Evangelical manner.

N. C. Good Neighbour, be not so confident.

C. Why should I not have some degree of confidence about these things, seeing I am master of common Reason, and I have consulted also with several of our Ministers about them, who have made it plain to me, that the Gospel propounds Eternal Rewards in the Life to come, as the great motive to well-doing? The most that any sober man ever said (as far as I can learn) in this argument is, that he who doth well only in sight of those rewards is in a weak estate; but they always allowed him to be indued with an Evangelical Spirit.

N. C. Then it seems you *live upon your own purse, and upon what you can earn of God*; which he tells you is contrary to a Gospel spirit.

C. It is so. But that is an impertinent Conclusion from his former discourse. For a man may serve God upon the account of Reward, and yet not be so foolish as to imagine he can earn any thing of him.

N. C. Indeed you speak too confidently.

C. I am not of that mind. For I may judge what is consequently spoken as well as another man. And I am sure that Conclusion is nothing to the purpose: only he imagin'd this to be a pretty saying, *That a man of a Gospel spirit knows he lives*

lives upon a better purse, than all his own earnings can amount unto.

N. *C.* I wish you would be more temperate.

C. Who can endure to see men bear up themselves so highly, and hear them cry'd up, as if they were full of the Spirit, when as there is scarce common sense in them, and not be a little concern'd?

N. *C.* Well, suppose there be one flaw in that Discourse, must that make all this ado?

C. One flaw? Read the rest, and you will find that it is no wiser. For he would have us immediately after to receive this as another note of a Legal spirit, that it is a *fearing spirit*, put on rather by the Threatnings, than the *P*romises; and the Gospel spirit rather by *P*romises than Threatning.

N. *C.* And is not this true?

C. No. For our Saviour bids his Disciples again and again to *fear*; (*Luke* 12. 4,5.) not indeed such things as the *Mosaical* spirit did, Temporal Calamities upon their Bodies, Goods, &c. but Eternal Miseries, which they should avoid, though with the enduring of all the hardships in the world. And whereas he says, that *the difference between the Dispensations is, that the one is terrible, the other comfortable*; it is manifestly false. For the Gospel speaks a great deal more terribly, than the Law doth, to Hypocrites and Unbelievers.

N. *C.*

N. C. Therefore he tells you afterward, that *a gracious Soul may be full of fears about its condition.*

C. This is nothing to his business. For he was not speaking concerning the fears, which a Soul hath about its estate; but of the Principle upon which a man doth his duty. And, if I understand any thing, a Christian is moved by *fear*, as well as *hope*.

N. C. Well, he acknowledges so much when he saith a gracious heart may be full of fears.

C. I tell you again this is impertinent; for these are not motives to his Duty, but rather hindrances and impediments, as he will tell you. And besides, he makes them to be causeless fears; for, he saith, they are the fears of *a man that stands upon a rock*; and therefore he ought not to be troubled with them. Whereas the Scripture requires us to *fear*, (*Hebr.* 4. 1.) (and tells us there is cause for it) *lest a Promise being left us of entring into rest, any of us should seem to come short of it: and to work out our salvation with fear and trembling*: and, *to have grace to serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear*. Mind this last place, and tell me if it do not directly oppose what he saith. He perswades you that a fearing spirit is a Legal spirit; and the Apostle tells you, it is an effect of the Gospel grace, and such a thing whereby we *acceptably* serve God.

N. C.

N. C. You have studied this, I perceive: and I have not. But what say you to the *third*, which is this, *A Legal spirit measures the love of God by outward things.*

C. I say it is the best thing he says; and he was to blame, that he passed it over so slightly and hastily, as if it were not worth his notice.

N. C. Is not the *fourth* as remarkable, viz. *That an Old Testament Spirit trades much, or most, or altogether, with conditional Promises*; the other not?

C. It is indeed very remarkable: *First*, for the paltry phrase of *trading in promises*; and *Secondly*, for the pernicious consequence of the Doctrine.

N. C. Why? Is not the Doctrine true?

C. No. For though there was an absolute Promise of sending *Christ*, yet there are no absolute Promises which *Christ* makes to us.

N. C. He seems to grant as much.

C. That is, he contradicts himself.

N. C. No; he saith, *though the Promise be Conditional; yet the Lord hath promised that Condition elsewhere, and that without a Condition.*

C. Then it is not Conditional; for what is without a Condition is absolute.

N. C. You would make him speak Nonsense.

C. Do you try at leisure if you can make good Sense of his words, which methinks are not much bet-

better, than if he had said, The Promises are Conditional, but without any Condition.

N. C. Phy, Sir! they are thus to be taken: The Promise is upon a Condition; onely that Condition is promised without a Condition.

C. Now you have mended the matter finely; and made it plain, that he thinks all the Promises are absolute. Which how well it agrees with their being Conditional, I pray tell me, when you have thought of it, at our next meeting.

N. C. Do not you grant then that God promises the Condition (upon performance of which we shall enjoy the Promise) without a Condition?

C. No indeed; for it is certainly false. He promises (for instance) Eternal life if we repent and effectually believe, and not otherwise. Repentance therefore and Faith are the Conditions of that Promise. And I affirm that God nowhere promises that any of us (do we what we will) shall repent and believe. But he requires us to consider and lay to heart what is spoken to us by his Son *Jesus*; which is as much as to say, that upon this Condition he will work Repentance and Faith in us.

N. C. He doth so. *But though the Promise runs conditionally, yet* he tells us, *it shall be fulfilled absolutely.*

C. You mean, *W. B.* tells us so; and therein confesses he did not speak truly before, when he said the Promise was without a Condition; for

now

now he acknowledges that it runs conditionally. And to say it shall be fulfilled absolutely, is to say, that it seems to be Conditional, but is not.

N. C. Well; methinks there is much of Mystery in what he delivers.

C. That is, you do not understand it, but it sounds prettily, and so you like it. And so I believe you do the next, (for the same reason) wherein he tells you, that *in the Old Testament they came to* Christ *by the Promise, but now we come to the Promise by* Christ.

N. C. I like it because it seems to carry a great mystery in it.

C. It may seem so, but it doth not.

N. C. No? what do you make of it?

C. I think it rather carries a plain falsity in it. For we come to *Christ* by the Promise as well as they; and they went to the Promise by *Christ*, as well as we.

N. C. I know not what you mean.

C. That's because you know not what he means. But if you will understand me, thus it is. There was a Promise that God would send *Christ* into the world; and the fulfilling of this Promise is one great reason why we believe in *Jesus*; and so we are led (you see) to him by the Promise. On the other side, there were Promises of great things that *Christ* would do for those that believed on him; and those then that did believe the *Messiah* would come, hoped for

the

the enjoyment of these Promises by his means; and so (if *I* may speak in his phrase) they went first to *Christ*, and then to the *Promise*,

N. C, I do not well apprehend you; and therfore thinks it's time to lay aside this Book.

C. You do discreetly? For if you had continued your discourse about it, I should have discovered a world of Follies to you.

N. C. The things of God are Foolishness to the natural man.

C. These are not the *things of God*, nor the *things of a man* neither; but childish Fancies, or as we commonly speak, *New-nothings*.

N. C. I know they appear so to the natural man.

N. I do not judge according to meer Nature but by the direction of the Spirit which instructed the Apostles; and therefore you apply that Scripture foolishly to me.

N. C. You use your reason too much.

C. You have some reason to say so, for if I had used it less, things had not appeared so ridiculous.

N. C. By that time your *heart hath lain so long a-soke in the blood of* Jesus *as his* hath done, we shall hear other language from you.

C. You are taken, I perceive, with that new phrase in the Epistle to the Reader, and only because it is new: else it would seem very irreverent, being taken from a Toast in a Pot of Ale, or a *Sop* in a Dripping-pan; a great deal

more fit for a Preface before a Book of one of those you call *Old Sokers*, then of such a Reverend Author.

N. C. You are merry, Sir.

C. Truly, I do not make my self merry with any mens Sins: but at their little foolish Affectations, how can one chuse but smile? But could he not as well have said, that he had a long time thought of the efficacy and virtue of the Bloud of *Christ*; or, that he was much acquainted with the Love of *Christ* in dying for us? Why to say that he had *lain long a soke* in his blood, is as absurd as if he had told us that he had *lain long broaking himself* in the Beams of the Sun of Righteousness; or roasting himself before the Fire of the Divine Love.

N. C. Pray, Neighbour, forbear these expressions.

C. I was only going to shew you that we have as good a faculty, as you to coyn new Words & Phrases, if we would take the liberty. But I will forbear, if you will but be content upon this occasion to look back with me, and consider how all the Nation comes to be overrun with folly.

N. C. How, I pray you?

C. As soon as you had cast out of doors all that was Old among us; if any Fellow did but light upon some new & pretty Fancy in Religion, or some odd unusual Expression, or perhaps some swelling words of Vanity; presently he

he set up for a Preacher, and cry'd up himself for a man that had made some new discovery. And such was the confidence of these men, both in inventing strange Language, and proclaiming their great Discoveries every where, that the poor people were perswaded, the Nation never knew what Communion with God meant till this time. Now they thought the happy days were come, when the Spirit was powered out, the Mysteries of the Gospel unfolded, Free grace held forth, the Anointings and Sealings of the *Spirit* vouchsafed, *Christ* advanced to his Throne; and when they should have such Incomes, in dwellings, and I know not how many other fine things, as never was the like heard of before. For one man comes and tells them of the *streamings of* Christ's *Blood freely* to sinnners: another bids them *put themselves upon the stream of Free grace*, without having any foot on their own bottome: A third tells them how they must *apply Promises*, absolute Promises. A fourth tells them there is a special Mystery in looking at the *Testamentalness of* Christs *Sufferings*. And because he found that every body had got into their mouths *Gospel Truths, hidden Treasures*, and such like words; he presented them with *Sipps of Sweetness*, and told them he was come to shew them how the *Saints might pry into the Father's Glory*; and in short, bid them not be afraid of *New Lights*, but *set open their windows for any Light that God should make known to them.*

N. C. Sure, no body uſed ſuch Expreſſions as theſe.

C. This laſt is to be found in that very Authour you have laid out of your hands, *pag.* 47. who alſo puts the people into a fancy, that they have *Revelation and Viſions in theſe dayes.*

N. C. Certainly you do him wrong.

C. You ſhall be judg of that, when you have read the beginning of the next page. There he tells you that there are four times wherein you ſhould think much on *Chriſt* crucified. And the firſt is this, *Incaſe of ſome Revelation or Viſion that you may be under.* Which he repeats again in the following page. *It is a good thing*, ſaith he, *to think of* Chriſt *crucified at all times, but when you have Revelations and Viſions*, &c. *then it is a good time.* From whence I conclude, that as he bids you *open your windows for new Lights to come in*, ſo, when he thinks on't, he will call upon you, as the Beadle doth in the Streets, *Hang out your Lights, Hang out your new Lights.*

N. C. Pray be not ſo abuſive.

C. There is no abuſe at all in this. For the ſame reaſon that made him ſtep at firſt out of the common way of ſpeaking, may make him uſe ſuch an expreſſion as this, if he light on it. It being alſo a thing peculiar to ſuch men to pleaſe the people with ſome new-found Words and Phraſes; which if they ſhould lay aſide, together with all their abuſed Scripture-expreſſion, they

they would look just like other men, only not so well.

N. C. You may say your pleasure.

C. I thank you. And pray look back again, and consider what followed all these *glorious Discoveries*, as they called them. Since the people were so much in love with new-minted Words, in which they thought there were great Mysteries concealed; those men who would excell all the rest of these new Teachers set forth themselves in more pompous Language, and made a shew of a more glorious Appearance of God in them. For they told the people of being *Godded with God, and Christed with Christ*, &c. which strangely amused silly Souls, and made them gaze and stare, as if the Holy Ghost were come down again from Heaven upon men.

N. C. Our Ministers are not of this strain.

C. But they first began this affectation of new phrases; and no wonder if their Scholars endeavoured to out-do them.

N. C. They are none of their Scholars.

C. Sure they all came out of their School. For they taught men first to despise sober and plain Doctrine, which teaches them their Duty toward God and their Neighbour, entertaining them with finer Speculations of pretended Gospel-Mysteries and Manifestations; with which

we heard almoſt every Sermon ſtuffed : ſo that he was thought no body that had not good ſtore of them. Now as thoſe you admire found they could win no great number of Proſelytes, unleſs they left the old track of Preaching Sobriety, Juſtice, Charity, and Godlineſs : ſo their Scholars found in a little time that the new Notions and Language of their Maſters were grown ſtale ; and that unleſs they invented newer, at leaſt coined ſome other Phraſes, their Reputation would be but ſmall. And thus it came to paſs, that every one, ſtriving not ſo much to ſpeak what would profit, as what would pleaſe, dreſſed up Religion in affected Language of his own making ; and new Expreſſions, if not new Notions, were heaped one upon another every year; till none knew what Chriſtianity was. For at laſt there aroſe a Company of fine Youths, who judged even their Maſters to be in a low and dull Form of Religion, *ſticking in the beggerly Elements*, and *the dead letter*, and *the Old-Teſtament ſpirit*, as their manner of ſpeaking was. Theſe imagine that not only we, but you, know *Jeſus* only in the *Fleſh*, and ſtand in the *outward Court*, and are not yet come within the *Veil* to diſcern the *Spirit* and the *Myſtery*, which they alone bring to light. Such a progreſs doth Fancy make, when once it is let looſe, and men are taught not to *reaſon*, but to *believe*, there is no end of its Follies ; and God only knows when this Nation, which is overflowed with

with them,and is made fond of them,will be reduced to a more sober mind.

N. C. We bewail it as well as you.

C. I am glad of it. But I wish you would bewail the *Original sin of all* (as *W. B.* advises you in another case, I doubt with no good meaning,*pag.*473.)which will be found in your selves; from whence a great number of other Mischiefs have flowed, and made the same progress with that now named. For you first taught the people to forbear all expression of Devotion when they came into the Church,and decried the reverence of uncovering the Head there as Superstitious and abominable. And so they soon took the liberty to come talking into the Church, and not onely to walk with their Hats on to their Seats (even when the Minister was reading the Holy Scriptures)but keep them half on when he was at Prayer. And then,because others were wont to kneel, or at least Stand,in that holy Duty;they would shew their Liberty , or their Opposition (I know not whether) in Sitting, nay in Lolling after a lazy fashion, as if the Minister were telling a sleepy Tale, not praying to our Creatour. *In* short,there were no bounds could be set to their Extravagancies; but they found out as many new Gestures,and odd phrantick Expressions,in their Prayers, as before they had done in their Preaching.

N. C. For all this you shall never make me

believe but that they are the onely *Spiritual Preachers*.

C. This you told me before; and *I* am of your mind, if you call that Spiritual Doctrine which is airy, thin, and so refined that no body can feel and touch it, no not with his most serious thoughts.

N. C. Yes, *I* can feel it to be very Spiritual?

C. It is an hard matter to understand your Language. Do all our *Preachers* onely tell us *carnal* things?

N. C. That is not my meaning.

C. What then?

N. *C.* *I* call it *Spiritual*, to distinguish it from *Moral* Teaching.

C. As much as to say, our Ministers teach men their Duty, and yours do not: or else, that yours teach them onely such Duties as may be done in their Spirits between God and themselves, but not such as are expressed in Life and Manners, in our bodily actions, which tend to the good of our Neighbours, and the Happiness of the world.

N. C. *I* understand you not.

C. Your Sermons are chiefly about prayer, and meditation, and Communion with God, and Believing, ——

N. C. Yes, Believing: Now you have hit my meaning.

C. But I was going to add something to that word,

word, *viz. Believing*, *without Doing*. Else you will not count it spiritual Preaching.

N. C. Not if they should insist much upon *Doing*. For there are more *Spiritual matters* for Believers to be instructed in.

C. That is, things revealed to us by the *Spirit* sent down upon the Apostles.

N. C. I know not what to say to your explication; for I never heard it before. But pray proceed.

C. I know no spiritual things but those which concern the glory of our Saviour in the heavens, his power at Gods right hand, his Intercession there for us, his coming again to Judgment, and such like; which are proved to be true; not by humane Reason, but by the Spirit descending from heaven on the Apostles.

N. C. Well, and are not these great things?

C. And do not our Ministers treat of them as well as yours?

N. *C.* But none in a *spiritual way*. Ours treat of *spiritual* things *spiritually*.

C. I guess what you mean. They treat of these things in such a manner, as not to bring them down to meddle with our Lives, or not much and chiefly, as *W. B.* speaks. Or thus, they draw matter of Comfort from them, but little or nothing of Duty.

N. C. I know not how to express it. But I alway find that they handle these things in a sweeter manner than other men.

C. I

C. I believe you. For nothing is so sweet and pleasing to flesh and bloud, as for a man to hear how much a great *Prince* is in love with him, and how freely he loves him; how his heart beats in Heaven toward him; and especially how careful and compassionate he is toward him in a persecuted condition.

N. C. And is not this very spiritual Doctrine?

C. Yes. But setting aside all fancy; nothing is more solidly open'd by our Divines, than the power of our Saviour, and his great love toward his faithful and obedient Disciples.

N. C. You must needs still bring in *Obedience.*

C. I have been taught to do so. For this great Lord always *loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: and therefore God hath anointed him with the oyl of gladness above his fellows*; *i. e.* given him such a Royal *Power* in the Heavens, (*Hebr.* 1. 9.) Unto which glory we cannot be promoted but by the same way of Righteousness. And let me tell you, *I* think *I* have heard it clearly demonstrated, that though there is infinite comfort and satisfaction in believing that our Lord *Jesus* is so exaled, and hath made us such promises, which he is able to make good; yet all this is but to incourage our Obedience, and to make us constant and firm in the Christian Religion, notwithstanding all the Difficulties and Troubles we meet with all for *Christ*'s sake. So that

that in truth these are the most *spiritual Preachers*, that is, the best Interpreters of the mind of the Spirit, who urge and presse men, from the consideration of what God hath revealed to us in these matters, to be *stedfast and unmoveable, and abundant in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

N. C. Doth not *Christ* himself say that the *Work of God is Believing? (John 6. 29.)*

C. Yes, but not such a believing as yours, which is only a relying on *Christ* for the forgiveness of your Sins.

N. *C.* What was it then?

C. An effectual perswasion that God hath sent *Jesus* into the world, as he there tells you, *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* And if you can think he means a bare perswasion of this, that God sent him, without the effects and fruits of it, which is the becoming his Disciples sincere profession of his Religion, and living according to it; then the Devil may be a good Believer, a very Spiritual person and great Saint, for he very early acknowledged Him to be the Son of God. And we read that *the Devils believe and tremble.*

N. *C.* Alas! this is a poor Faith, which cannot apply the *Promise.*

C. That's because it is not made to them. For if it were, and they had but a good fancy, they might

might apply it (in your way) as well as any body else, and yet remain Devils still.

N. *C.* Now you go beyond all the bounds of Reason.

C. Because I follow you, whose Doctrine leads to this.

N. *C.* How doth that appear?

C. I cast my eye casually upon one place in the Book newly nam'd, and there I found this Mystery; *That though there is a Condition in the new Covenant, yet no Condition to be perform'd by us, but by* Christ *our second* Adam: *pag.* 69. And though he confesses something must be performed by us, yet he saith, it is all promised to us, and that without Condition. And therefore a little after he makes this a mark of those that are in Covenant, *to be begot again by a Promise, especially the absolute Promise: pag.* 72. Now since no Condition is to be performed by us, why should any person take any care about it? or why should any one trouble himself about doing that, which is already done for him, or, if it be not done, is promised that it shall be done? especially since his great work is (as you say) only to close with the promise, to lay hold upon the absolute promise? For no body being named particularly in the promise, nor any qualification supposed in any man whereby he may know that he is capable of the Blessing rather than another; no reason can be given why all should not apply it to themselves, though never so bad; nay, why they

they ought not to apply it.

N. C. No, that is too great a boldness; they must be humbled and cast down———

C. Then it seems they ought to feel some Qualification in themselves, which incourages them to lay hold on the Promise. Though, if it be absolute, it's more than needs, nay, than is good: for they ought to have no respect to any of those things, but only the Freeness of the *Promise*. And then I pray why might not a Devil remain so still?

N. C. But such as are within the Covenant will find themselvs wrought upon to forsake their sins, &c.

C. Grant that. Yet if they do, it is no Incouragement to them, according to your Doctrine; and therfore if they doe not, it ought to be no Discouragement. For they ought not to take any confidence to go to God because anything they find in themselvs; and therefore they may be confident, though they find nothing in themsevles but only a strong fancy that the Promise belongs to their Persons.

N. C. Though they cannot take any confidence becaufe theyare so disposed toward God yet they must be well disposed.

C. Why so?

C. Will he have it so in order to give them Confidence to hope in his Mercy that their sins shall be forgiven?

N. C.

N. C. No; the promise of that is absolute.

C. Then one man may be as confident that hath not those Dispositions as he that hath, believing that it is God's will he shall have them when he pleases.

N. C. I see you understand nothing of the Covenant of Grace.

C. Yes, I understand that it was the riches of God's Grace, to make a Covenant of saving those *Sinners* who would obediently believe on his Son. For this was more than he was bound to grant; and this Believing and Obedience can deserve nothing of him (it being a Duty to believe what he reveals, & to do what he enjoyns;) and besides, he gives us the means of Faith, and Helps to well-doing,

N. C. How can it be Free, if we do any thing for it?

C. I have told you, that we cannot do any thing for to deserve it: and what we do he inables us to perform it And therefore it is free; because when we have done all, yet he is no way tied to give us any thing, but only upon the account of his own most gracious Promise.

N. C. You grant then his Promise is from meer Grace.

C No body doubts of it that *I* know of. But this Grace is not so fond as to make the Promise to any one that is confident it belongs to him, even whilst he remains in a state of *Sin* Such a Favour

Favour God had to Sinners, as freely, and without any disposition in them, to send his Son and his Holy Spirit: but unless they become like to his Son, they are taught by him not to presume he will give all the Blessings the Gospel promises; for they are made only to the faithful.

N. C. God will make them so.

C. But according to your Opinions, that is a thing which they need not consider when they apply the Promises of Salvation to themselves. For you say, they must have respect to absolute promises; which you know have nothing to do with any Qualification for this Favour. In pursuance of which Doctrines you perswade your selves that Assurance of God's Love is not to be grounded upon any Grace wrought in us; but only upon the Testimony of the Spirit, perswading us that our Persons are beloved, and that the Promises are made to us.

N. C. This is *Antinomianism.*

C. May be so; and your Ministers may be *Antinomians*, and yet not know it.

N. *C.* Call them what you please, I am resolved to follow them: for I think you will allow them to be the most *experimental preachers*, in the world.

C. Stil you pester me with Phrases which I doubt you understand no more than I.

N. *C.* Is not the word plain enough?

C. It is, if you mean by an *experimental Preacher* a man that hath tried himself those ways which

which he earneſtly beſeeches others to walk in: but then it will not ſerve your purpoſe; for you cannot deny but we have men that lead as ſtrict and holy lives as any of yours can do.

N. C. I mean, one that preaches his own Experiences in the ways of God,

C. You do not well know what you mean. For this is either the ſame that I now told you; or elſe, it may ſignifie no more than one that preaches his own Fancie.

N. C. Now it is hard to know what you mean.

C. I mean that tells you ſtories of God's *Withdrawings* and *Deſertings*; and again, of his *Shinings in* and *Sealings*, &c,

N. C. And do you call theſe Fancies?

C. Commonly they are no more. For I obſerve well, meaning people fall into theſe melancholick & deſpairing Fits. & are recovered again into greater Chearfulneſs and Aſſurance, without any reaſon at all; but only by a fanciful application of ſome *Scripture* or other, which belongs not at all to their condition: and yet caſts them down, or raiſes them up.

N. C. You are miſtaken; they have Reaſon.

C. If there be any that can be thought a ſufficient ground, of God's withdrawing himſelf, ſure it muſt be ſome provoking Sin which they have committed. And yet *I* ſee that they who cannot charge themſelvs with any voluntary

tary act of Sin, nor with any such Omission neither, fall into these fancies (so I must still call them) of being forsaken by God. All the occasion that ever I could find for such black thoughts is, but some such thing as this, that they have not such Inlargments as they were wont; or cannot go to Duty with that delight which formerly they took in it: which your Ministers ought to teach them, are no Reasons, but only melancholick Conceits. And if these be the things you call *Experiences*, there are none of us but understand them, as well as you, finding the same Dulness and Heaviness in our selves. Only we are taught not to talk or complain of it, but to do our duty notwithstanding as well as we are able, and we shall find it will not last alway.

N. C. You make too light of these things.

C. I hope not. But you lay too great weight upon them, and make these such Marks of a Gracious Soul, that it helps to put good (but weak) people into these Humors; and, I doubt, makes them lay hold on all occasions to fancy themselves deserted.

N. C. Pray speak no more of these matters, for I see you are ignorant in them; as you are in all the great things of God, which are Foolishness to the world. Why do you smile? They are the Apostle's words, (1 *Cor.* 1. 23.)

C. I know it. But I smile to see how you prove that which you deny, *viz.* that Fancy governs you.

N. C. How do I prove it?

C. By this application of the Apostle's words according to their Sound, and not their Sense.

N. C. Why what is their Sense, think you?

C. That to a mere Gentile it seemed a foolish thing to believe that a Crucified person was made *Christ*, that is Lord and King of the world. The *Jews stumbled* at this, and would not receive him for the *Messiah*, or King of *Israel*, who shamefully hung upon a Cross: and the *Gentile* thought this a ridiculous perswasion, which none but Idiots would receive. But then he tells you what *Gentiles* and *Jews* these were; *viz.* such as were meerly natural, and did not allow the testimony of the Spirit, whereby the Apostles proved this Doctrine. For they who were convinced that the Holy Ghost was in the Apostles; and judged not by mere humane Reason, but Heavenly testimonies, made no scruple to believe that this crucified *Jesus* was made Lord of all: and herein they acknowledged the great Power and Wisdom of God to be made apparent.

N. C. You give the oddest interpretations of Scripture that ever were heard of.

C. Every thing seems odd to you which is cross to your Fancy. But examine the Scriptures seriously, and you will find the interpretations which *I* have learnt to be plain and even.

N C I do read them continually.

C. I believe you: and that you apply every thing

thing,as you fancy it will fit these times.

N.C.I apply it as *I* see those do who (notwithstanding all that you have said)I take to be the most *experimental Preachers*. For *that which they have seen with their eyes,which they have looked on, and which their hands have handled of the word of life, that declare they unto us,* as S. *John speaks,* 1 Ep. 1. 1. Pray be more serious, and do not laugh while we speak of these things.

C. Well, *I* will. Bring me one of those men that have done this,and *I* tell you seriously *I* will become one of his Disciples.

N.C. I can bring you an hundred that *I* am acquainted with.

C Then the story of the *Wandering Jew* is no Fable. Would *I* could see but one (*one, I* assure you, would suffice me) of these happy men.

N. C. Would *I* could know what the matter is that makes your fancy wander and rove on this Fashion. You have talkt so rationally all this while, that *I* cannot but admire now to see your wits go a wool-gathering *I* know not whither.

C. I do not stray one jot from the business: *I* have heard (as *I* was going to tell you)of a *Jew*. who being present at our Saviour's Death, and seing him hang upon the Cross, hath ever since wandred up and down from place to place, and (as the story goes)remains somewhere or other to this very day. *I* always took it indeed for a

Lie, till now that I meet with you, who give me hopes to see an hundred such men, and that in *London*.

N. C. You seem to me to be distracted. I have nothing to do, either with *Jews*, or with *Lies*.

C. A little, my good Neighbour, with *Lies*. For if your men have *seen the Lord of Life with their eyes, and look'd upon him, and handled him*; then they were alive in our Saviours time, as that *Jew* is said to have been. Or else he hath appeared to them since, as he did to S. *Thomas* saying, *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands*; and *reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side*.

N. C. No: there was some other seeing beside that.

C. What? hath *W. B.* or some of his Disciples had a *Vision*, wherein they beheld him and look'd upon him?

N. C. You cannot understand the things of God.

C. Yes, as well as you; unless you have had some *Revelation*, which he presumes you may enjoy.

N. *C.* There is seeing and feeling without that.

C. You can tell me of none which we are strangers unto. If you mean, that you discern the truth and certainty of the Christian Faith; I doubt not that our eyes are as good as yours

in

in that point. If you mean, that you approve of the Christian life, even from your own sense of the satisfaction and Happiness there is in it; I make no question it as palpable to us as to you. Or if you would have us think that you have long & seriously meditated upon the Mysteries of the Gospel, so as to be mightily affected with them; *I* do not believe that we are defective in that neither, but have look'd upon them, as long as your selves, and are as affectionate Admirers of them.

N. C. You are faln, methinks, into a strain of *Boasting*.

C. It is you, that have compelled me, as the *Corinthians* did *S. Paul* by undervaluing him. And if you think me a fool in this (as well as other things) I am in a worse conditon than that great Apostle thought he might be: Read his discourse in 2 *Cor.* 11. 16, 17, &c. and give me leave to speak to you a little in his words. You are a wise sort of people, and so can be content now and then to *suffer fools gladly*. For *you suffer if a man bring you into bondage* to certain Opinions of his own, which make it necessary for you to do or not to do that which God hath not tied you unto. *If a man devour you*, by living continually upon you; *If he take of you*, Gold, Silver, and other gifts whereby he must be maintained; *If he exalt himself*, pretending perhaps, to more of the Sprit, and a more special Mission from God, than other men have;

ſtill you ſuffer him very patiently. Why then cannot you ſuffer me only to *boaſt a litle*; eſpecially ſince it is not of my ſelf, but of our Miniſters which I hear? And thoſe few words of S. *Paul* in that place ſhall ſuffice to this purpoſe; *Are yours the Miniſters of Chriſt?* (*I ſpeak* you will think, *as a fool*) *ours are more*, For they know *Chriſt Jeſus* the Lord, as well as yours: they preach him as ſincerely and feelingly: they tread in his ſteps, and crucifie the fleſh with the affections and luſts. And beſide, they are more peaceable, more obedient to Governours, more reſpectful to their Superiours, more modeſt in their Inquiries and Reſolutions about difficult Points, more charitable to thoſe that diſſent from them, and more deſirous methinks to edifie, rather than to humour the people. For they do not ſeek to pleaſe their itching Ears, and gratifie the longings of their Fancies with new-found words, affected Expreſſions, and odd Phraſes; but tell us thoſe things that concern our Saviour and his holy Life in plain & proper Language. Which, I proteſt fills me with joy and gladneſs whenſoever I think of it. And it makes me conclude they have much Experience of the things of God becauſe they make me ſo feelingly conceive what the pleaſure and contentment is of being meek and lowly, ſober and chaſte, contented and heavenly-minded; and above all things, of having an heart enlarged with great Charity to all men, ſo as to be

be ready to forgive, and to do good. This holy disposition, you cannot deny, must needs make them capable to understand the Mind of God revealed to us in his Word; which book *I* observe they are very careful we should understand aright, and not interpret and apply it, as I see you do, according to our Fancy. For you conceive that, because *S. John* declared what he *saw and handled of the word of Life.* (*i. e.* of our Saviour and his Gospel) to convince some that denied he was come in the Flesh, or gainsay'd their Doctrine; you are able to do the same.

N. C. Well, I see my mistake in that. But say what yon will, your Preachers never had such a *Seal to their Ministry* as God hath given ours, by converting thousands through their means.

C. More Phrases still? You mean God hath shewn they are rightly called or sent by him*t*

N. C. Yes.

C. Then all those men who turn people may say that they have a *Seal of God* to their Ministry: See, say the *Popish* Priests, what multitudes we convert! therfore we are sent of God. Behold; say the *Quakers*, we have a *Seal from Heaven*; for so many of your people have forsaken you; and follow us.

N. C. But you mistake me, Sir; They do not only convert men to our Party, but to to be good

They really turn them from sin to God.

C. I am glad to hear it. But may not a question be made, whether they are not converted only from some, not from all Sins; nay, whether they are not converted from one Sin to another? So I am sure you confess it is with the *Quakers*, who make men sometime more civil in one regard, but more uncivil, than ever in others.

N. C. Sure, you cannot suspect us to be like them.

C. It will be fit for you to examine your selvs throughly in this Point; Whether, for instance, many among you are not converted from loving the World, to hate their Neighbours; from cold Devotion at our Churches, to a fiery Zeal against our Ministers; from Undutifulness to Natural Parents, to the greatest Contempt of Civil and Spiritual. Nay, is this never made a Note of a man converted, that, though he have a great many Faults, yet he is wrought to Antipathy to Bishops, Common-Prayer, an innocent Cassock, and a Surcingle, as you are pleased in derision to call our Ministers Girdles?

N. C. Truly, I think the badness of your Ministers may have provoked the people to be rude to them; the best of them being no better, than *Time-servers.*

C. We will consider that by and by. Only let me note, that you cannot deny what I suspect you guilty of. And beside, suppose there be a great many

many converted by your Ministers to true godlineſs, this is no greater *Seal* (as you call it) than we have, there being many turned from all their evil ways, to a more noble degree of Vertue, than you can commonly ſhew, by thoſe very men who did then heartily ſerve God when yours too much ſerved the Time.

N. *C.* You will ſay any thing.

C. If you know, what is meant by a *Time-ſerver*, and do not only pelt with words, I hope to make you confeſs, what I ſay.

N. *C.* Try what you can do.

C. I think we are agreed that a *Time-ſerver* is one who complies with the naughty Humors of the time for his own profit, and meddles not with the reigning ſins, for fear of offending his good Maſters by whom he is maintained. A thing which it is hard to find any man of note guilty of among us; but which it is notoriouſly known the moſt eminent of yours were faulty in, in their time.

N. *C.* I doubt you will prove your ſelf a faſe Accuſer.

C. Charge me with that, if you can, when I have done. And let me ask you, whether you are not ſatisfied that the ſins of *Sacrilege*, and *Rebellion* or *Diſobedience to Governours*, are very heinous; and whether it be not apparent that their was great need, in the beginig of the late Times, to warn the Nation to take heed of involving themſelves in that Guilt which ſeveral conſiderable perſons were runing headlong into

I think you will not oppose me in either of these, and I take your silence for Consent. And then I dare appeal to you, whether your Divines were not very meal-mouth'd, as we use to speak, and afraid these words should come within their lips, even then when they saw these *Sins* come to their full groowth. Nay, *I* affirm that you shall scrace find mention of them in their Writings, much less was any thing heard of them in their *Sermons*. Which is an evidence to me, that either they had not sound and good Consciences, or that they wanted Courage, and contented themselvs to swim along with the *Stream*. And in the first place, let me tell you somthing that hath been observed of their unworthy Compliance with the *Sacrilegious* humour of those times. A worthy Minister of my acquanitance once told me, that your Assembly-men or other Divines, who wrote the *larger Annotations upon the Bible*, (of the Edition *An.* 1646) are very guilty in this point. For where there is a fit occasion, said he, to speak against Sacrilege, and where other Expositors are wont to declare the foulness of the Sin, there they say not a word, but pass it quite over, as if they knew of no such th ing in the world. Though he would not impute it to their ignorance, but to their base Cowardise and flattering disposition, which was loath to displease the Lords of that Time.

N. C. Sure he did them a great deal of wrong

C. I'll tell you some of the places, he instances

ces in. First, that known place *Act.* 5. where he told me in that Edition of 1646. there is no mention made of their Sacrilege, and defrauding God of that which was devoted to him, (though that was their chief Crime) but onely of their Hippocrisie, Covetousnes, and Lying I must confess *I* have not the Book, and therefore you must take his word for it But thus much *I* will tell you upon my own knowledge; that having occasion once to look upon their Annotations, (and that of the third Edition, much inlarged) upon *Rom.* 2. 22. where there was a fitter occasion to say something of this Sin, than in the former place, because the very word *Sacrilege* is here mentioned, *I* observed (*I* well remember) that these tender-finger'd Gentleman would not so much as touch it, but fairly slipt over it. For they only speak of the notion of the word in the Civill Law, (and that not directly) defining it, *The taking away from the Emperour any thing that his is.* Would not this make one think that they were very much afraid to meddle with this *Sin?*

N. C. Perhaps that is the meaning of *Sacrilege*, there.

C. One can scarce believe it, who consults the place; where the Apostle reprehends a man that commits somthing of the same nature with that which he reproves another man for. And therefore I doubt not but, those who then cry'd out against *Idols*, and by no means would indure them

them in the Holy place, did discover their *Profaneness* and disrespect to that place some other way, which in all likelihood was in not bringing their Offerings thither, but detaining from God that which was his own peculiar goods. They that are learned, I doubt not, can give you other reasons.

N. *C.* But I have heard some say, that things are not holy now, so as they were then; because they were separated by a particular direction and express command of God, which was the thing that made them *holy*.

C. This is one of the most notable things you have said yet, however you came by it. But it will not do your Business. For what will you say, if I shew you that even in their Notes upon the Law of *Moses*, and other places of the Old Testament, they say not a word of this Sin, of turning that to another use which God hath separated by his special command unto his own? no, though there be the fairest invitation, and sometimes great reason, to do it?

N. *C.* I believe you undertake more than you can do.

C. Thus much I can assure you upon my own knowledge, that consulting upon a time (as any man may have occasion to do) their Notes upon *Levit.* 25. 34. where the Fields belonging to the *Levites* are forbidden to be sold; I found that they were perfectly mute, and said not a word of the nature of this Sin amongst the *Jews*: for fear,

one

one would think, that any Christian should thence conclude, that it was unlawful to sell the Bishops Lands, which then their Masters were about.

N. C. The Text is plain enough, if any one had a mind to make that Inference.

C. I, but some Annotations on a plain place make it more observed: and I am sure they are large enough in their Descants upon as plain words as those. And therefore why they should forbear to say any thing there I cannot imagine, unless it were a fear of displeasing the Parliament and many of their partakers. For as for themselves, I believe many of them would not have had the Lands sold, but imployed to their use and benefit.

N. C. Well, is this all?

C. No, there is another remarkable place in the Book of *Joshua*, Chap. 6. 19. where God commands all the Gold and Silver, &c. which should be taken in *Jericho*, to be consecrated to him, and put into the Treasury. Notwithstanding which we read that *Achan* purloined 200 shekels of Silver and a wedge of Gold to his own private use, and was therefore severely punished, nay all the Congregation troubled for his offence, till he suffered for it, *Josh.* 7. 21. And yet these men say not a syllable of this Sin in their Notes on either of those verses; though all other Divines are wont from thence to shew how dangerous it was then to rob God, and take away

away what was separated to his uses. In other places I am sure they oft make large Declamations against some Sins, and in a manner preach against them: and therfore why they should not have a syllable to say here about this matter, is a great Mystery, unless I have discovered the cause of it. As for that place, *Gen.* 47. 22. I know you will say they were Idolatrous Priests whose Land *Joseph* sold not. But methinks they needed not have made an excuse (as they there do) for *Joseph*'s not selling them as if it had been an act of greater Virtue, if he had. And methinks they should have told the world pretty smartly that if *Pharaoh* had such a respect to the *Ægyptian* Priesthood as not to sell their Land; Christian Princes & Governours should not be more unkind (if not unjust) in these days, nor expose to sale those Lands which have been settled upon the Priests of the most High God. But above all, I wonder at their profound silence in their Notes upon *Ezek.* 48. 14. where one would think at last they would have broken it; especially since they might have done it pretty securely in such an obscure place, which few read. There the Lands of the *Levites* are again forbidden to be sold: And by *Levites* according to their own *Principles* we are to understand the Ministers of the Gospel, whose Lands therefore ought not to be sold. I prove it clearly. thus, *In* the beginning of their Explication of this Vision, they lay down this for a Foundation

tion of their Exposition (Chap. 40. 2.) that herein was represented the ample and flourishing estate of *Christ's* Church, under the Types of the Re-building of the Temple, Restauration of the *Levitical* Worship and Service, nad the Repossession and Inhabitation of the whole Land. Which they repeat again Chap. 43. 1. and in sundry other places. If this be true, (as they believed it to be) then, according to their own Rules, the assigning of Land for the *Levites* must signifie the care that ought to be taken to settle a Maintenance for the support of the Gospel-Ministery and Service; and the prohibition against selling the *Levites* Lands must denote the pleasure of God, that the portion of Land or other things settled upon the Evangelical Priesthood, or Ministery, should never be alienated from them. Now I pray you tell me, why would they not open their mouths at last in so plain a case as this? What should be the cause, that they do not so much as name this Sin, much less bid the World beware of it, and still much less pass any sentence upon it? Do you think they did not know what is wont to be said on these places? Did they not understand well enough, that if they would write consequently to their own principles before laid down, they must either tax that Sin in this place of *Ezekiel*, or else say just nothing? Why did they chuse the later, and pass it over with a word; but only referring us to two or three places

of

of Scripture nothing to the purpose?

N. C. Truly I know not what to say.

C. I'll tell you then. The most probable conjecture is that which I have made already, That they were afraid in the least to displease their masters who set them on work. The *Parliament* would have taken it very ill, and all the *good people* too, who, to save their own purses, were content the Churches Lands should be sold to carry on the War which they had illegally begun.

N. C. I hope better, and that you will not now take occasion from the mention you make of the War, to fall into a Declamation against the other Sin of *Rebellion*.

C. Since you love not to hear any thing of it, I am content to be as silent as your Ministers were wont to be: only let me tell you, I have observed several other things which they forbear, not because they think it is their Duty, but for fear of displeasing a party.

N. C. What do you mean?

C. I mean, it was for this reason that they seldom or never (some of them) used the *Lord's Prayer*, because the people had been taught on a sudden to abhorr Forms, without remembring them that the Lord's prayer was a Form. It was not fit to tell them that, for fear they should have continued to like other Forms of prayer for its sake. I observe also, that still they will by no means give the title of *Saint* to one of the Apostles

Apostles or Evangelists of our Lord, (though I think they will call them *Holy*, which is the same) no not when they reade a Text out of their Writings. For which I can conceive no other reason, but their good Dames and Masters do not like it. They are afraid that it is Popish. And rather than these *Men-servers* will be at the pains of convincing them of their errour, or, to speak more properly, rather than venture the danger of losing them, (for many might in a passion fly off, if they heard the name of *Saint* given to any but themselves) they will not offend their tender ears by naming that abominable word. And were it not that I am loath to try you, I could instance in a great many other things wherein they are meer Slaves to the humours of the people, and *serve the time*; not daring to say those things, or to use those words, which they know are fit to be said and to be used, meerly because many people will run away from them.

N.C. There is no danger of that. Whither should they run?

C. To our Ministers; whom perhaps they forsook upon such little accounts, and so may return to them when they see others do like them.

N.C. Hold you content, Neighbour. They will never return to one that is an *Apostate*, and *hath forsaken his Principles*. And that I am sure you will grant your Minister hath done; though

you will not have him call'd a Time-ſerver.

C. You have a company of the moſt frivolous exceptions againſt our Miniſtry that ever I heard of. None of which (as I might have ſhewn you all along) are ſufficient to juſtifie your ſeparation from us, were they true. But being as they are, either falſe Imputations, or elſe ſuch things as no man need be aſham'd of, you can the leſs be excuſed for your forſaking our Aſſemblies. As for this that you charge our Miniſter withall, I have reaſon to think it is a Forgery, and that he never had any other Principles than he hath now. Or if he had, what do you ſay to thoſe who ſtuck ſo faſt to their Principles, that it coſt them all they were worth? Are there not a great number of theſe among our Clergymen? And do you not hate theſe as much as any elſe? nay look upon them as your old Enemies, becauſe you remember what Enemies you were to them?

N C. There are a great many, I am certain, that were once ours, and now are faln away to you. Thoſe I abhor a great deal more than your old Clergy, and cannot endure to hear them

C. Suppoſe there be many ſuch; yet there is no reaſon for this ſtrong Antipathy againſt them. For it is like they were very young when they followed you; and may ſay, as S. *Paul, When I was a Child, I ſpake as a Child, I underſtood as a Child, I thought:* (or reaſoned) *as a Child: but when*

when I became a man, I put away childish things.

N.C. Belike you think ours a Childish Religion.

C. Perhaps I do, and, for any thing you know, can prove it to be so in great part. But that's not our business now; which is onely to shew, that it's no shame for any body to think and speak otherwise than he did, provided his Judgment be grown more ripe and manly. What? Do you think Youth must never examine the Principles they receive with their Education, nor judge for themselves when they are able? If you would not have them follow their Masters or Parents, as Horses and Asses do those that lead them in a string, why do you blame any of them that consider who it is that leads him, and whither he is carrying him? nay, that forsakes the track in which he hath always walked, when he finds it to be wrong?

N.C. Nay, a great many Old men have forsaken their Principles, who, one would think, should have had more wit or more honesty.

C. They have never the less for that: For I hope you are not too old to learn. And this is all you can make of it, that once they thought it unlawfull to do according to their present practice; but *days have taught them wisdom*, and given satisfaction to their Scruples. Beside, the extravagant Freaks and the mad fantastick Tricks which were plaid in Religion, when you reigned,

opened many mens eyes(whom you had deluded by fair ſpeeches and goodly pretences) to ſee their folly in condemning and caſhiering Biſhops and Common Prayer.

N.C. You have an art of Apologizing for any thing.

C. Let's ſee your skill in that art; for I would fain try it a little. What will you ſay, if none be found ſo guilty of this which you charge us with-all as your own dear ſelves?

N.C. I will ſay, that you can prove any thing.

C. No: you ſhall onely ſay, that they have the leaſt reaſon of all other men to talk againſt forſaking Principles, who have done it ſo notoriouſly.

N.C. I cannot but wonder at your confidence. Are not your very Senſes convinced of the contrary? Do you not ſee how they ſuffer for their Conſciences; how they are deprived of their Liberty, and have loſt good Benefices. If they would have forſaken their Principles, what needed they have been thus deprived?———

C. You need ſay no more, for I know it all beforehand. But pray be not you too confident, nor take it ill that I ſtop you thus in your carier; ſince I think you will ſpend your breath to little purpoſe. Anſwer me ſoberly a few queſtions, and then perhaps you will thank me for ſaving you the pains you were about to take. Do you not remember a time when the *Covenant* was ma-

nified

nified as the most Sacred thing in the world, next the Holy Scriptures? Did you never meet with such a passage as this in Commendation of it? *This Oath is such, and in the matter and consequence of it of such concernment, as I can truly say, it is worthy of us, yea of all these Kingdoms, yea of all the Kingdoms of the World?* If you have not, it is to be found in Mr. *Nye's Exhortation* at the taking of the Covenant, *Septemb.* 25. 1643. *pag.* 2.

N.C. What of all this? is there any thing we more suffer for than that holy Covenant?

C. Surely, that Gentleman and a great number beside (who now are followed and esteemed above *our Changelings*, as you are pleased to call them) have long since altered their minds, and reprobated that Covenant; or, to speak in his own words, *they have been found to purpose, nay more, to vow and to swear, and all this according to the flesh; so that with them there is, notwithstanding those Obligations, Yea, yea,* and *Nay, nay*; pag. 5. A thing which he there accuses of great falsness and inconstancy, such as is not to be shewn amongst us.

N.C. What do you tell mee of *Independents?* We have nothing to do with them.

C. Yes, but you have. For it appears by your discourse, that your Opinions now are a mixture of the Fancies of more Sects than theirs. And as for your Ministers, it's plain that they are in part turn'd *Independents*, (which is a grosse

Apostacy from their Principles)having Congregations in several places that have no Dependency one upon another.

N.C. They are forced to it.

C. If that be a good excuse, no body will want an Apology for his faults, which he will find there was some necessity or other for. But (I pray) do you not remember such a *creature* some years ago, as the people called a *Lay Elder*, but by your Ministers was named a *Ruling Elder?*

N.C. Yes.

C. And you remember it was disputed very hotly, whether he were one of *God's creatures*, or of *Man's*.

N.C. Very well.

C. And the Ministers whom you adhere to, confidently affirm'd that their *Ruling Elders* were by Divine right, and ought to be admitted not onely upon the account of prudence, but as seated by God in the Church as *Church-officers*. If you doubt of it, read the *Vindication of Presbyterial Government*, set forth 1649, from *pag.* 34. to *pag.* 55.

N.C. I know their Opinion well enough.

C. But can you tell me what is become of these creatures? doth not the whole *Species* seem to be lost among you? what is the reason that we hear never a word of them?

N.C. They are still in their first Principles.

C. You

C. You grow witty. But it will not serve your turn; for I should think the Principles are lost as well as they. Else what's the cause you have none of them in your private Congregations, where you may do what you list? Either you have deserted those Principles, or else your Covenant, which I am sure you thought bound you to maintain these. Chuse which part you will; for either of them will serve my turn.

N.C. I never troubled my head much about those *Seniors*, and therefore do not much care what is become of them.

C. But you should think what is become of your Ministers Principles, who, I believe, are content now to let the *Lay Elders* die; they being but the creatures of men, and so of a mortal nature.

N.C. It is no great matter if they do, and never rise again.

C. Good. But I have another Question to ask you. Was not there a time when this was a Principle among your Ministers, *that they should obey the Orders of the Magistrate under whom they lived, if they were not sinfull*?

N.C. I am not much acquainted with their Opinions in those matters.

C. You may know them then by their Practises, (which I suppose you will by all means have to be consistent with their Principles.)

N.C. What Practices?

C. I think there were Orders in the late Times that no man ſhould pray publickly for *King CHARLES*; and they obey'd them. They were required alſo to keep a thankſgiving for the *Victories at Dunbarr and Worceſter*; with which I believe the moſt, if not all, complied. Nay, that Thankſgiving was repeated every year at *Whitehall*; and I believe *Cromwell* found ſome among you that would not deny to carry on the Work of that day.

N.C. What do you inferr from hence?

C. That they have forſaken their Principles. For now they will not obey the King's Orders. Mark what I ſay: They would obey Uſurpers, becauſe they had a Power for the time being; and now they diſobey their Sovereign, whoſe Power they acknowledge to be juſt, and who commands things that are not unlawfull. As for example, they will not hear Common-Prayer, (at leaſt many of them do not) which they can if they liſt: nor will they obſerve an Holy-day, which is no more unlawfull to be kept, one would think, than one of thoſe thankſgivings. Give me a reaſon, for inſtance, why the *Nine and twentieth of September* may not as well be obſerved as the *Third* ſometime was.

N.C. That day is obſerved for ſuperſtitious purpoſes; to remember the Victory of *Michael* over the *Dragon*.

C. Suppoſe it were. Is not that a great deal better than to remember the Victory of *Cromwell* over the *King*? *N.C.*

N.C. That was but once, and away.

C. But once all over the City and Kingdome; yet every year at *White-hall*. But why is not that lawfull to be done alway which we may do once, the reason continuing still the same?

N.C. You love to rip up old things, which had better be forgotten.

C. Not I. But you force me to it, by reflecting upon the old Principles of some of our men. And how can one chuse (upon such an occasion) but take notice of the Fantasticalness of your mens Consciences, (at least some of them) that are so nice and squeamish in some Fits, and at another time can swallow any thing?

N.C. I do not see but they are the same.

C. That's strange; when they are so scrupulous now, and were so little scrupulous then: or at least could do things with a Reluctance and Regret, and perhaps some Fears and doubts in their minds in those days; and now nothing will serve them but perfect Satisfaction. If you would have me speak plain, and shew you the difference between things they did then and those they will not do now, I will take the pains.

N.C. Save your self the labour, I have no mind to hear more of it.

C. That is, you have no mind to see how they have *left their Principles*, or at least do not act according to them.

N.C. They know their own Principles better than you.

C. Would

C. Would they would let us know something of them, that so we might have a reason for some other alterations we see in them.

N.C. What are they?

C. Did you never hear them cry out against *Separation*, and forsaking of *publick Ordinances*? Were there not many books writ to this purpose, when they possessed the Pulpit?

N.C. I perceive whither you are going.

C. And you shall not stir, but go along with me. Consider, I beseech you, what are become of those Principles; or how much are their present practises condemned by them? Do they not keep Private Meetings every week, and that in the time of the Publick Service, as I told you before? Are they not thereby kept from Church themselves, and do they not thereby keep away a great many others? Tell me (good Neighbour) what is this but *a down right Separation* from us?

N.C. They are not for a Separation from *Christ's Ordinances*, but from *yours*.

C. Ours are *Christ's* Ordinances as much as any you frequent; for we pray and give thanks to God in his Name. And we do this according to his appointment; praying onely for such things as he would have us, and no other. As for words, I hope you grant that neither yours nor ours know any ordained by him but the *Lord's Prayer*, which we use, and you perhaps do not. And as for Ceremonies, I know those very

men

men now separate from us, who heretofore approved those books which were writ against Separation upon the account of Ceremonies. And whatsoever you imagine, they do not think our publick Ordinances (as they now stand) are Antichristian, or that it is unlawful to be present at them. Therefore I must have a better reason for their Separation from our Assemblies, or else you must confess that they (not we) have chang'd their Principles.

N.C. I doubt not but they have a Reason.

C. No more do I. They have, without question, a great many: but they are *carnal reasons.*

N.C. Why are you so censorious?

C. I am content they should have other reasons: but I speak according to your conceptions of them.

N.C. You are very Mysterious on a sudden.

C. Methinks the matter is plain. If they have found reasons to alter their Principles, then we have done. If they have not, what reasons can they be but carnal ones, which alter their practice?

N.C. I do not love to hear you talk thus.

C. Nor do I love to hear my self talk thus: but you constrain me to it. And (I pray you) whether you love it or no, do so much as hear me one word more.

N.C.

N.C. You may speak your mind.

C. Was there not a time when your Ministers would by no means hear of *Liberty of Conscience*? Did they not cry out upon it in their Pulpits and their books, and call it *Cursed Toleration*? Read but a Book called *A Testimony to the truth of* Jesus Christ, *and to our solemn League and Covenant*, &c. subscribed by the Ministers of the Province of *London, Decemb.* 14. 1647. There you will find that among other abominable Errors and damnable Heresies, (as they are called, *pag.* 4.) this is condemn'd for one, *pag.* 22. *That little can be done, unless Liberty of Conscience be allowed for every man and sort of men to worship God in that way, and perform the Ordinances of* Christ *in that manner, as shall appear to them most agreeable to God's Word*, &c. This, among others, they call a *horrid and prodigious Opinion*; and tell us (*pag.* 32. and 33.) that it will lay the glory of the most high God in the dust, if it take place, and raze the Truth of *Christ* to the ground, and overthrow all *Christ's* Ordinances, and together therewith Magistrates and Ministers, and all Religious and comely Order, &c. In short, they say we shall be disown'd by all Reformed Churches, who will cry out, *Is this* England, *who covenanted to extirpate Popery, Prelacy, Superstition, Schism*, &c? *and after so long travel hath she now brought forth an hideous Monster of Toleration?*

N.C.

N.C. I know all this as well as you can tell me: and they are of the same mind still; for this was writ onely against an *Universal Toleration of all Sects*, which they abhorr.

C. I can tell you another story. They would not so much as tolerate *five poor men*, who professed to agree with them in all matters of Doctrine. Judge then what their Opinions were about Liberty, when they would not allow it to so few *dissenting Brethren*.

N.C. That was a great while ago, and most of those streight-lac'd men are dead.

C. No such matter. But if they were, their Principles did not die with them, but survived in their followers. And yet now all on a sudden they are vanish'd. Now they are for Liberty of Conscience. By which if they mean onely a Liberty for themselves let them speak out, that all their Brethren of the Separation may hear them. And withal let them acquaint us by what Title they claim this Favour more than the rest of the Sects that are sprung from them, who might take the liberty to separate from them, as well as they take the Liberty to seperate from us. And before they prove that it is due to them, let them first answer their own Argument against the Independents, (which I can shew them in a *Letter of the* London *Ministers to the Assembly of Divines*) which was this; *That to grant a Toleration to them, and not to other Sectaries, will be counted Injustice.*

N.C.

N.C. I perceive you are of a *perſecuting ſpirit.*

C. You rather diſcover your ſelf of a *turbulent ſpirit*, which cannot forbear to trouble and confound even our diſcourſe. For that is not the buſineſs, whether all Reſtraint of mens liberty be Perſecution; nor whether I am for it or no: but to ſhew you that once your Miniſters were of ſuch a *ſpirit* as you call *perſecuting*, and now are not.

N.C. Then they are changed for the better.

C. You ſhould have ſaid, Then they are chang'd, (which was the thing we were ſpeaking of;) whether for the better or no, that's another queſtion: And let them, if you pleaſe, reſolve it. I believe they will not confeſs they were of a perſecuting ſpirit, when they were againſt the Liberty which they now claim.

N.C. What, do you make them of no Principles at all?

C. Do not miſtake me ſo. They are conſtant to ſome Principles, particularly this, *That all is well done that they do, though quite contrary to what they did before.*

N.C. You are bitter.

C. Do you like this Principle better, (which they will not forſake, I warrant you) *That they are in God's way, and therefore ought to be tolerated; whereas all others are out of his way, and there-*

therefore ought not to be tolerated?

N.C. You much offend me by these Reflections.

C. I'll tell you another then, that's more moderate, and will please you better: *That they must by all means keep you from coming to Church, for fear you should see that you may be as well taught elsewhere as in their private Meetings.*

N.C. I told you before, there is no danger of that.

C. But you told me no Reason, as I have shewn you, that's worth any thing.

N.C. We have one that will never suffer us to come to Church more, as long as your Ministers are there.

C. What terrible Scare-crow should that that be?

N.C. To tell you the truth, many of us do not think *that they are Ministers.*

C. Now you have revealed the Bottom of your heart ——— Pardon me that sudden conclusion; you may have more yet lurking behind, which you have not told me. I should rather have said, Now you have revealed your Unskilfulness more than ever. For what have any of yours to qualifie them for the Ministry which ours have not as well as they? If you require the inward motions of the Spirit of God inclining a man to devote himself to this work; (which some of you think is enough) this ours profess to have felt, as you may see in the Form

of

of ordering Priests. If it be further necessary to be approved by Presbyters, and to have their hands laid on them; this is not wanting to ours, as you may there also be satisfied.

N.C. But the Bishop layes on his hands also.

C. And can this unhallow them, when they are so dedicated to God?

N.C. Yes so I am told.

C. Then you would sooner believe what one of your own Party says without any reason, than what we say with all the reason in the world: which is plainly partial affection.

N.C. Why so?

C. Is it not apparent that a Bishop is a Presbyter too? though we think him more.

N.C. You acknowledge a distinction of persons in the Church, which is Antichristian.

C. Nay, then I have done with you. You condemn all the ancient Church of Antichristianism; and more than that, the very Apostles themselves and the Evangelists, who it is manifest had some Superiority over their brethren. But observe whither you are run, having once left your way. You mix the very dregs of all other Sects with your own; and believe any thing that makes against us, even such things as the Minister you commonly hear would be asham'd to say. First, you onely disliked the Common Prayer; then you did not love the man

that read it; next you would not come to hear him; and now you will not allow him to be a Minister: nay rather than suffer him to enjoy that name, you will venture to deprive Apostolical men of their Office, who exercised an Authority over their brethren.

N.C. Suppose they did; yet they were not *Lords*.

C. No, nor do we *ordain* any *Lords* when we make Bishops. That's an Honour which the King doth them, to qualifie them to sit in Parliament, and advise about the Affairs of the Realm, in which they are as much concern'd as other men.

N.C. If their Lordships would preach more, perhaps we might like them better.

C. I doubt not. For those that do, you will not come to hear.

N.C. Their Lawn-sleeves offend us.

C. And why should you not as well take offence at the White Cap and the Lace which I have often seen under the Black upon your Ministers heads?

N.C. Any thing becomes a Godly man.

C. I thought thither would be your retreat. But why are not the Bishops Godly too?

N.C. They do not love and encourage good men.

C. You still suppose none are good but your selves; which is no great token of that Modesty and Humility which we think necessary to make

a Godly man. But suppose any of them should be so bad as not to countenance the very best among us, but rather the worst; yet this would be onely the fault of the *Men*, not of the *Office*.

N.C. I have often heard that Distinction; but I could never love your Logick.

C. Yes sometimes. For you once liked a more subtil Distinction than this, and that was between the *King's personal and politick capacity* ——

N.C. Pray forbear to scratch those old sores. But why do your Bishops oppose all *Praying by the Spirit?*

C. I thought you might come to that at last, & I fansie it is the great quarrel you have with thē.

N.C. Verily it is.

C. Then let me assure you, the *Bishops* are the farthest of any men in the world from opposing *Praying by the Spirit*.

N.C. You tell me a thing incredible. I should come sometimes to hear your Ministers but that they have not the Spirit of Prayer; which the *Bishops* (I suppose) suppress and keep down all they can.

C. Belike then you think that to *pray by the Spirit*, and *to have a Spirit of Prayer*, are all one.

N.C. Why not? I know no difference.

C. Because I am sure ours have a Spirit of Prayer; but neither ours nor yours can pray by the Spirit. If they could, the Bishops would rather suffer Martyrdom than oppose it.

N.C. I apprehend you not.

C. Very likely: for I see you have been nourished with phrases, but understand very little.

N.C. Pray try if you can make me understand more, since it seems you are so skilful.

C. Hear me quietly then, and I will tell you what I have learn'd. For my skill is onely borrow'd from such good men as our *Parish Priest*, whom you (I doubt) sometime deride, and scornfully call by that name.

N.C. I am in no passion: speak your mind.

C. Tell me then; when a man reverently addresses himself to God, seriously acknowledges his Authority over all, his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, professes to depend upon him intirely, dreads his Displeasure, waits upon him for his grace and favour, hungers and thirsts after Righteousness, and devoutly renders his Thanks to the Possessor of Heaven and Earth for all his benefits; hath he the Spirit of Prayer, or no?

N.C. I cannot say but he hath, if his heart go along with his lips.

C. Then our Ministers have the Spirit of Prayer; for in all appearance, and as far as we can judge, they have an inward sense of these things when they pray. And as for their words and gestures, they are generally more reverent and becoming than yours.

N.C. Methinks you should not be of that mind.

C. Truly I have heard such bold, and sometimes rude, things spoken by some of yours in Prayer, that I could not think they had any sense and

feeling of God at all at that time. Their Gestures also were ridiculous. Nay, I have seen some of them look about upon the people, (to see, I suppose, how they were affected) when they should have turn'd their eyes toward Heaven. Which was an argument to me they had something else in their mind then, more than God.

N.C. Then it seems you hear them sometimes.

C. Not now. But I have heard them heretofore, when they preached in our Churches.

N.C. O! but if you could hear them now, you would say they are full of the Spirit.

C. Because they pour out such abundance of words.

N.C. No, but they are more *earnest* than ever; and they *plead* with God after a more effectual manner.

C. You call Loudness of speech *Earnestness*; which I always took to be the ardent desire of our Souls after that good which we humbly beg of God. And as for their *pleading* with God, I think it is rather *saucineſs*.

N.C. Now you are bitter.

C. If I thought so, I should condemn my self as much as you can do; for I have learn'd, that we ought to *put away all wrath, bitterness, clamour, and evil speaking*. Nay, if I thought I had done amiss, I would ask forgiveness, not onely from God, but from you too.

N.C. That is a good mind. But why did you use such an harsh expression? Is it not one of *Jobs* words? *Job* 16 21. *C.* Yes,

C. Yes, but not in your sense. For he would willingly have maintained his innocency, and have had his Case argued, that he might make it appear he was not so guilty as his friends made him: Which is nothing to your purpose; who, I suppose, do not intend (though you call *Jesus Christ, a Days-man* between God and us) to stand upon your defence, and justifie your selves before him. This you think too great a boldness, do you not?

N.C. Yes.

C. Why then may I not call it a Saucinesse in you to do a great deal more; I mean, to question God so much as you are wont, and to ask him over and over again what's the reason he doth not this or that, and why he suffers you to be so and so, and how he can deny you this or the other thing?

N.C. Doth not *David* sometimes ask questions?

C. Yes, in a great agony of spirit, and upon some great occasion: which will not warrant you to take this unheard-of boldness. So I call it; because things done in imitation of others, when we are not in that condition, and have not that occasion, and that spirit also which they had, are very fulsome; no better than the motions of a Monkey when he imitates a man. To do those things also commonly which those great men did now and then, is monstrously unbeseeming. Besides, his Psalms are pieces of Divine Poetry, in which Passions are wont to be expressed much

otherwise than they ought to do in plain and familiar speech. And yet you not onely venture to use their Figures of speech, but you go beyond them. Like a man that having light upon a good Figure in Rhetorick, will never have done with it, but is always touching upon it. Then which nothing can be more absurd, especially if he heap a great many of these Figures together, as your manner is, asking God over and over again, (as I said) why he doth not this or that, and when he will do it. Besides, that which in a great agony (as I said) is very decent to be spoken, doth not befit a man's mouth at another time; but they that go about to imitate it, do a thing unnatural. And the truth is, you seem to me to endeavour by these questions to put your selves and the people into a great passion, and a kind of agony; but they do not spring (I persuade my self) nor arise of themselves from any ardency of Devotion. But there is another thing that offends me more than all this; that having stirr'd up some confused passions in your selves by this and other such like means, you proceed to such an high degree of confidence in this bold way of Arguing with God; that you quite forget who you are speaking to For some have told him that he little knew how his enemies insulted, (or some such thing,) and that if he did but know how desirous they were of such a thing, or how much they would prize it, he would not deny them.

N.C. Pray, Sir, hold your peace, or I will stop

stop my ears. You abuse good men.

C. I tell you only what is credibly reported: and if it be not so, I shall be very glad. But I must adde, that they take such a liberty of saying any thing to God, which they would say to one another, that I conceive it not unlikely that some might fall into those unseemly (others perhaps will call them blasphemous) expressions. Are not you of the same mind?

N.C. I cannot deny but that they use *great familiarity* with God.

C. Familiarity do you call it? would the world had never known it: For it is such a one as hath bred in mens minds a contempt of God and Religion. It hath taught every body to let that Member loose which ought to be always bridled, especially in God's presence. They vent all their foolish Opinions to him; they tell him News, and inform him how things go abroad; which they have received many times upon a false report: which hath brought such a scandal upon Religion, that it cannot but grieve any good man's heart to think on't.

N.C. It is such as *you* that have brought Religion into contempt, and not *we*.

C. How so, I pray you?

N.C. By *despising the Spirit*.

C. It is false We reverence that Spirit which was in the Apostles; and if we could see such an one again, none would entertain it with greater gladness. We acknowledge also the power of

the Spirit of God ſtill in the hearts of men, eſpecially of thoſe who are good; and we bleſs God continually for it. But that which we deny is this, That either you or we are able (as I told you) *to pray by the Spirit.*

N.C. Do you not then deſpiſe the Spirit?

C. No; we ſuppoſe there is no ſuch thing as Prayer by the Spirit: if there were, we ſhould reverence it.

N.C. Would you would tell me your meaning.

C. I mean a prayer immediately dictated by the Holy Ghoſt, as ſome were in the Apoſtles day.

N.C. I underſtand you not.

C. Such a prayer, in which by the Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt a man conceives thoſe things which he ſpeaks to God. Or (in plainer terms) I mean, that the Spirit of God doth not now ſuggeſt to any of us (when we pray) the very matter and words which we utter. If you pretend to this, then thoſe prayers are as much the Word of God as any of *David's* Pſalms, or as any part of the Bible; and (being written from your mouths) may become Canonical Scripture.

N.C. But we do not pretend to this.

C. I wiſh then you would not talk as if you did. I am ſure, your diſcourſes of Prayer are commonly ſuch, that one would think you took your ſelves to be full of the Holy Ghoſt. And this I muſt tell you hath made a great many ſcorn Religion, when they ſaw the Spirit of God intitled to ſuch pitiful ſtuff as they heard many vent with the greateſt confidence. *N.C.*

N.C. This is their own fault.

C. And yours too.

N.C. I cannot believe that our Prayers ever had any such effect.

C. But I can; and I will tell you how. You constantly tell us that the Bishops by prescribing a Form limit and stint the Spirit. By which Spirit you mean the Spirit of God, not your own. From whence it follows, that you think (or would have the world think) that the Spirit of God speaks in you when you pray, and that you utter its mind and words. Now many men hearing you pray so inconsiderately and wildly, uttering most absurd (if not impious) things, yet with a mighty zeal and confidence, have been tempted to think that whatsoever is said of the Spirit, even in the Apostles days, might possibly be no more than such an Extravagance and Fury as this.

N.C. A most senseless conceit.

C. I think so too. But you have given occasion to such conceits in those that are inclined to Infidelity.

N.C. I hope not. For we onely mean, when we say we pray by the Spirit, that the Holy Ghost assists us.

C. With what? Doth it furnish you with words?

N.C. No, with devout and ardent affections.

C. This indeed you should mean; but your brags of the Spirit import more.

N.C. Pray, Sir, use no such reproachful words; we boast of nothing. *C.* Well,

C. Well, pardon me that word. But if you do not brag, yet you say that you can *pray by the Spirit*, and we cannot, at least do not. In which you ascribe something more to your selves than is to be found among us.

N. C. Yes.

C. Then you mean more by *praying by the Spirit* than being inspir'd with devout Affections. For those you cannot deny we may have as well as you; and unless you will take upon you to search the heart, you must grant we feel them, since we protest that we do. From whence I conclude, whatsoever you say, that your men would have you believe that it is the Spirit which speaks in them and by them when they pray. Which is a thing that reproaches not only them, but the very Spirit of God, and (as I said before) hath at least confirm'd men in their Atheistical or unbelieving inclinations.

N. C. Well, I will not dispute this with you any longer. But tell me seriously, do you think that men could pray with that readiness and elocution, and lenght, if they were not mightily assisted by the Spirit of God?

C. Yes indeed do I. Their own spirits will serve them for this purpose; if they be but indued with good phansies, and a sufficient measure of boldness. For it is a great vertue (I assure you) in this case not to be modest; though we reckon it a singular vertue to be so.

N. C. I cannot think it possible.

C. Why?

C. Why? Neighbour, you may take my word for this. There are many of our men could outdo you in this Gift (as you call it) of Prayer, if they would give themselves the liberty; and yet you would not think them inspir'd, I am sure. I mean, they are able to speak so readily and fluently, so earnestly and passionately of all manner of things, and to continue this strain so long, and that without humming or hawing; that if you did not know them, perhaps you would admire them above most of your own.

N.C. Then I should conclude they had the Gift of Prayer but suppress it.

C. So they have, but it is both in you and us onely a Natural gift, or acquir'd by Exercise, and Practise, and Imitation———

N.C. Now you speak prophanely.

C. I speak the sense of the sobereſt of your own Party, (as I verily believe) who would say the same, if they durst but deal plainly with you. And (as simple as I am) I dare undertake to justifie the truth of what I say against any of them, if they have the face to contradict it.

N.C. I see you leave the Spirit of God nothing to do in our Prayers.

C. Would you would see how you forget your self. Did I not tell you what the Spirit of Prayer was? how that God bestows it upon us, when he gives us a sense of himself and of our needs, and stirs up in us holy desires, and passionate longings after his Righteousness; which we should

ſhould expreſs in ſuch words as are becoming that Majeſty with whom we have to do? And this is the reaſon that we take care to chuſe our words, and not leave them to extemporary invention, eſpecially in the publick Service of God.

N.C. Do you think they will ever want Words whoſe hearts are full of Deſires? or can great Affections ever fail to furniſh us with plenty of Language?

C. Yes, that they may. For all experience tells us, that very great and high Affections are too big for Words, and make a man at a ſtand for want of Expreſſions; which no man ſure will think a ſeemly thing in a publick Congregation. And the paſſions of Admiration and Reverence of God reſtrain a mans forwardneſs of ſpeaking to him, and make him like a few words beſt, which he is not then in a fit caſe to invent. As for leſſer Affections and ſuperficial Heats; I grant they ſeldom let a man want words (if he have tolerable Parts) and make him ſpeak more readily than he would do at another time: yet they are not able ever to furniſh him with thoſe that are fit, proper, and decent. Which methinks ſhould make you not quarrel with a ſober form of words, at leaſt in our publick Devotions.

N.C. Would you could perſwade me that a Form of words is lawful to be uſed; it would go a great

a great way to perswade me to come to your Church.

C. Strange that you should be so inapprehensive! It is so lawful to use a Form of words, that I have shewn you it is in a sort necessary: that is, we can have no security that the Service of God will always be performed well without one.

N. C. I confess I do not yet apprehend you.

C. Observe then. I say, the best of men, though their hearts be full of good desires, may, from some cause or other, want such words as are fit and proper to express their meaning. In this case they must hack in an unseemly manner, or make a stop, or use such words as are too rude and slovenly, or speak broken and imperfect language, or at the best such as is too hard and obscure, and unintelligible by the Vulgar. None of which things are to be permitted in the publick Worship, which ought to be performed with the greatest solemnity and gravity. And therefore to prevent that Undecency, and secure the Service of God from all that is unhandsome; you must consent to a prescribed Form of words, wherein men shall address their humble and hearty Desires to him. For though some men, at some times, may pray well enough; yet other men, and the same men at other times, may be very confused, and full of Tautologies; and it's well if they endeavour not to supply these defects with rude Clamours, brutish Noises,

and

and a deal of the Holy Scriptures wofully misapplied. Beside; how can you persuade any strangers to be of our Church, or to hold any Communion with us, if they do not know how we worship God? And how should they know that, unless you can produce something which by a general consent is own'd for his Service? This no doubt is one reason why all Churches in the world have had their publick Forms of Prayer, that they may let every body know how God is served by them; and why the best men in Reformed Churches have wished those happy days might come of amity and friendship, that they might by a Common Counsel and Consent form a certain Liturgy, which might be as a Symbol and Bond of Concord among them all. And truly I cannot advise how your Ministers can justifie themselves in separating now from all the Reformed Churches, (as well as ours) with whom they covenanted to maintain an Uniformity, not onely in Doctrine and Discipline, but Worship also. To me they seem to live in an open breach of one branch of that Covenant, of which they are so tender. For they do not *endeavour in their place and calling to reform according to the example of those Churches.*

N.C. What should they reform now they have no power?

C. Themselves and their Congregations, which they take the boldness to gather; who ought

ought to serve God (according to the Covenant) after the example of the best Reformed Churches; all of which have an Order and Form of Prayer, and never imagin'd that those written Forms did bind up and stint the Spirit. This is a peculiar phansie of your own, who have no Form at all in any of your Conventicles or Meetings; though it is in the power of your Ministers to have one, as well as to hold such Meetings; and though they be bound by their League and Covenant to do their endeavor to imitate those that have. Nay, I much question whether they use the Lord's Prayer. They that do (I believe) have the least company; such is the prejudice which they (contrary to their Covenant) have sowen in peoples minds against Forms of Prayer, even that of the Lord's. Which thing considered, it makes me astonish'd at your impudence in pretending such niceness of Conscience, and fear to break your Covenant; when you break it every time you meet together without some Form of Divine Service.

N.C. They onely covenanted to reform this Church of *England* according to the example of the best Reformed Churches: which they cannot do.

C. Onely, do you say? Is that a less thing then to reform a particular Congregation? Methinks they should think themselves obliged to do what they can, when they cannot do what they would; and to do that in a part, which they

cannot

cannot do in the whole; that is, bring in some Form of Prayer into your Churches, for so no doubt you esteem them.

N.C. I do not think they can if they would.

C. Why?

N.C. Because most of us think Forms unlawfull.

C. That's their fault, who either taught you to believe so heretofore, or do not instruct you now to believe otherwise. Though it were a very easie thing for them to do it, and convince you of your errour, even from your own Practice.

N.C. My Practice? I never use any, and I think never shall.

C. It is a wonderful thing that you should be so blind. Do you never sing the *Psalms of David*, and that as they are translated into *English* Metre?

N.C. Yes.

C. Those are Prayers and Petitions as well as Thanksgivings, are they not? And let me tell you, the words are so mean and sometime uncouth, nay, the sense of the Prophet so often mistaken in that Translation which is commonly used; that if you had so much to except against the Common Prayer, as may reasonably be excepted against many things there, there would be no end of your Complaints; you would be ten times louder in your Clamours than you are.

N.C. Indeed I did not think of this.

C. Your Ministers do; but are not so sincere

as

as to give you notice of it? lest you should be disabused, and they should lose your Custom. But pray think of it your self hereafter; and tell me why it is not as lawful to use a Form of Prayer in Prose, as to use one in Verse. You will be a marvellous man, if you can shew a Reason of the Difference.

N.C. But this Form is not taken out of the *Mass-book*, as the Common Prayer is.

C. Then you lay down your quarrel at *a Form* of Prayer; and onely scruple *this Form* now in use; and that because it hath been used in the *Roman* Church.

N.C. Very right.

C. Then pray lay aside your *Bible* too; at least cut the *Psalter* out of your book, for that's much in use in their Service.

N.C. You go too fast; that is the Word of God, and therefore to be used; but any thing else used in the Church of *Rome* I think we should have nothing to do with.

C. This is a foolish exception. For the Reason you gave me concludes against the use of the *Psalms* too, or else it concludes nothing: which I thus demonstrate. You lay down this Proposition, *Whatsoever is used in the Service of the* Roman *Church must not be used by us.* To this I adde another; The *Psalms* and other *Scriptures* are used in the *Service of the* Roman *Church.* Now do you draw any other Conclusion if you can from these two, but this,

That *those Scriptures must not be used by us.* If You like not this Conclusion, then you must mend the first Proposition, (which is your own, and you may do what you will with it;) as for mine, it cannot be mended, for it is certainly true. Now how will you mend it, but by allowing us the use of whatsoever is good in their Service? And then you must admit of more than the Scripture to be used by us, even all that is according to the Scripture: As our Prayers certainly are; though some of them are but Translations of the *Latine* Prayers used in that Church.

N.C. I will mend it in this manner: Whatsoever they use (except it be the Word of God) we are not to use it.

C. It is meer Humour that makes you limit it in this manner. For there is something good besides the Scripture, *viz.* that which is writ, said, or done according to it. And why they should make any thing of this nature unuseful to us by their using it, since you confess the Holy Scripture, notwithstanding their use, nay abuses of it, is not prophaned thereby; is past my capacity to understand. But perhaps you will be more sensible of what I say, if I tell you, that upon these principles you must reject the use of the *Creed*, commonly called the *Apostles Creed*, because it is Professed there in Divine Service as well as here.

N.C. I would not willingly go so far from them.

C. Not go? you must whether you will or no, if you will follow your Principles, which will carry you so far, and a great deal farther. For this is the very bottom on which your Discourse stands; that whatsoever hath been in use by a bad company of men, must by no means be used by us in God's Worship, except onely such portions of Holy Scripture as shall be thought fit to be read in our Assemblies. From whence it follows, that you may not lift up your Eyes to Heaven, nor Kneel when you pray, nor——

N.C. Now methinks you rave.

C. Pray hear me a little, and you shall see it's you that are wild, and not I: so wild, as to practise that which you condemn. If we must not do what the *Church of Rome* doth in the Worship of God, then much less what *Heathens* have done and still do; for they are worse than the *Roman* Church.

N.C. I think your Proposition is good enough; but who doth that which the Heathen Idolaters were wont to do?

C. That did the *Jewish* Church, and that do you.

N.C. Prove that.

C. So I will; and you shall have Scripture for it. The *Jews* and you also *Bow your Knees or Bodies to God*, and the *Heathens* bowed their Knees to *Baal*, and Bodies to *Rimmon*, 2 *Kings* 5.18. 1 *Kings* 19.18. You all lift up your Eyes

to Heaven when you worship; and the Heathen lifted up their eyes to their Idols, as appears by the practice in *Israel*, who imitated their Customs, *Ezek.* 18. 12. and 33. 25. You stretch out your hand to God, and so the Custom was to do to a strange God, *Psalm.* 44. 20. The Heathens sate down at their Feasts, when they eat of the Sacrifices in the Temples of their Gods, 1 *Corinth.* 8. 10. *Exod.* 32. 6. which is the very posture which you are so fond of when you come to feast with *Christ*, in the holy Sacrament of his Body and Bloud sacrificed for us. I would adde more, but that it would be tedious. And the truth of it is, good men use that every day well which bad men use ill: And therefore I see not but we may do so with many things practised in the *Roman* Church. Do not good men use the Name of God with Reverence, which wicked men continually blaspheme? Do we not refresh our selves with Meat and Drink, of which many Debauched persons take a Surfeit? Those fine Cloaths which some wear for pride, do not others wear because they befit their Quality? And, to come nearer our business, Those Prayers which some men mumble over, others read devoutly: and those Garments which some may use as holy, others use as decent. What should ail us then, I ask you once again, that we cannot rightly use those things which the Church of *Rome* abuses? say those good Prayers, for instance in,

in *English*, which they say in *Latine?* wear a white Garment without any Ceremony to consecrate it, which they hallow with many Prayers, and Crossings, and Holy water? Nay, use the Sign of the Cross it self upon one occasion onely once, after the Sacrament of Baptism, and merely as a token the Child is already become a Servant of the Crucified *Jesus*; which they use upon all occasions, before and in Baptism, a great many times, and that also to drive away the Devil, and to make the Sacrament more efficacious? There are an hundred things more, present themselves to my thoughts about these matters; but I am ashamed to discourse any longer against so absurd a Principle as yours. For in my judgment you may as well *do* some things which the Church of *Rome* doth, as *believe* some things which she believes; as I hope you do. Nay, you believe even what the Devil believes. And as it would be a very dangerous rule, if any one should say, Believe quite contrary to what the Devil believes; so it is no less (but rather more) dangerous to say, Do quite contrary to what the Church of *Rome* doth.

N.C. I have not much to say against your discourse; but we have a persuasion among us, that Nothing is lawful to be done by you or any body else in the Worship of God, but what is enjoyned by himself in his Word. And then what becomes of your Crossing and Chaunting

and Kneeling, with all the rest of your Inventions? are they not all Idolatrous?

C. This is the wildest phansie that we have yet heard, as many of our Ministers have shewn by unanswerable Arguments. For it makes that unlawful which the Scripture allows; in which we find many Holy men doing those things (without any censure) in God's Worship which he had no where commanded. Nay, it makes the Worship of God impossible; the Time, the Place, the Vesture in which it shall be performed being no where appointed. It condemns also the best Christians in all Ages till of late, who without any scruple used Forms of Prayer, and such Rites as those about which there is all this stir. And, which perhaps will most move you, I have heard our Ministers shew that this Principle doth condemn your selves, who (when you take an Oath) do not refuse to lay your Hand upon the Book, and kiss the Gospel, according as the custom is. Now all agree that an Oath is a solemn act of Divine Worship, it being an acknowledgment of all God's Attributes, and he being invocated and call'd upon to be a Witness and a Judge in the case. And if that be an act of Worship, I am sure, Kissing the Book and Laying on the Hand are as much Ceremonies as Signing with the Cross; outward Signs (I mean) accompanying the action of Swearing, though they belong not to the Essence of it. And I am as sure that you

you can no where shew me that God hath commanded this Religious action to be attended with this Ceremony. Behold then, into what perplexities these men cast you! What Snares they intangle you and themselves in! Out of which they cannot set you free, but by acknowledging (as we do) that men may appoint this Ceremony in taking an Oath, though God hath not appointed it; according as in this very case, *Abraham* made his Servant put his Hand under his Thigh when he sware, though it were a thing no where commanded. But then consider again, that they and we may take the like liberty in other parts of Divine Worship, and submit to such Usages as are appointed by our Governours, provided they be no where forbidden. Or if, rather than condemn themselves, they will condemn good old *Abraham*, and say he followed the custom of the world too much: there is no way for you but to turn *Quakers*, and to condemn Clean cloaths when we come to worship God; to find fault with the Minister for standing in a Pulpit, for Preaching by a Glass, for wearing a Gown, yea, a Cloak or a Cap, especially with Ears: for none of these things are by any Divine Command.

N C. I see you have something to say to every thing. If I did not know you, I should suspect you for a *Jesuit*.

C. That would be ridiculous. For if there

be any of them in Lay-mens clothes, they do not perſuade you to our Church, but from it; knowing that is the ſureſt way to gain you, if they can once unſettle your minds, and fill you with Phanſies: of which they will at laſt perſuade you there is no end, till you reſt your ſelf in the boſom of that *Harlot* which you ſo much abhor.

N.C. I ſee one cannot weary you. But ſuppoſe theſe things be lawful in themſelves; I am told they become unlawful when once they are enjoyn'd.

C. This is an Extravagance wilder than all that went before. They are ſo far from being unlawful by being commanded, that they become neceſſary; to be done, I mean.

N.C. I thought you would ſay ſo. But that's the very thing makes me think them unlawful when commanded; for it takes away Chriſtian liberty by making them neceſſary to be done.

C. Goodly! what fine things do your Chriſtians make themſelves, that muſt be reſtrained in nothing, though for publick Orders ſake? Nay, muſt over-rule the Laws of Chriſtian Princes, and ſhew the power they have over their Commands? Do you think there ever were any Chriſtians in the world before you that held themſelves bound not to do a lawful thing, merely becauſe his Sovereign would have it done? If he did command a thing unlawful,

lawful, there were good reason not to do it: but if he is like to be equally disobeyed whether he command things lawful or unlawful; nay, and it be a duty to disobey him in both alike; he is in miserable circumstances, and had better never meddle with the Worship of God, but leave it to be ordered as every body phansies.

N.C. That's the best way.

C. Nay, now I think on't, there's a way to make you do what he likes best; and you shall hold your selves bound to it.

N.C. That's strange.

C. Not so strange as true. For when a Prince hath a mind you should do a thing, if I were of his Council, I would advise him to make a Law that you should not do it. For then you would either shew that you are people of a humoursom Conscience, that is guided by no certain Principles; or else, according to your own Rules, you would do what he forbids you. For as when he commands a thing about the Service of God, it becomes unlawful to be done: So when he forbids any thing, it becomes unlawful to let it alone; your Liberty being invaded by him either way. If he would but require therefore that no body should wear the Surplice, or use the Sign of the Cross; we should see all your Ministers with Surplices on their Backs, and all your Children crossed in the Fore-head: For else

you

you would be restrained in your Liberty.

N.C. I never knew any man fetch things about in this fashion as you do. The truth is, you intangle me, but you do not perswade me.

C. I have not much hope of it, If you feell not the force of these arguments: Yet I'll try what a familiar Resemblance will do. We are agreed that the thing commanded by Authority, is not less indifferent in its own nature after it's commanded than it was before; but onely our use of it is not so indifferent and at liberty. We must needs be therefore agreed also that this Restraint comes not upon us from the things themselves, because still perfectly indifferent; but onely from the Law, which ties us up: Now we say, that to this Law we are to be subject, not regarding our own Liberty so much as the Prince's Authority. You say, No. But as the Law cannot alter the Nature of the things, so it ought not to Restrain your Freedom in the use of them; but leave that as indifferent as the things themselves. That is, that the King ought to make no such Law about those matters; If he do, then it is unlawfull to do what he commands to be always done; because he ought to leave you at Liberty to let it alone if you please, and you ought to maintain your Liberty, and by no means to part with it. Put the case then that you (being Master of a Family) will have your

your Children and Servants to come at a certain time and place, &c. to worship God. It is indifferent indeed in it self, and all one to God, whether it be at ten, eleven, or twelve a clock, or in what part of your House they meet, or in what Cloaths they come, or what Postures they use: But you appoint the hour of meeting shall be twelve; and that they come into your Parlour, or Hall, or Chappel, if you have that conveniency: And beside, you require your Servants that they shall not come into your Parlour (suppose) in those Frocks wherein they just before rubb'd your Horse's Heels, (which you think not handsom or decent) but in their Liveries, or some such neater Apparel. And when they come there, you bid them stand some part of the time, and the rest you bid them sit, if they please, and at Prayers kneel, as you do your self. Let me ask you now, Do you really think that this is any such Restraint of their Liberty, as they have just cause to complain of it? Would you think you took too much upon you in making these Orders for your Family, of which you are Governour? Or would you judge that Servant to be without fault, and guiltless of any Contempt, who should say, that he will come at ten of the clock, but not at twelve; because it matters not which, so the thing be done; and he will not be tied to any Order, but to do the thing? And suppose another should come and say, that he

he will pray, if you please to come into the Stable, but he will not come into the Parlour; for it is indifferent where it is; and he must not be confined to one place more than another. And a third should come and tell you that he is ready to joyn in Prayer, but then it must be in his Frock, otherwise he will not; for God may be served as well in that as any other Garment, and he must use his Christian Liberty, and not be bound to your Fashions. And the next should tell you, that he will sit in your presence, or else you shall not have his company: His reason is, because it is all one to God whether he sit or stand; and he is not to let you be Master of his Freedom in those matters. What would you say to these people? Nay, what would you do with them? Would you excuse them, and acknowledge your own guilt in making such Injunctions? Or would you not rather treat them as a company of saucy Clowns and ill-bred Fellows, not fit to be kept in any orderly family? If you should not, all the world would hold you as ridiculous as they. For every Master of a family is vested with sufficient authority to see such commands as those observed. And when they that will not observe them, yet acknowledge them to be indifferent things; truly I think no body will think them harshly used, if they be turned out of doors. If they be Fools and Blocks, that cannot understand common sense; then (I confess) they are to be pitied; and his

good

good nature may work so far as to bear with their simplicity, if they be otherways good Servants: But yet those Knaves that abused their simplicity, and instilled these filthy Principles into them; deserve to be punish'd, and put out of his Service, till they acknowledge their fault, and learn more manners. Just like this is the present case before us. The Church is but a larger Family, a wider Society; in which the King is the Father and Supreme Governour. If he make some Laws for the more convenient, orderly and decent Worship of God there, which in themselves are Lawful, and declared not to be in their own nature necessary, but onely prudent Constitutions; I cannot see but that those who refuse to obey them upon pretence of their Liberty, and that God may as well be worshipp'd without those things, do shew themselves as unmannerly, rude, and refractory persons, as the Children or Servants in that supposed Family, of which I bad you conceive your self Master. And I leave you to apply this case to that; and to make the parallel complete in your thoughts at your leisure. I hope it will be worth your labour, if you do it seriously.

N.C. It gives me some light into the business already But still I wonder that all our Ministers should hold your Forms and Orders unlawful. Sure they have some better reason for it than I have.

C. Alas, good man! you are merely abused.

For

For though they are willing you should remain in the opinion of their Unlawfulness; they do not think so themselves.

N.C. What would you make of them? Do not I hear them constantly speak against them?

C. Nay, do you make what Consequences you think fit from it. As for the thing it self, I will maintain, that those Ministers you hear (some indeed think otherwise) are not of the mind, that it is unlawful to come to Common Prayer, or wear a Surplice, or kneel at the Sacrament.

N.C. You cannot make good your confident Assertion.

C. Why, Man? I have seen them at the Prayers; and many of them have professed they did not think the Ceremonies such great Bugbears that one need to be afraid of them. And if this will not do, I have a more convincing Argument of their Opinion in these matters.

N.C. And do these very men now seem to dislike the publick Prayers?

C. Seem? you confess they speak against Forms. And we see the open affronts they put upon our Service, by meeting at that very time when it is performed: the reason of which I expounded to you before.

N.C. Therefore I always thought they accounted it unlawful.

C. No such matter. You should rather think something else; and (to help you a little) consider whether their Integrity be so great as you imagine.

N.C.

N.C. Your meaning, Sir?

C. I mean, they do not seem to me to deal sincerely with you, in suffering you to live in this dangerous perswasion of the sinfulness of Common Prayer and the Ceremonies, when they know in their Consciences they are not sinful. And then to hear you call it *Bibble-babble*, *Porridge*, or such like vile names, without any reproof, is still worse. But if you hear *themselves* speak against the Common Prayer and the Ceremonies; there is the greater reason to have a vehement suspicion of their Dishonesty; because they decry that which in their Consciences they allow.

N.C. I am not fully satisfied of that.

C. Why did many of them deliberate so long whether they should accept of Dignities in the Church, if they did not believe it lawful to hear the Prayers, and to put even the *Babylonish* Garment (as you will needs call the Surplice) upon their backs; and more than that, to wear the very Rags of the Whore, the Lawn sleeves? If it was so plain a business, that their Conscience and their Covenant would not let them conform, one would think they should have professed it openly without any more ado. And therefore I conclude, that Pause and Deliberation was about something else; not about matters of Conscience, but of Interest and Policy. As, Whether the people would take it well, and not laugh at them, as so many Magpies got upon a Perch: whether

whether it would not be a scandalous thing, that is, not for their Credit and Reputation: whether they could not hold such a Party with them in Non-conformity, as would balance the Episcopal, and so force them at least to a Toleration. In short, whether they should not lose the Affections of their own Party, which they had already made; and win very little upon the Affections of others, whom they had so much disobliged in the late Troubles. These were their secret Debates in their Cabals, the weighty Points that were to be stated in those Consultations. You, Good man, think perhaps that they spent their time in Fasting and Seeking God to direct their Consciences. No, no; it was not their Conscience, but their Credit, which then lay at stake.——

N.C. Why should you think so?

C. Because I have heard some of them acknowledge they did not scruple what we do, but thought it unhandsom for *them* to do it. Sometimes they put it in a more Religious phrase, and said, it would give a great scandal to the world, who would think the worse of the Profession of Christianity. But the meaning was in plain *English*, that they were ashamed to confess their Error, and to set up those things again which they had rashly pulled down.

N.C. And would you not have men to consult their Credit?

C. Yes, but not so much as the Peace of the Church,

Church of God. We ought to deny our selves, and be content to be put to shame for God's sake; (which is indeed true Glory) and there is little of God among them that seek not Peace, though on those terms. Besides, there can no account be given of their Behavior since in cherishing this Fancy among you,(or suffering it to grow)thatConformity is unlawful,unless it be this;that they think it will make more for their Reputation among you,if you believe it wasConscience,not care of their own Credit & Estimation,that kept them fromConforming

N. C. You are the severest man that ever I knew, and love to search too far into the reason of things.

C. Would you would do so too; for then you would soon be of my mind.

N. C. No, not as long as one Scruple remains in my mind.

C. What's that?

N. C. I have heard some of them call yours, Will-worship, which the Apostle condemns, (*Col.* 2. *ult.*)

C. Very likely they might, and not understand what they said.

N.C. Do you believe they would,like brute Beasts, speak evill of things they know not?

C. I will not censure them of that, but this I can tell you,that one of your Ministers confessed to a sober person of my acquaintance, that he had never so much as read over the

Common-Prayer-book in all his life; and yet he was no Youngster. Perhaps there may be more such: and then if they speak against it, judge of them as you see Cause.

N. C. I believe such men dislike it without looking into it; because, as I told you, it is *Will-Worship*, a meer invention of man.

C. That's a word of S. *Paul*, whom no doubt they have read; but I question whether they understood him.

N. C. Why should you doubt it?

C. Because, if we take the sense of the Word, not from Fancy, but from the matter wherewith it is connected, it makes nothing for your purpose, but rather much against you.

N. C. Can you tell better than they?

C. I do not say so; but I have heard one of our Ministers give such an Explication of the place as satisfied me, that you use a Weapon which wounds your selves.

N. C. Let's hear it.

C. If you look a little back, you will find the Apostle forbids *Worshipping of Angels*; (*v.* 18.) as a bold invention of men, for which there was no Revelation. And then he speaks against such superstitious people (whether *Jews*, or others, the minister could not tell us) as made it unlawful to Marry, to eat some kind of Meats, to touch or come near some things; none of which God hath made sinful, but they were the meer Commandments of men, (*v.* 21.22.)

Now

Now those that were of this Humour he immediately after (*v.* 23.) charges with *Will-Worship*. Which must consist, therefore, one would think, in these two things.

First, In giving the Worship due to God to some Creature or other. *Secondly*, in enjoyning that as a thing necessary, and commanded by God as a piece of his Worship and Service, which he hath left indifferent; or, in other words, when any thing is so enjoyned to be done or not done, as if it were the Will & Command of God he should be so served, when it is a meer Constitution of the Will of Man, then a *Will-Worship* is erected. Now I am sure you will not make us guilty of the *First* sort of Will-Worship, because none are more against it than we. As for the *Second*, our Church hath declared to all the World, that none of the things you boggle at are imposed under the Notion of Necessary, or Religious, in themselves, or as commanded by God; but are of an indifferent Nature, and only used as decent and comely in the judgment of the present Governors, who can alter these things, and constitute something else in the room, if they see it fit; which they could not pretend to, did they think them necessary. But then, as our Church is not guilty of *Will-Worship* in the Apostles Sense; so, on the other side, I know not how to excuse those from that very guilt, who oppose what is ordained among us as un-

lawful, and forbid us to use those Rites and Orders, because sinful things. For they make that necessary to be forborn and left undone, which God hath not made so, but left indifferent; and so they in effect condemn those as Sinners whom God acquits from all blame. As those in the Apostle's Discourse, said, *Touch not*, *Taste not*, *Handle not*, so you say, *Kneel not*, *Pray not by a Form*, *Weare not a Surplice*, &c. Now since you think (as those men did) to please God by not doing those things which he hath no-where forbidden; I do not see but you commit the very fault which the Apostle reproves: That is, you make that necessary not to be done, (if we will be true Worshippers of God) which he hath not made necessary not to be done, but left us at liberty to do it if we please. By which means *you make a Religion of your own*, and study to honour God by abstaining from these things by which he never said that he was dishonoured. O that all tender Consciences would seriously consider this. For they would soon discern that your Ministers by forbidding these things now in dispute, lay greater burthens upon the Consciences of their Brethren, and clog them with more Duties, than God hath laid upon them. Whereas we, who think those things may be done, lay no other burthen upon the Conscience than what God himself hath laid; which is, to obey our Governors in all things wherein he himself hath

hath not bidden us to do the contrary.

N. C. You will endeavor by and by to make me believe the Moon is made of green Cheese. All this discourse tends to prove that we are *Superstitious*, which you know in your Consciences we abhor; and are therefore so averse to your ways, because we judg them Superstitious.

C. You begin to be sagacious and to smell things a far off. The very truth is, *I* think it is no easie matter to find more *Superstitious* people in the World than your selves. And your Clamours against *Superstition* prove nothing, but that a man may be guilty of some faults, and not know it.

N. C. Phy for shame!

C. You must not think to put me off with words and wry Faces. *I* will prove you grosly *Superstitious*, or else be converted to you.

N. C. You will not make good your word.

C. Yes, but *I* will. Tell me, what is *Superstition?*

N. C. *I* am not well skill'd in Definitions.

C. No, if you were, you would have smelt the foul Beast among you before this time. But your business is, only to get some ugly Words by the end, and then to throw them at every body whom you do not fansie, though they have less to do with them than your selves. We have been taught that *Superstition* is a great Dread lest God should not be pleased, unless we do some things which we need not do, and lest he should be displeased when we do some things

in which there is no harm. Which Dread springs (as you very well saw) out of an opinion that such things are good or evil, (and so must be done or must not be done, else God will take it ill) which in truth are meerly indifferent. Or, in shorter, and perhaps plainer, terms, It is *a needless Fear in Matters of Religion*, which makes a man either not dare to do those things which he hath a liberty to do, or think he must upon pain of Damnation do those things which he may as well let alone.

N. C. What then?

C. What then, do you say? I would have you behold your face in this Glass, and see how wretchedly and superstitiously you look. For you think you must not, for fear of God's Displeasure, use a Form, nor sign a Child with the Cross in Baptism, nor Bow in the House of God, nor go up to the Rails, nay, nor Kneel, nor hear Church Musick, nor uncover your Heads when you enter into a Church, nor call the Lord's-day *Sunday*, nor keep an Holy-day. Nay, it was a long time before you thought it lawful to let your Hair grow below your Ears. All which things we may do, and not displease God at all. On the other side, You imagine you are bound to propagate & spread all your little Opinions, though with the Ruin of Kingdoms: That you are tied to maintain your liberty in indifferent matters, against all the Authority of a King, and to the disturbing a

Church:

Church: That you have a Sermon or two on a Fasting-day, or else you fear it is not kept; and two Sermons on the Lord's-day, or else you doubt it is not Sanctified. Nay, some of you (I remember) fansied heretofore, that it was no Sermon, if it were not in the Pulpit. And to such an height is your Superstition grown, that you scarce think a Prayer is acceptable to God, unless it be long. And you are afraid he is not served aright, unless we have a long Prayer before Sermon, after we have been praying a great while for all manner of things. And such a Necessity you seem to lay upon extemporary Prayer, that many well-disposed people, who have not that Gift, dare not pray at all, (at least in their Families) for fear they should not pray aright. And all these are things of such a nature, as that they may not be done, or done otherwise than you think they must, and God be never the less pleased with us.

N. C. Now you have discovered the Naughtiness of your Heart, in speaking against Sermons in the Afternoon.

C. If I should do so, I should speak against my self, and ran into your fault, I think they may be used, or they may be let alone, according as the Edification of the People shall require. But to make them so necessary as you do, arises from a *Superstitious* Fansie, that God is not well served without them. Whereas in

truth the Catechism expounded, or the Scriptures opened, would be as well, or rather better.

N. C. I doubt there is something that is naught lies at the bottom of such Discourses.

C. You should rather suspect there are naughty things at the bottom of such Opinions as yours. For the Fruit of your Superstition is this at the best; Rash and unjust Censuring of your Brethren, that do not the things which you make so necessary to be done, or do the things which you make so necessary to be forborn; and at last downright Schism and Separation from them, because you fansie they are out of the way of God.

N. C. I must confess I have some fear you are so; who can be content without a Sermon in the Afternoon, and satisfied with Common-Prayer; which I could never feel my self so affected with, as I am with extemporary Devotions.

C. That's because you had so low an esteem of it, and therefore brought no desires, nor used any Endeavours to be moved by it: but rather you set your self in a dull and sleepy Posture, as one that had no list to hear it. I could tell you something else besides this, but it would only vex you.

N. C. I am not afraid of any thing you can say. Pray speak your mind.

C. I believe if you would examine your self,

you

you would find there is *some part* of your Ministers extemporary Prayers, which do no more affect you than our Service.

N. C. What part should that be?

C. The Entrance or Beginning of his Prayer: When he speaks very slow, as if he was studying what to say, and draws out his words with a low Voice, and with a small degree of Vehemence, and little or no Motion; then I say, I believe your Affections are low too, and you feel not your heart much moved. But when his Voice begins to rise, (especially, if he lift it up on a sudden, and it break out like a Clap of Thunder) and when he speaks more fluently, & his Zeal begins to kindle, and he lays about him, and is full of life (as you call it) that is, uses a great deal of Action; then is the time, if the truth were known, that your Affections stir, and begin to rise from the bottom of your Heart, where they lay heavy and dull before. Then you sigh and groan, and perhaps weep, and are put into many Passions, which lay quiet enough till his Breath blew lowder. Is not this the plain truth?

N C. What then?

C. Then you are no more affected with the Prayers of your Minister, (as they are pious Petitions or Acknowledgments of God) than you are with our Common-Prayer; But only with the Voice, the Vehemency, the Action, the pretty Fancies and fine Phrases, which perhaps

haps he lights upon when he is a little heated; which were it my case, 'twould make me suspect the Love of God was not in me. For why should he think he loves God, who is not moved with Affection to him when he hears his Greatness, Goodness, Wisdom, and Benefits to us, soberly and gravely expressed, but is in a great Commotion when he meets with a new Word that pleases him, or a kind Phrase, or melting Tone, a sweet Voice, or some such thing?

N. C. I hope it is something else that affects me.

C. If it be, then pray tell me, why should not the Common-Prayer affect you, whose sense is good enough, only it is not varied and dressed up in new words every day? I beseech you try your Heart, by examining the Book, & considering whether those very things be not requested of God there, which you desire in your Prayers: and if they be, then demand of your self a Reason why they move you no more. I doubt you will find it is because they are not new, but old Expressions.

N. C. I will consider of it at leisure.

C. To help you a little take this along with you; which will go near to convince you, that if it be not the Voice and Tone, it is the Novelty which affects you. Suppose one of the Prayers of your own Ministers, which you think is indicted by the Spirit, was taken in short-

hand

hand writing, and afterward used every day in the Service of God, as often as our Prayers are: Tell me seriously, do you not think it would seem very flat at last, fuller of nauceous Repetitions and faulty Expressions than you conceive to be in the Common-Prayer?

N. C. You put a hard Question to me.

C. I see you are inclined to be of my mind; and therefore pray consider these two things. *First*, That since even a Prayer which you think so heavenly would not affect you alway, if it were alway used; it is to be feared you are moved only while Prayers are new, and indeed because they are new, not because they are good & pious Petitions. And *Secondly*, that since it is convenient, if not necessary, to have a Form of Prayer in the Church, and the Common-Prayer hath no other Imperfection but what those whom you so much admire would have, were they constantly used, as it is; why should you not like it as well as any, especially since it is established by publick Authority?

N. C. I will consider of it, as I said before. But I wish you had seen a Book (as I perceive you have many of ours) newly come out, which supposes *your Service-Book hath been abused to Superstition and Idolatry*, and therefore must be abolish'd.

C. He doth well to suppose it, and not to undertake the proof of it. What is the name of the Book?

N. C.

N. C. Nehushtan.

C. I have had a short sight of it, as it creeps up and down privately.

N. C. What do you think of it.

C. I will tell you first what I think of you.

N. C. Why what is the matter.

C. You seem to be in a most dangerous condition; for you are infected, as I told you, already with the extravagant Fancies of a number of other Sects, with whom you are blended. And in all likelihood you will have such new *Inventions*, or rather Frenzies, every year, as will at last destroy your selves as well as us. Some of your Ministers, for instance, acknowledg that the Liturgy is lawful to be used, and can read it themselves. Others there are that think it lawful, but not convenient for men of their Parts and Gifts, whose Ministry (which it seems is of great Necessity & Benefit) they conceive would be thereby rendred less useful. Then there is a third sort who are gone farther and doubt of its Lawfulness; So that they dare not be present at it, though they are content others should, who think it lawful. And now here is a man thinks no body ought to hear it, nor be suffered to use such a Form of Worship; but though the Magistrate ought to tolerate you, yet he ought not to tolerate us. For he saith, *It* is his Duty utterly to extirpate the Liturgy, as well as the Ceremonies. And every *one of you in your places ought to do your parts towards the abolishing*

bolishing of it; and not sit still in the midst of such Defilements and Snares, but discover your hatred of them, decline their use, and in such ways as Prudence, Justice and Order do allow, Endeavour the rooting of them out. Whether you will go next, God only knows. And God help the poor Children of the Church of *England*, who when all so boldly challenge Liberty and Toleration, must be the only Persons excluded from this Favour, and, according to this Gentleman, be denied the use of the Common-Prayer, when every body else may pray what he list.

N. C. You must be content, if he have *Evinced* (as he tells us he hath, in his Title page) *That the Liturgy, Ceremonies, and other things used at this day in the Church of* England, *ought neither to be imposed, nor retained, but utterly extirpated and laid aside.* And he pretends in his Epistle to have said more in this Argument than ever was said before.

C. He doth so, and imagins he can weild an old rotten Engine, that hath been long laid aside, better than former Workmen, who were but Bunglers in compare with this Artist. For he doubts not to manage it so as to throw down the whole Fabrick of the *English* Church.

N. C. What Engine do you mean?

C. It is this Principle, *That it is the Will and pleasure of God, that such things as have been abused*

abuſed and polluted in Superſtitions and Idolatrous Services ſhould be aboliſhed and laid aſide (pag. 15.) Which I obſerve he contracts into theſe words, (pag. 21.) *It is Gods will that things abuſed in corrupt and falſe Worſhip ſhould be laid aſide.*

N. C. And what have you to ſay to it?

C. I will firſt tell you what he ſays to it, After he had told us a great many things (which every body knows) concerning the will of God that the *Iſraelites* ſhould aboliſh the Images & Groves and Altars of the *Cananites*, &c. and thence concluded, that *ſuch things* as have been imployed to corrupt ends and purpoſes muſt be aboliſhed: at laſt he comes and tells us, that this principle muſt not be extended too far, nor made to ſerve againſt *all things* that have been ſo abuſed, and he excepts a great number. Nothing Commanded by God muſt be diſuſed upon this account; none of Gods Creatures are to be refuſed; nay, no neceſſary and profitable Devices of men need be ſent packing, though they have been ſo profan'd, & more than this, he ſays that things which are but in a competent degree uſeful, may be retain'd, if they have been abuſed to Idolatry only in a ſlight manner; that is, a little while. Nay, things that have been more groſly abuſed, in caſe there be no danger for the future of their being imploy'd, to Idolatry, he is content ſhould be ſpar'd, and uſed either to Civil or Religious purpoſes.

Now

Now let any man, that can be Master of coherent Thoughts but for one minute, tell me, if this be not as much as to say his Principle is not true; and that things are not to be rejected merely upon this account, that they have been imployed in false Worship, but there must be some other reason for it. For if there be so many things, as he confesses, that may be abused; and yet may, nay some ought to be still used in God's Service, then the Abuse is not a sufficient reason for our throwing them away utterly, but there must be some other which makes it necessary. And if he had told us that reason plainly, and spent his Discourse in making it good; he had done like a man. But he saw (it's like) that this would not have done his business, for it would not for instance, have reached to the taking away of Common-Prayer; because it may be still *useful*, as much (sure) as his *Pen, which*, he tells us, *must not be thrown away, if any man be so foolish as to bow down to it and Worship it.* (pag. 130.) And as *necessary* I should think, as the *Water-Pots* in *Cana* of *Galilee*, which he confesses our Saviour used, *though abused to Superstition and unlawful Purifications*, And it is in no danger to be imploy'd to Idolatry, for the Papists hate it; and I hope he hath no thoughts that we ever intend to say these Prayers to Saints or Angels, any more than *to bow to a Saint or Angel standing for a Sign at an Inn-keeper's door*: And yet that

that is no such Profanation of the Sign in his judgment, but that the owner may let it stand, unless it become customary to bow to it.

N.C. Well. Is not the Gentleman to be commended for his Honesty, in not concealing this from his Readers, that his Proposition or Doctrine is not to be understood universally?

C. He durst do no otherwise. For if *by things abused which must be abolished*, he had understood *all things abused*, then he saw the *Lord's-day* would be antiquated, the *Sacrament of the Lord's* Supper laid aside, nay, *he himself* put out of his Ministry: the Christian Priests or Ministers having so much served Idols as he supposes. But since his Doctrine was to be limited, why was he not so honest as to do it at first; that so no Reader might be abused, who perhaps would not go so far as to come to his Limitations? Why did he not say, *some things abused* must be lay'd aside, and in some Case; for that's the sense of his Proposition? To make it plainer what I mean, I say, (mark it I pray you) by *things abused*, he understands only *some things*; and when he says they *must be lay'd aside*, he means *in some Cases* they must be lay'd aside; as appears by his Exceptions afterwards. And therefore he had done sincerely, if he had drawn up his Proposition thus, (and it had been agreeable to his Text, 2 *Kings* 18. 4.) *Some things*

things abused, &c. *are in some cases to be lay'd aside.* But, I conceive he saw that this would not so well serve his purpose; which was, to put people out of conceit with the Common-Prayer and Ceremonies as much as ever he could. For the Doctrine would not have been so popular, nor so easie to declaim upon. It would have put him to a great deal of pains, to *specifie the things* that must of necessity be destroy'd, and then he must have undertaken an harder Task, *to name the Cases* wherein those things, that might otherwise be spared, must needs be abolish'd; and another harder than that, to shew that, because some particular things were abolish'd at one time, none of the like kind must ever be used. And then he must have proceeded to shew, which ought to have made the principal part of his Book, but now in a manner is taken for granted) that the Liturgy is in the number of those things that have been so abused; and that the case is so, that it cannot be tolerated, but must be destroyed by the *King*, as the Brazen Serpent was by *Hezekiah*. Which would have proved the most difficult labour of all. For supposing it had been ever imploy'd to Idolatry, (which can never be proved;) yet since *Hezekiah*, in all likelyhood, would never have destroy'd such a Monument of God's mercies as the Brazen Serpent, had the people of a long time ceased

to burn Incenſe to it, and been in no danger to do ſo again; why ſhould we throw away the Liturgy, now that it is not abuſed to any Idolatrous purpoſe, nor in any likelihood ſo to be? Beſides, it cannot be ſo aboliſh'd as the Brazen Serpent was, but the very ſame Form may be brought forth again upon occaſion. And therefore any likelihood that may be fanſied of its being uſed to Idolatry in future times can be of no conſideration here, becauſe it may be ſo uſed whether we lay it aſide or no.

All theſe things conſidered, he very wiſely waved this Method; and only tells the people in *general* terms that *things* abuſed in falſe Worſhip muſt be laid aſide: Under which he knew the *Liturgy* and *Ceremonies* would be concluded by them, without any more adoe. For though his Inſtances or Proofs be all *particular*, and therefore he ſaw well enough his Propoſition ought to have been ſo; yet the people he knew might not ſee it, but preſently conclude the *Liturgy* muſt be packt away among the things abuſed. And though he makes limitations and reſtrictions of this Propoſition, to ſhew it is not Univerſal; yet they come a great way behind. And before there is any certainty what the *abuſed things* are, which muſt be laid aſide; the Magiſtrate is told his Duty, and earneſtly preſſed to remove them: the people alſo are inſtructed in theirs; who, he ſaith, are all concerned

cerned in one respect or other, as you may see *Sect.* 7. Then he spends another Section to shew the manner how it must be done; and another about the *time*; declaring, they must *forthwith lay their hand to the work*, even before they knew what they had to do, (for the time was not come to tell them that.) And then another follows, to give the *Reasons* of the Point: wherein *these things* are Represented as so odious and loathsom to God, that you may well think the *Liturgy* might be condemned to the Flames by the Reader, before he came to consider whether it was not an excepted thing; and he might be in such a flame to see execution done *forthwith*; as not to have patience to deliberate whether he ought to save it or no. Nor is the matter much mended when he comes to his Cautions: for, lest it should happen to be acquitted or reprieved, he doth not so much as bring it to a trial, much less bid his Readers take heed of passing rash judgment, without examining whether it were guilty of the aforesaid Crime or no; but fairly leaves it to take its chance, and to stand or fall in their opinion as it should happen. And therefore he did wisely intimate in the beginning of that Section, that it must be left to the Reader to compare his Cautions with what he had said; for there is not one in twenty that will take that pains, and fewer that are able to do it to any purpose, without some

assistance. In short, as far as I can judge, (for God only knows the Heart) he saw it was his best way to let his Restrictions alone till the last, and to propound his Doctrine in round and general words, because he knew the people would more readily swallow it: whereas if it had been broken into parts, some of which were to be taken, and some left; they might prove more nice, when they saw there was a scrupulous difference to be made. But that we may see what force there is in his Principle to do such feats as he imagins, I pray, if you can, resolve me one thing.

N. C. What's that?

C. Whether a *Roman Priest* being truly converted (as far as we can judge) may not be made an *English Minister.*

N. C. Yes, surely: what should hinder?

C. I will shew you clearly that it must not be according to his way of Reasoning. He tells you (*pag.* 21.) that things abused in False Worship must be laid aside; Then (*pag.* 44.) he tells you, that under the word *Things* he comprehends *Persons*, and lastly, (*pag.* 49.) he affirms the Papists to be no better than Idolaters. Now shew me how any Popish Priest, who in his language is a thing abused (so notoriously) in Superstitious and Idolatrous Worship, may ever be made use of more in the Service of God; especially when you consider what a possibility there is, that he may be Serviceable in

in the false Worship again. For my part, I think, according to his Principles, that he ought not only to be laid aside, but to be kill'd.

N. C. God forbid.

C. Read his *third Section* at your leisure, and tell me what you think of it. For it's like you have such Books among you, though we see them but by chance.

N. C. I have it not, nor know when I shall see it. Pray tell me briefly what he says.

C. He tells you *that God is so Impatient of gross and open Idolatry, and of such as are guilty of it, that he every where breaths forth Death against them.*

N. C. You have told me enough.

C. Nay, since you have put me upon it, you shall have a little more. *God peremptorily decrees* he sayes *that whosoever pleads for Idols, offers to them, or performs them any service, shall not only be look'd on as unfit to approach him, but also lose his life.*

N. C. Since you would not leave off when I would have had you, I will be even with you, and require his reason for this Assertion. Doth he bring any place of Scripture that contains so Universal a Decree, that *Whosoever he is that pleads*, &c.

C. No: You know his way is to make his Proposition *Universal*, and his Proofs *Particular*. He brings you above half a score Texts out of the

Scripture, which speaks of the execution that was to be done upon the *seven Nations* of *Canaan*, or the *Apostate Israelites* and the *Priests of Baal*; and leaves you to be so kind as to suppose, (though he go not about to prove it) that God hath decreed the like against all Idolaters whatsoever. And then at last he thus concludes; *How far this concerns the Papists, the knowledg of their ways and practice will inform us. That they are Idolaters the best Protestant writers affirm. And it will not relieve them to alledg that they Worship the true God; for so did the* Israelites *when they worshipped the Calf, yet no body questions but they were guilty of Idolatry.* I wonder he did not adde, from what went before, *and you very well know* Moses *ordered them to be slain.*

N. C. I must confess his Discourse ought to have ended so, if it be as you relate. And as I do not like it upon that account, so there's another thing that makes me think he is out of the way. There are many that scruple to call the place of your Assemblies a *Church*, and yet they would not have them pull'd down, (as they must be by these Principles) they being convenient Places to meet in for the Service of God. And for my part I would have the Cathedrals stand, if it were but to be an ornament to the Nation; though I plainly see his Engine, as you call it, will throw them all down, if we suffer it to go to work.

C.

C. He saw this as well as you; and therein could not but discern his Principle was bad, because it prov'd more than he would have it. And therefore perceiving how it undermin'd the Foundation of all our Churches, (except some few lately built) and being loth such goodly Fabricks should tumble down, nay all the stateliest Buildings in *Europe* be laid in the *dust*; he, in great compassion quits his Principle, that he might support them. For he tells you, that those only are to be thrown down which in respect of their *Situation and Figure or the like, are unfit for profitable Uses; and such as remain deck'd With their Idols Attire; and stand among such people as are scandaliz'd with the use of them, and are in such places where there is danger of their return to Idolatry*; which a man half blind sees is as much as to say, They are not to be laid aside because they have been imploy'd to Idolatry, but for other considerations. He himself confesses as much, when he saith, *if they be in regard of their Situation and Figure, and the like; fit for profitables Uses*, &c. *they may lawfully be retain'd.* That is, as if he had said, there is no necessity of laying them aside, because they were abused in false Worship; and therefore my Principle is not true which I laid down at the beginning, *that things abused in false worship must be abolished.* Are you not amazed that he should be thus forced to forsake his Principle, and yet not mend it?

Nay, as if he would demonstrate that men are carried by Humour and Prejudice when they talk of these matters, after all this, he would have *Cathedrals* pull'd down, as the *High places* were.

N. C. Why? What difference is there?

C. For any thing I can see there is none, but they have all the qualifications he mentioned to deserve his Favour. Neither the Situation nor their Figure hinders but they may be fit for profitable Uses. I never saw any Idols attire with which they are adorn'd; nor do they stand among those who are scandaliz'd at them, unless it be such as himself, (and some other humoursome people) who first take offence at them without any reason, and then make this serve for a Reason why they should be pull'd down.

N. C. No doubt he hath some Reason.

C. If he have, he concealed it, or it must ly in their Figure and Situation rendring them unfit for profitable Uses, or in their remaining deck'd with their Idols Attire: from none of which can there be any thing alledged more against the Cothedrals than against other Churches; nor so much neither, in some regards. For they may be made to serve many more profitable uses than a small Church. But if his people's being offended at them, no body knows why, nor wherefore, must stand alone for a Reason; then mark unto what a fine pass

he

he hath brought his business. He hath quitted his ground in this particular to no purpose, and done the Churches, he thought to save, no service at all; for he holds fast one Fancy which will not let them stand.

N. C. What is it?

C. I have told it you already; *that if they stand among such as are scandaliz'd at them, they ought not to be retain'd.* Alas poor Churches! To what purpose was all this care to keep them from Ruine? The *Quakers* and many other people are extremely offended at them, and could be content with a *Gothish* Barbarism to demolish them. Or if they were not, we know not when the Conceit will take men to be scandaliz'd; and then they must be converted into Stables or Cow-houses, or what they please; or rather pull'd down, for fear they be converted to Churches again. And truly when I consider all things, I wonder they were not long agoe destroy'd upon this very score.

N. C. When were they in danger: I pray you?

C. Upon a Petition of the Assembly of Divines, *July* 19. there was an Ordinance (I remember) of 28. *Aug.* 1643. requiring that *all Monuments of Superstition and Idolatry should be demolish'd*; which was repeated again, to make sure work, *May* 9. 1644. Now why Churches were not mention'd is hard to tell, for they were dedicated to the honour of some

Saint

Saint or other at the first: and to those Saints there was then such an Abhorrence, that as they would not let their Images or Pictures stand, so, it should seem, their Coats of Arms, if they had any, were to be defaced. For thus a Proviso at the latter end runs: *This Ordinance shall not extend to the taking down the Image, or Picture, or Coat of Arms, set up for any dead man, who was not commonly reputed a Saint.* It seems they concluded, that none of the reputed Saints in their days would be thought so hereafter, (for then no Picture or Image at all should have been allow'd, for fear of being worshipped) and their words suppose, that any of those (either Image, Picture, or Coat of Arms) belonging to any ancient reputed Saints must not stand. The Churches therefore that bore their Names, and were better *Monuments* and remembrances of them than any Coat of Arms, had good fortune they were not beaten down.

N. C. They had so: But they were fit still for Use, and so were not Images and Pictures.

C. Yet those in the Glass-windows were fit enough, and served still for the same use they had done before, where they had the wit to turn their Heels upward.

N. C. It is like, some had no mind to take any notice of them, but were rather well pleased to pass them by.

C. Perhaps so: For men can pass things by,

or

or take but little notice of them, when they list; though they concern them very much: Of which we have an instance in this very Writer. For being to treat of things abused, first he tells us of *Persons*, then of *Names*, next of *Times*, and after that of *Places* which have been imploy'd to Superstitious or Idolatrous Uses. And of each of these he discourses in a section by it self. Would not any man have expected now to find one Section on purpose about *Books* that have been so abused? Especially since his greatest Spite is at the Liturgy, and it is the prime thing he undertook to overthrow? And yet he thrusts this thing into a Corner, as some did their Glass-windows heretofore, not being desirous to meddle much with it, nor having much to say in this matter. I mean, he crouds it in among many other things, at the end of that Section about *abused Places*; and there you find it under the Name of such *Utensils* as have been devoted to Superstitious Uses, which are *Altars, Images, Books, Reliques, Vessels and other Instruments that have been imployed in that manner.* Now mark, I pray you, in what general terms he speaks of all these together, (for you must not expect to have them distinctly handled:) *Though in themselves* (saith he) *they are never so innocent, rich and splendid; yet when once they have been Serviceable to such Wickedness, He would have them cast away, as things unfit to be retained by those that*

that profeſs his Name. Would you look now to find any limitation of this, and to hear that things fit for God's Service may be retain'd? And yet in this very Section he allows this favour to *Places*; and there is the ſame reaſon *Books* ſhould enjoy it. And would you not expect a clear proof of this, that even Innocent things muſt be deſtroy'd, (and particularly Books imploy'd in Idol-worſhip?) eſpecially ſince he pretends to juſtifie his Aſſertion by Scripture, and ſaith, *This appears by divers expreſs Precepts which he gave the* Iſraelites *to this purpoſe?*

N. C. Yes, indeed, ſhould I; and I ſuppoſe he produces them.

C. Read but *pag.* 75. and try if you find a Syllable ſpoken to the *Iſraelites* about *Books*, or about *innocent things* either. I can ſee nothing but what concerns their Altars, Images and Pictures. He tells you, indeed, that whole Cities in *Canaan* and every thing in them were to be deſtroy'd. But he would not take notice, at the ſame time, that this was only commanded concerning that Countrey; and that there is no proof can be made, that there were any innocent *Books* there imploy'd in their Idol-worſhip. No, we conclude rather all were Superſtitious and Idolatrous in themſelves, and ſuch as could never be imployed in Divine Service. It is true, at laſt he comes to remember us, that in the New Teſtament we read,

the

the Christian Converts burnt their *Curious Books*, *Act.* 19. 19. But what is this to the Precepts he promised to shew us given to the *Israelites*? And what is this to the business of Prayer-Books? Nay, why did he not shew us the Innocence of these Books, and prove that Conjuring was a very harmless Art? ——

N. C. I wish you would have done with this Book of his, which I think in one sense is innocent enough, and will do no harm among considering people.

C. I am content to make an end; for I fear I have been too tedious. But it was out of a desire to examine seriously whether there were such force as he conceives in this Engine, *to batter down all the Fortifications that they who preside in the Church, or their Assistants, can erect, in defence of the abused Scandalous things* (as he calls them) *which With so much zeal we contend for*, viz. the Liturgy and Ceremonies. They are his words in his Epistle.

N. C. He tells you a little after, that he will not offer to impose his belief on others. Let every body read, and then do as he finds cause.

C. I commend his Ingenuity and Modesty, only I wish his Zeal was a little less in this matter, and that he would not think himself and others ingag'd to endeavour to the utmost of their power the Extirpation and abolishing of the Liturgy. For what is this but to impose his belief upon us, as much as he is able, in his

his place? Doth he only offer his Reasons, who solicites and perswades and intreats men to promote his Design? Doth he leave others to judge, who ingages their Affections, and stirs up their Passions, as if the Cause were already decided according to his mind? This it is to be zealous to advance a private Opinion, He meant, it's like, as he spoke, when he told us in his Epistle, that *he expected and desired no more but that We would candidly Weigh the case*: but his zeal made him forget himself, and earnestly beseech us to be up and doing, as if judgment were already given on his side. This I make no doubt, was the thing that put him so much beside the Cushion, as to make him magnifie the Purity of those Doctrines, which in sober thoughts he saw were of pernicious consequence. And I would willingly think it was nothing else that made him only pass his word, that the Liturgy is one of the things that God would have laid aside, without any Proof of it: For whatsoever he or the Assembly have been pleased to say, no body ever *made an Idol of it*, or were guilty of *adoring it*. These are but a kind of Conjuring Phrases and Magical words, which make a great Sound, and astonish the silly people, but signifie nothing, save only this, that men care not what they say to serve their cause. And therefore I hope you will not be afrighted by such Bug-bears, but come and do your Duty to

God

God and man both together, in joyning with us in *Common-Prayer.*

N. C. I will consider it as I have told you more than once: But I have had the less mind to come to it, because after it is done, your Minister prays so coldly himself.

C. That is, he doth not put himself into a Sweat. But are not his words lively, and apt to warm the Hearts of those who attend to them?

N. C. Methinks not. And beside, his Sermons that follow are very dull, and nothing comparable to ours.

C. Now you are got again to the Hole from whence I did drive you a good while agoe: you run in a Circle of discourse, and are returned thither where we first began. But since I have followed your motions thus far, I will ask you this question; Why do you not rather think your self dull than him?

N. C. Because I am not dull in other places, and yet was so at your Church.

C. You may be in the fault for all that. For perhaps you was disaffected to his Person, or to his method of handling things; or you had a greater Kindness for some other; and then, though S. *Paul* himself should preach, you would be apt to prefer that man before him.

N. C. No; methinks his matter is dull and flat.

C.

C. Why, what did you hear him treat of?

N. C. I heard him preach about the neceſſity of Obedience to the Laws of *Chriſt*. And there he told us how we muſt do as we would be done unto, and love our Neighbours as our ſelves, and forgive Injuries, and make Reſtitution of ill-gotten Goods; with a great many other ſuch like things, which every body knows already. And yet he ſpent I know not well how many Sermons about theſe common matters.

C. Does every body know theſe things, ſay you? The greater ſhame then that they live not according to them. I am afraid they are not ſenſible of the neceſſity of theſe things, about which a man of any underſtanding and ſerioufneſs cannot well ſpeak, and be flat and dull. I much ſuſpect that you even ſet your ſelf to ſleep, or ſuffered your thoughts to run to other matter, or fell a reading in your Bible, (as I have ſeen ſome do) when he begun to treat of ſuch Arguments as theſe, thinking that you was little concern'd in them.

N. C. I muſt confeſs part of what you ſay. For when I come to Church, I look not for Moral, but Chriſtian Doctrines.

C. How now? Do you oppoſe Morality and Chriſtianity? Is not the former a part of the latter? I mean; doth not the Chriſtian Religion teach us the higheſt Morality?

N. C.

N. C. No I think it doth not meddle with it.

C. Then you talk of this as you do of many other things, without understanding. Pray what is Moral Doctrine?

N. C. Do you tell me, if you please.

C. I always took it to be that Doctrine which teaches us howto regulate our manners, that is, to order and govern our actions, or our whole Behaviour in this World. Now I appeal to any man that reads the Gospel, whether this be not the very design of it, to teach us to *live soberly, righteously, and godlily.*

N. C. Is this morality?

C. Yes, that it is. And therefore I said that Christian Religion advances Morality to the greatest height; because it gives us the best and most excellent Motives to live soberly, righteously, charitably, and piously in this World.

N. C. For all this, I think it were better if *Jesus Christ* were more preached.

C. Still I see you deceive your self, and trouble the world with Phrases. Doth not he preach *Jesus Christ* that preaches his Doctrine? If you doubt of it, you shall have Scripture enough to prove it.

N. C. But I mean that the Love of *Jesus Christ* to poor Souls should be more preached.

C. I cannot say it should be more preached;

but it ought to be preached, and so it is; and perhaps better; than you would have it. For his Love is declared, to the end we may love him and keep his Commandments. This is that which the Grace of God teaches us, to live soberly, &c. The Loving-Kindness of God towards mankind, in *Christ Jesus* was expressed for this very purpose. And therefore he that preaches both these together is the best and wisest Guide with whom to entrust our Souls; and that is the design of our Minister. He doth not tickle us merely with a soft Story of the great love of *Jesus Christ* towards Sinners; But labours to beget in us an ardent love to him. And lest we should run away with a pleasant Fansie, he makes us understand wherein this love consists, *Viz.* in Obedience to him to the very death; in Meekness, Humility, Patience, taking up the Cross, and such like Graces; which seem to be rough things, and have no amiableness in the eye of the World, but are as dear to all those who love our Saviour, as their very Lives. And this makes me think him the most sincere and honest, that he doth not seek so much to please us in his Preaching, as to profit us.

N.C. Profit, Do you call it? I could never profit by him at all.

C. Whose fault was that? Yours, or his? You are loth to suspect your self, and inclin'd to lay all the load on others. I believe it will be found

found at the great Day that he hath done his duty better than you.

N. C. That's a thing, which neither you nor I know. But this I am sure of, that I can profit more by others, than by him.

C. Let me try the truth of that, if you please; for I very much doubt of it.

N. C. I am sure of it.

C. If you profit so much, then your Ministers make you *wiser* and *better* than you were before: For there are but these *two things* that argue Proficiency. Now do as much as answer me the *first*. Wherein are you *wiser* than you were? What one thing do you know, that you did not understand before, or might have understood easily, when you pleased? What things do you now understand the Reason of better than formerly? Or what account can you give me of the grounds of Christian Faith, and of the Hope that is in you? What Rules of Prudence have you met withal? What explication of Scripture? I was going to ask what Point in Divinity you are able to state with Judgement and due Caution? But that's too hard a Question.

N. C. I am not able presently to call things to mind. But this I am sure of, that *I* get more good by them, than any men that ever *I* heard.

C. That is, you are grown *better*: where-

in I beſeech you? Are your carnal Affections more mortified? Are your Paſſions more ſubdued to Reaſon? Are you more humble and lowly in heart? More meek, more merciful, more compaſſionate to all men, more affable, more courteous? I am afraid in this laſt Point you are grown better, as *ſowr Ale doth in Summer*; that is more ſharp and eager.

N. C. Me-thinks I have much more Comfort.

C. That's ſtrange, when you are neither wiſer nor better, as far as I can diſcern. One would think you ſhould ſuſpect them to be fooliſh and deceitful Comforts, becauſe they have ſo little ground, except it be in your Imagination.

N. C. VVhy? would you have me fetch my Comforts from my ſelf, and not from *Jeſus Chriſt*?

C. Now I ſee indeed how wiſe you are grown by this profound Queſtion.

N. C. Muſt not all our Comfort be fetch'd from *Jeſus Chriſt*?

C. Yes: But every body cannot fetch it. They are the weary and heavy laden, and ſuch as take upon them his Yoke and Burthen, *i. e.* ſubmit to his Commands, whom he invites and promiſes eaſe and Refreſhment unto. By which you may ſee, if you will that we muſt feel ſomething that is good in our ſelves, (and more than good Deſires, and Affecti-

Affections and Purposes) before we can feel that solid Comfort and Satisfaction you speak of.

N. C. Then it seems we must fetch our comfort from our own selves.

C. No. But it seems you are grown so wise, and taken up in such high Notions, that you cannot understand common Sense. Is there any other Comfort you dare give to an ungodly man besides this, that he may by the Grace of our Lord be made better, and so received into his Favour?

N. C. I think not.

C. Then before you can take that full Comfort in him which you talk of, you must feel that you are truly changed and converted to a love of Godliness, and a Life according to those good Affections. All the good, indeed, that is in us, and all that we hope for, we derive from our Saviour *Christ*: but till we become good, and be made like him, we do but put our selves into a Fool's Paradise, if we fansie that we are in his Favour, and that he will carry us to Heaven. And on the contrary, when we are once made partakers of his blessed Nature and Spirit, how can we choose but be full of Joy, both in that Resemblance we find in our selves to him, and much more in the hopes he hath given us, that he will perfect those Beginings in eternal Life? But it is as plain, that though we cannot but rejoyce very

much in that which we feel in our selves, (the Likeness of *Christ* and good Hopes) yet the Original of this Joy & Satisfaction is not from our selves, but him, who gave us that Participation of his nature and those good Hopes.

N. C. I do not well understand you. But this I know, that you all talk as if we were *to bring something to* Christ, *and not to take all from him.*

C. Rather to talk thus is to be very ridiculous. For he invites us to come to him, *i. e.* to believe on him, and become his Disciples and Followers. And this we must do, or else be disown'd by him; though when we do it, we only obey his heavenly Call, and bring him nothing, but only all our Desires and Affections to be govern'd by him. Is there any body so absurd, as to imagine we must not give up our selves to be led and guided by him in his ways? and when we are in them, does any body think we came there without his Motion and gracious attraction? Would you have us without any more a-do conclude, that all the promised blessings are our portion? or must we not first be perswaded our Saviour tells us the truth of God, and then purpose to learn of him and obey him, and next set our selves with all our might to subdue every Thought and Passion to his obedience, and last of all, order all our actions (by the assistance of the same Grace where-

by

by we do the rest) according to the Rule of his Laws? And must we not have a sense that we are sincere in all this, before we can reasonably expect that he should give us all the good things he promises? In short, must he not give us his Grace to will and to do, and must we not receive it, and effectually do thereby all that I have said, before we conclude our Sins are pardoned, and take the confidence to hope our Saviour will give us eternal Life?

N. C. I perceive you pretend to have profited very much by your Minister.

C. Yes indeed; I think, *I* am grown wiser a great deal and much better.

N. C. I wish you would tell me briefly wherein.

C. I know God and his Attributes better, and perceive how all Religion depends on that Knowledge: *I* think also, *I* understand the nature of Religion in General, and of Christianity in particular more exactly, than *I* did. *I* know wherein Religion consists; with the grounds of Faith, and the Reason why I am a Christian rather, than of any other Profession. And withal, I hope I understand many places of Holy Scripture, and am able to give a clearer & soberer account of them than heretofore; whenas I ingeniously confess, I was wont to expound the Word of God by fansie, and not by serious & attentive Considerations. And as for growth in goodness, I may truly

ſay, I have learnt many things to be my Duty, which I ſcarce ever heard you ſpeak of. As for example, to bridle my Tongue; eſpecially when I ſpeak of my Superiors; to reverence my Governors; to live in obedience to Laws, though they happen to hinder my private profit; & for that end to look upon humane Laws, as binding the Conſcience; to anſwer my Betters with great Modeſty and Humility: in particular, not to contend boldly and malepertly with the Prieſt, as if I were upon equal ground with him; not to be a Buſy-body, & a Gadder from houſe to houſe; not to pry into every bodie's Secrets: not to rejoyce in iniquity, or take a pleaſure in hearing of the Sins of the contrary party; to be very fearful of making a Schiſm in the Church; and to name no more, to take heed of itching Ears, and not to run from my own Church, out of a fanſie that I can profit more in other places.

N. C. Well, talk as long as you pleaſe, *all the Godly will follow thoſe men* whom you would perſwade me to forſake.

C. I am heartily ſorry to ſee your Arrogance and Uncharitableneſs. But it gives me to underſtand how much you profit by your Miniſters; not in the Graces of *Chriſt*, but in the peculiar unheard of Vertues of your Sect, Pride, Boaſting, Good opinion of your ſelves, Contempt of others, and raſh judging even of mens Spiritual eſtates.

N. C.

N. C. I think you judge rashly of me.

C. No such matter. Your Censoriousness & Rashness is apparent; and I do not commit the same fault, when I take notice of it. And I must let you know, that you commit another like this, when you make an Out-cry through the Nation and tell the people *that all Ungodliness hath over-flown it, only since Bishops and Common-Prayer* came home again. Which is an arrant Lie; as will be made good, if need be, against the best of you. For it began to break in upon us when the Bishops & all good Order was thrown down, and the Kingdom put into Arms. Then men ran into excess of Riot, when their was no Restraint upon them. I will not say into so much Drunkenness, but into Whoring (I may add Atheism and Irreligion) and such like Wickedness, which are said now to be the reigning sins. And though men were not presently openly lascivious and profane (for the older Wickedness grows, the bolder it is;) yet then they got loose from their Chains, and these works of Darkness secretly lurk'd, and were privately practised.

N. C. I do not believe you.

C. You will believe the Assembly, I am sure, and they say so.

N. C. Where?

C. In their Petition to the Parliament of *July* 19. 1644. where they desire (in the seventh Branch of it) *that some severe Course may be taken*

taken against Fornication, Adultery, and Incest: Which do greatly abound, say they, ESPECIALLY OF LATE, BY REASON OF IMPUNITY.

N. C. I am not concern'd about this. But I affirm the *Generality of the Godly people* now follow us.

C. Suppose they did; you will not allow it a good Argument in other cases to say that *all the Godly for many Ages* did such and such things, for instance, use a Form of Prayer, and such Ceremonies as ours; and therefore, why do you keep such a stir with it now? but where did you get a List of all the Godly, that you can tell so exactly the major part follow you? Were they ever brought to the Poll? And who were Judges, I pray you, in the Case? You do but still persist in your over-fond Love to your selves, and your own Party and way, when you talk in this manner: For there are many ways to shew, that they are far from being the Generality of the Godly that flock to your Meetings.

N. C. Then you allow that some Godly people follow us.

C. Did I ever dispute it? Nay, does there any body doubt (except your selves and the Papists) but that there may be Godly people of every Sort and Party? But then it is an imperfect sort of Godliness which we acknowledg in them; and we hope God will bear with their Defects,

Defects, when they are sincerely humble and modest, and do not fansie themselves the only or the most godly people in the World. And if you will have me speak my mind plainly, and not be angry; I think I may say without any rashness, that your godly people are generally of the lowest Form in *Christ's* School, as I told you before. A great deal of their Religion is of their own making, (as I lately shew'd you) and they want a great deal of God's Religion.

N. C. You are very envious.

C. No truly. I admire the Grace of God wheresoever I see it, for it is the most lovely sight that can present it self to me. But I cannot allow them to be such excellent Christians as you imagine: they rather appear to me with many Deformities. For they are ever wrangling about little Ceremonies. They break the Peace of the Church by this means, and seem to make no scruple about it. They are froward and peevish, greedy of Riches, stubborn in their Opinions, and by no means can bear with any man differing from them in matters of Doctrine. In short, I see a strang Ignorance mixt with Presumption & Wilfulness, not without a high degree of Superstition, in those whom you admire for godliness. But then there is a sort of people who injoy that name among you, in whom I can see nothing but an humour of Despising and Railing at all ancient received Customs, how

how good soever; Together with a sullen Devotion, and such a turbulent nature, as will give no rest to themselves or others. And they have one peculiar Quality, proper to themselvs alone; which is to revile our Ministers even as they go along the streets: a thing which I could never observe our ungodly people to be guilty of towards your Ministers, who may pass peaceably enough: nay, I think is not committed in any Country in the World, where they are of different Religions. Perhaps you will say, that ours would do it, did not the power of the Lord over-awe them and shut up their Mouths, that they may not reproach his faithful Servants. But this is only a cast of your skill in searching the Hearts of men, and gives us a taste of the opinion you have of your dearness to God.

N. C. I doubt not but they are very dear to God; and that God will *reprove even Kings for their sakes*, saying, *Touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harm.*

C. You have a strong Faith. But methinks before you suffer it to grow to such a Confidence, you should soberly consider whether some of those precious ones may not be anointed——; that make godliness a pretence for their Disobedience to Kings, and Saucines towards their betters; that flatter you into a conceit of your godliness, that you may flatter them with the title of the *Prophets of the Lord.*

Lord, To me it is no mean argument of their want of Integrity, that they teach you no better, and connive at all this Wickedness, and never (that I could hear of) lay bare, and rebuke these Sins that reign so much among your Party. Tell me whence came all the scurrilous Pamphlets that are abroad? Out of what Shop do the venomous Libels fly about the Town? Who are they that not only despise our Clergy, but put open affronts on them as they quietly and soberly walk the Streets? That have the Poison of Asps under their Lips, and spit it in good mens faces? That in a fearful manner, scorn and revile their Holy Calling, and salute them every where with the ordinary name of *Baal's Priests*? Are they not all bred up in your Churches? Do they not all frequent your Meetings? And do not by-standers of your Perswasion laugh and rejoyce when they see this Contempt poured on them? Do they not seem to encourage those by their Applauses, who are so rude and insolent in their behaviour toward good men? And yet these stile themselves *the godly*, and take it ill if we do not think them so. These you are content to wink at, that your Congregations may be full. Your Ministers dare not preach down these Abuses; lest they should be thought to be friends to *Baal*.

N. C.

N. C. There will be some *bad* people every where.

C. I am glad to hear you say so. By and by you will confess that there may be also *good* people every where, and that some of our Ministers may be good; though your Revilers make no difference, but if they see a man in a Cassock, presently throw dirt in his face, and call him a Limb of Anti-Christ, or some such thing. So bruitish and outragious are the Passions of this Heady people. So wonderfully do they profit in your School in those new Vertues of Hatred to ancient Customs and Habits, though never so innocent, and Hatred or Anger to all that are not of their Way. For such is the Fire, *I* have sometimes seen in their Eyes, when they meet one of our Ministers, that one would think they had a mind to burn them up. And *I* make no doubt they would call upon your *Prophets*, if they were but like *Elijah*, to call for Fire down from Heaven to consume us. You may condemn their Folly perhaps; but whatsoever you are pleased to say, they are the most Zealous of your Party, and think themselves the most godly. And for any thing *I* can hear, they may think so still. *It* not being the manner of your Preaching, to meddle with such things as these; nor the time, *I* doubt, to be named when you heard a Sermon to reprove the scurrilous and railing language of some among you against the *Eng-*

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Irish Clergy. No, the way hath been, and *I* doubt still continues, to declaim only against Superstition, and Formality, and Will-worship, and sometimes against Morality; and then to exhort the people to prize Ordinances, and seek after pure Ordinances, and admit of no humane Mixtures. But whilest the poor people are thus affrighted, and made exceeding timorous lest they should be *righteous over-much*, by following vain Traditions of men; they have little or no fear wrought in them of being *wicked over-much*, by Schism, and Disobedience, and letting loose their furious Passions and unruly Tongues; by reviling God's Ministers, nay, by despising Governments, and speaking evil of Dignities.

N. C. I think they should be taught to fear these things more than they do.

C. I, and they should be taught not to think themselves godly too soon. Whereas the manner hath been quite contrary, to breed in them an opinion of their Piety, if they be but a praying people, and follow Ordinances, and frequent private meetings. And when they are taught on such easie terms to call themselves *gracious* and *godly*, then your Ministers make this an Argument against us, that all or most of the Godly are on their side. And now it comes into my mind, that this was the Pretence wherewith they countenanced the late Rebellion, as now *I* suppose, you will give us

us leave to call it. But to let you see how idle and frivolous such Arguments were, and that they might serve any bodies purpose; it was not long before you were numbred among the ungodly: For the Army learnt to call themselvs the only *godly party*, and in a manner excluded you. Though I believe You would have lik'd it well enough, if a Painter had drawn a man with his Eyes lifted up to Heaven and one hand on his Breast, with the other Hand in his Neighbors purse, or cutting of his Throat; and writ over it this Inscription, *An Army-Saint*. I mean, you thought them an ungodly & untoward generation. But whatsoever you thought, the Argument was as plausible & succesful for them as it had been & is for you: for the people were strangely drawn away by it. This cut off the King's Head; that it was for the safety of the godly. This was in a fair way to keep our present Soveraign from returning to us; that those that feared the Lord were against it, and would be undone by it. And I find that to this day this pretence of godlines hath left an impression on some peoples minds, and excuses all those impieties. For not long since I heard one commending them for *a very gracious people*: and when it was soberly objected, that they were unjust, & even Cruel, and False, and Turbulent, and Disobedient to their own Governors, and Troublers of the Nation; it was answered, that not-

with-

withstanding all these things, there was more *Grace* among them than there is to be found now-adays. Meaning, *I* suppose, by their Grace, that they were a *praying people*, and much *in seeking God.* As if S. *Paul* did not understand himself when he told us, that *the Grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness* and *all Worldly Lusts*; and *to live soberly, righteously*, and *godly in the World.* And to deal Freely with you; *I* am much afraid there are many of this kind of Godly people whom you associate your selves withal, *I* am sure, some of those who were Patrons to their wickedness, and allowed, if not justified, the killing of the KING, and were Army-Chaplains; and now private Preachers, and not a little adored.

N.C. Well, no more of this. For *I* am satisfied we are not the only Godly. But yet *I* am still inclined to think there is more of the *Power of Godliness* to be found among us, than any where else.

C. I alwayes thought the *Power of Godliness* did not consist in words, but in a great deal of Humility, and a great measure of Charity; together with exact Justice and Meekness, and Peaceableness, and purity of Heart. Now, me-thinks, there is not such store of this among you as one would expect; at least, not more than we see in other people.

N. C. Do you call this the *Power of Godliness?*

C. Yes; and so doth the Apostle, as will appear, if you think good that we consider seriously together the Character he gives of those that *deny the Power of Godliness*, and content themselves only with the shew or Image of it, which he calls the *Form of Godliness*.

N.C. With all my heart. For that will be a better way of spending our time, and edifying one another, than the continuing Dispute will be.

C. You say very well, and I love you for that sense of Piety which you discover. Let's take the Book then, and read what S. *Paul* teaches us in 2 *Tim.* 3. 2,3.4, &c. concerning them that want the Power, and have only the *Form* of Godliness. First, he tells us, they are *lovers of themselves*, *i. e.* as I understand it, study above all things, their own Profit, Credit, Honour, and Pleasure. From which (as the Root of wickedness) they grow to be *Covetous*, or Lovers of Money; and then *Boasters*, that is, people who magnifie themselves, arrogating to themselves more, than is their due, and bragging they can do that, which they are not able to perform. From whence it follows that they are *Proud*, that is, Contemners and Despisers of others; who perhaps are better, than themselves: *Blasphemers*, *i.e.* of Magistrates & Dignities, (upon a pretence, perhaps, that they have nothing of God in them, or are Antichristian: *Disobedient* to their

their Natural *Parents*, (as some now are, because they say, they are unsanctified and unregenerate people:) *Unthankful* to their Benefactors: *Unholy* and impure Wretches, or, as some have expounded it to me, such as make no difference between things Sacred and Profane: *without Natural Affection, viz.* to their Children or Kindred, as well as Parents: *Truce-breakers*, or perfidious people, whom no Bond or Tie can hold to their Promises or Duty: *False-accusers*, or such as calumniate, and tell false and devised Stories, to the prejudice of those whom they do not love, or set themselvs to oppose: *Incontinent*, which I have been told, signifies such as have no Power over themselves and their Passions, and as are inconsistent with themselvs: *Fierce*, that is, Bloudy-minded men, and such whom no Kindness, no Benefits can reconcile to Society, Friendship or Modesty, *Despisers of those Who are good*, (*i. e.* that have no Kindness for men who are solidly Good,) or, as our Translation seems to take it, such as contemn true Vertue, as a mean thing: *Traitors*, that is, such as will betray their best Friends and Companions, for to serve their own Interest: *Heady*, that is, rash, inconsiderate, impudent and bold people; ready for any bad Design: *High-minded*, or men puft up and swoln with an Opinion of themselves, of their own Knowledg, suppose, or Piety: *Lovers of Pleasure more*

than lovers of God, or such as pretend to God, only to have a better opportunity to satisfie their desires of pleasure. And in conclusion, he tells us that they were of this number who in those days *crept into folks houses*, and insinuated themselves into the Favour of *silly Women*; having a design either upon their Wealth, or their Chastity. And Women they were for their turn; being *led away With divers Lusts, ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth*; that is, always frequenting Christian Assemblies, but getting no good by them: or else opening their Ears *to every Wind of Doctrin*, desiring still to hear some new thing, running from place to place where any novel Teachers were: but remaining just as wise as they were before, and not a whit the better for all the Sermons they heard.

N.C. Me-thinks you have made me a short Sermon; at least I have heard the Doctrinal part of it: would you would come to the Use and tell me what you gather from hence.

C. I gather two things, and leave you to gather the rest.

N. C. What are they?

C. First, that all this Wickedness which I have described from the Apostle will consist with a *Form* or shew of Godliness. For that's a part of the character of these very men, vers. 5. *Having a Form of Godliness*, &c. *Secondly*, I collect from hence, that those men have the

Power

Power of godliness who are of a disposition quite opposite to them now named: *Such, I* mean, *as deny themselvs for God's and their Neighbor's sake; that set not their hearts upon getting Riches; that are humble and modest; that reverence their Governors, and study in word and deed to preserve their Authority; that honour their Parents, though not of their Opinion, or perhaps ungodly; that are sensible of Benefits, and grateful to their Benefactors; that study Purity and Chastity; that are kind and tenderly-affected to their Relations; that keep their Faith, and perform their Promises, though to their own damage; that are easily reconciled, if they have been grosly injured; that speak well if they can, of their Neighbours, and are not ready to believe every Story of them; that endeavor to preserve an even Temper; that command their passions, are steady and uniform in their Actions; that are meek and submissive; peaceable and sociable; that love Vertue wheresoever they see it, and do not despise or reproach it under the name of meer Morality; that are faithful to their Trust; sober, advised and considerate in their Undertakings; that have no high Opinion of themselves, and love God above all things; that choose rather to keep at home, and mind their own Concerns, than to be prying into the Secrets of their Neighbors Houses; that have no other Design upon any, either Man or Woman, than to make them good; and further their increase in true Wisdom.* These, and such

like men in whatsoever place you find them, undoubtedly have *the Power of Godliness*, though they should not talk of it so much as others?

N.C. I see you are able to preach, if you list.

C. If I should think so, I should run into the company of those *proud* and *high-minded* men, whom I now spake of. I can only repeat a good Sermon to you, which I have heard.

N.C. You would have me preach, or at least make a piece of a Sermon; for you told me you would leave me to gather the rest from your discourse.

C. It's profitable to Preach to *your self* such things as you read and hear, and to press upon your Heart such Truths, as you cannot but observe plainly follow from them, though they were not named.

N.C. And what do you think I should gather from what I have heard you say?

C. I told you it would be best to leave you to consider what farther Use is to be made of this Character. But if you would have me direct you; then you may be pleased to consider, when you are alone by your self, whether any part of it belong to those, whom you call Godly or to those whom we esteem so: or, which is all one, you may consider whether those opposite Qualities, wherein I told you the *Power of godliness consists*, be to be found most among your, or our Godly. Always carrying this in your mind, that we do not call all them Godly who

who are of our Party, as you are wont to do. Our Ministers, I assure you, will not allow them to enjoy this name, who are Lovers of themselves, Covetous, Boasters, Proud, False, Fierce, Heady, &c. But whether many such do not pass with you for Godly men, and cry out against the Form of Godliness, while they have little else, I leave you to judg.

N.C. Truly, I thought once that the *Power of Godliness* had consisted in keeping the Sabbath, in repeating Sermons, having a Gift of Prayer, and using it in our Families, treasuring up and communicating Experiences, and meeting together to exercise our Gifts. And, now it comes into my mind on a sudden, this is a thing which hath made me fear you want at least a great deal of the power of Godliness, that you never *keep a Day* together.

C. Strange! I thought on the Contrary, that this had been one of our Accusations; our keeping too many days.

N.C. Really, I never heard that any of you kept one.

C. What did you never hear, that we have a Holy-day at lest once a Moneth, and sometimes more, which we always observe?

N.C. Pish! I perceive you understand not my Language. I mean, that we keep a private Day together, which we set apart for Prayer, and humbling our selves before God, and hearing the Word.

C. Alas! How ſhould I gueſs at your meaning! when as I thought you would have kept no Days but that of God's appointing.

N. C. Yes, we can keep other Days, and think we ought, at leaſt that there is much Religion in it.

C. Why then will you not keep thoſe which your Governors appoint? Have you power to appoint Days, and not they? I am ſorry to ſee your partiality, and that you are ſo full of Humour, as not to do things when you are bidden, and yet to do the ſame when you are not bidden, nay, when you are forbidden.

N. C. O, but we do not keep days, as you do.

C. What's that to the Purpoſe? Seeing what we do is good, why ſhould you not joyn with us in it? You pray, and ſo do we: You read the Scriptures and ſo do we: you give thanks to God, and that's part of our Buſineſs. Only we do it in publick, and you in private; we when our Governors would have us, and you when it pleaſes your ſelves.

N. C. We not only pray, but hear a Sermon alſo, when we keep our Days.

C. So you may at ſome of our Churches, if you pleaſe, every Holy-day. But what a fooliſh Conceit is this, to think that this makes a Day not to be well obſerved, if we want a Sermon? This is a piece of the *Superſtition* I told you of. For was it not always the chief Deſign of thoſe Days we obſerve, to acknowledg God, to praiſe

praise him in all his wonderful Works, to meditate on his admirable mercy in sending his Son, in giving him to dy for us, in raising him from the dead, in sending the Holy Ghost, and after that the blessed Apostles to preach the Gospel? And is not this sufficient work for one Day? Or cannot we meditate upon the holy Scriptures then read, or on the Sermon we heard the Lord's Day before; but we must needs have a new Sermon, or else think God is not glorified, nor well pleased? I am amazed at the gross Absurdity of such Fancies.

N.C. You may be so; but we shall never leave them, nor come to Church, till you have more than Common prayer on those Days.

C. I cannot understand any Reason for that Resolution. For if you be not satisfied with our Service, but yet must needs have something else; why do you not come to the publick Prayers & Praises first and then make up their Defects (as you conceive) in your private Meetings? Or why do you not seek and endeavour that these dayes may be kept more Religiously, seeing publick Praising God is far better than private, and doth him more honour in the World? For my part, I verily think (and I speak it sincerely) that if you would come to Church, and there joyn in the publick Service of God, and then go home, and spend some other part of the Day in Catechising your Children, instructing your Servants, teaching them among other matters, how

to

to use the Liberty You then allow them discreetly and soberly, and in visiting, inviting or relieving your poor Neighbours; it would be a thing far more acceptable to God, and more for the honour of Christian Religion, and the good of Souls, than a whole day of Prayer and hearing Sermons.

N. C. I am not yet of that mind.

C. Why? look over all the Families you know, and see if many of them be not miserably neglected, whilst their Masters and Mistresses are *keeping Dayes*, as you call it. And then tell me, whether they spend their time to so much Profit and true Comfort as I would have them.

N. C. I think some may be too negligent.

C. Why do not your Ministers chide them, and exhort the good Women to keep more at home, & not, under a notion of Religion, neglect their necessary Duties? It were easy to tell you of some who are the worst Wives, and Mothers, and Mistresses, in the Parish, meerly upon this account, that most of their time hath been taken up in gadding about to those private Exercises. Sometimes you are mightily offended at our Holy-days upon this account, that they take up too much of mens times from their Business; & yet you can be content to see a Day set a-part every Week, if not oftner, by your selves, to the great Dammage of many Families. And so, when

when the Fit is upon you, we are told that Magistrates ought not to bind the people to observe Days, which is to make that necessary which God hath left free: But yet notwithstanding you your selves stick not to lay such a necessity upon men of observing Dayes, now and then, as if there were a Divine Commandment for it; for you think they have no Religion, or want the Power of it, that do not. And what a stir do you keep to have Lectures on the Week-days; as if we were *dead*, and had but *a Name to live*, unless we hear a Sermon or two, then? whereas very good Christians, perhaps, have no more time to spare from their honest Imployments, than they ought to bestow in private Prayer and Meditation; digesting of what they heard the Sunday before; searching seriously into their Consciences, and constant Examination of their Lives and Actions; in conferring with their Ministers about their Doubts, or those Indispositions, or, perhaps, ill Inclinations, which they find in their Souls; in Comforting the poor and the sick; in Endeavouring to reconcile Differences among Neighbors; in consulting how to advance the publick Good either of the City or Town where they live, and discharging the publick Office well, to which they may be called. If after all this done, they can find any leisure to hear a Sermon, who is there that forbids it? We are only afraid, lest whilst the necessity

ty of that is so much urged, things more necessary should be neglected.

N.C. You say a great many notable things; but yet to me you seem *a man of a slight Spirit*, which you betray when you speak of these weighty matters.

C. If you mean that I slight many of those things which you think matters of great weight and moment; I cannot contradict you. But why you should thence conclude, I have a *slight Spirit*, I see no cause: For therefore I slight them, because I have throughly consider'd and examin'd them, and find there is nothing but Fansie or Superstition at the bottom of them. Mistake me not; your honest Affections I do not slight, but the things to which you are so affected. As for instance, you abound in insignificant Phrases, and Scripture-Expressions misapplied: You have a great many Superstitious Conceits & Opinions, and oftimes alledg your Experiences very absurdly ———

N.C. Nay, now you discover your self. Doth not this argue a profane Spirit, to *slight Experiences*, when the Apostle mentions Christian Experience as a part of our Rejoycing and Glory? *Rom.* 5. 4.

C. I do not slight *his* Experiences, but *yours*; and not all of *yours* neither. For if by your Experience you meant, that you had made a proof of your Constancy and Faithfulness to *Christ*, by patient enduring of any Affliction for Righte-

Righteousnes sake; and made a Trial also of his Faithfulnes, in performing his promises of giving us Strength, Support, and Comfort, (which I conceive is the Apostle's meaning:) I should accuse my self of great Profaneness should I slight it. But when you will needs give me this word for a proof of a thing of which I know you have no Experience, and perhaps can have none; and when you alledg your Experience in a matter of Reason, and in effect say no more than this, I pray believe me: you must not take it ill, if I make light of it. As for example, when you will tell us, you find by Experience that you are in the right way; it is a thing that may be entertain'd with a smile. *It* is in truth no better than to say, you may take my word for it. For whether you be in the right or no, is not to be known by Experience, but by Reason. *In* like manner, if you tell me you find by Experience your Minister is a good man because he doth you good; it is a frivolous Argument, and *I* may be allow'd to slight it; for it cannot be known by your Experience, what he is. You can only know by your Experience, that you are made better; but he may be bad enough notwithstanding. As the *Quakers* were reform'd of Cheating and Cousenage in some places by those, who there is great reason to suspect, were cheating knaves themselves.

N.C. But *I* may know by Experience whether the things he preaches be true or no.

C.

C. It will deceive you, if you rely upon that Proof. For you may have ſome good done you by falſe Principles. Nay, thoſe very Principles may make you do ſome things well, which ſhall make you do other things ill.

N. C. That's ſtrange.

C. Not ſo ſtrange, as true. For what Principle was it that led the *Quakers* to be juſt in their dealing?

N. C. That they ought to follow the Light within them.

C. This led them alſo to be rude and clownish, and diſreſpectful to Governors. For all is not Reaſon, that is in us: there is a world of Fanſie alſo: and the Flaſhes of this now and then are very ſudden and amazing; juſt like Lightning out of a Cloud. By this they find they were miſ-led in many things, which they have now forſaken: being content to wear Hatbands and Ribbons too, which they ſo much at the firſt abominated.

N.C. I take them to be a deluded people.

C. And yet they are led, they will tell you, by Experience. For they found themſelvs amended by entring into that Religion, whereas they cheated and couſened in all other Forms wherin they were before. And therefore do not tell me any more of the good you have got by your private meetings, nor make it an argument of their Lawfulneſs. For the ſame Argument will be uſed againſt your ſelvs by the *Quakers*; who will

will tell you, God is in no private Meetings but only theirs, for otherwhere they could never find him. Take your choice: and either let it alone your selves, or else allow it them. It will either serve both, or neither.

N.C. But I have seen you smile, if one bring his Experience to prove the truth of Christian Religion.

C. Yes, and very deservedly: Because the Ground upon which we believe it to be true, cannot be known by Experience; nor is your Experience of any thing in it a Ground for any other man to believe it. You cannot know, for instance, by your Experience, that our Saviour was born of a Virgin, that the Holy Ghost came upon him at his Baptism with a Voice from Heaven, saying, *This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* You cannot know by that means that he dyed, that he rose the third day, that he went to Heaven forty dayes after, and after ten dayes more gave the Holy Ghost; and that S. *Paul* was struck blind with the Glory of our Saviour, whom ye saw and heard, and was sent by him to preach the Gospel.

N.C. Yes, I feel that he and the rest of the Apostles speak the very truth.

C. They say all these things; and do you know them by your feeling? The Apostles indeed, felt, or saw, or heard them; but we cannot do so, nor know them by any other means than their Testimony. *N.C.*

N.C. I feel that their Teſtimony is true.

C. What? Do you feel that they ſay true, for inſtance, when they tell you that our Saviour turn'd Water into Wine, and that he raiſed *Lazarus* from the dead?

N.C. No, *I* know theſe things otherways.

C. Then you muſt know the reſt by the ſame means that you know theſe, *viz.* by believing Eye-witneſſes of theſe things, who you find are perſons worthy to be credited.

N.C. But *I* feel the Commands of *Chriſt* are exceeding good, and agreeable to humane Nature, which the Apoſtles have delivered to us.

C. That is, you find it good to live ſoberly, and peaceably; to be charitable to others, and to take up your own Croſs with Contentedneſs and Patience ———

N.C. Yes.

C. But may not theſe things be felt by Heathens as well as you? And may not they by Experience commend the practice of theſe Vertues to us?

N.C. I think they have done it.

C. Then this Experience of the goodneſs of *Chriſt's* Commands is no proof of our Creed, by which we are diſtinguiſhed from Heathens. No, nor will your Experience prove to any man that *Chriſt's* Commands are excellent, any farther than he believes that you ſay true, when

when you tell him what trial you have made of the best kind of Life, and that you are a person fit to judge of the Difference of things.

N.C. Methinks I feel that *Jesus Christ* is in the Heavens, and in great Power and Glory there.

C. Whatsoever you feel in this matter, it is the *Effect* of your belief, not the *Cause* of it. I mean, you first believe, that he is in Glory; before you can feel any good hopes in your Soul of immortal Life. And you believe his being in Glory upon good Reasons; else you do not know but entertain your self with a pleasant Dream, both of his Glory and yours. And lastly, whatever you feel it is no proof *of the truth of the thing*, but only of *the truth of your Belief*. It is to be proved otherwise that *Christ* reigns gloriously in the Heavens, and is able to bring us into his everlasting Kingdom: only your being so mightily affected with it, proves that indeed you believe it. But you had best look you have good Reasons for your Faith. For all the Severities of the Religious men among the *Turks*, prove likewise that they believe strongly in *Mahomet*: though I hope, if they quote their Experiences never so much, you will not be a Disciple to their Prophet, and hope he will take you by the hair of the head, and pull you up to Heaven.

N.C. I find that you are able to talk more rationally than I can in these matters. But yet I find likewise, there is another kind of Spirit in our people than in yours. For they *delight more in Heavenly Discourse*, and are *alwayes talking of Religion* when they are together: which argues they are not of so *slight a Spirit* as others, who love to discourse of unprofitable things.

C. Do you and I talk frothily, (as your phrase is) and spend our time in unprofitable Chat? Is this Discourse earthly, and not at all pertaining to Religion? And, deal sincerely with me, do not you sometime, when you are together, pass the time away in speaking against Bishops and Common-Prayer, and the Government? Do you not know some that are ever complaining of the Times in which we live, and saying the former Dayes were better than these? And are the Reasons of this murmuring so Heavenly as you suppose? Do they not say the Nation was in more Credit; and had a better Reputation abroad, and they a better Trade at home, and such like things?

N.C. I cannot deny but I have heard some *Professors* talk thus. But there are a great number that you shall scarce ever hear talking of any thing else but Heaven, and *Jesus Christ*, and the business of their Souls.

C. And such people there are in all Parties and Sects in the Christian World; who per-

perhaps are never awhit the better for that.

N. C. How irreligiously you talk?

C. Not at all. For unless they take a true delight in God, and in that Heavenly Discourse above all other things, and unless they understand what they say, and delight also to do God's will in all things: I think they had as good be talking of, or doing something else.

N. C. Can they possibly be better imploy'd?

C. Yes, that they may. For if they only tumble out a great many words and Phrases which they have learn'd, they had better be Studying what the Religion of *Jesus Christ* is. And if they talk of those matters meerly as it is a Duty, and be not so heavenly-minded as that, whensoever they have leisure, it is the greatest joy that can be to be thinking or discoursing of them; they will do this after a very bad fashion, when some other good thing they might have done better; as, visited the Sick, inquired after the Wants of the Poor, or ordered some Parish-business. And again, unless they be very prudent, and do not think they must needs draw the Company wherein they are (who are ingag'd, perhaps, in other necessary Business) to hear their discourse; I think their room, as we say, would be better than their company, or, that it were bet-

that they would hold their peace. For if a man take himself to be bound in Conscience to be always speaking of these things, (as I doubt many do) it is the effect of *Superstition*, which makes Religion a great burthen to a man's self and others. For whether he and the Company be dispos'd or no, this he thinks is his Business which he often manages very dully, and without any Taste: thereby rendring Christianity Contemptible, and making himself also still more flat and indispos'd for all honest imployments. All which considered, I leave you to judge, whether that man had not better have bestow'd his time otherways; for then he might at the end of it have been good for something, whereas now he is good for nothing at all; but mopishly sits bewailing himself, and complaining of the deadness of his heart.

N.C. Ought not a man to be always thinking of Heaven?

C. No: He may and ought sometime to think of other things. And he should do it without any Scruple, not fearing that he is ill imploy'd, when he doth not break God's Commands.

N.C. He may be meanly imploy'd.

C. That is, he is but a Man, and not yet come to the degree of an Angel.

N.C. But when others are recreating themselves

selves, (as you call it) ours are talking of Heaven.

C. If it be their choice, and if they do not neglect any necessary Business, nor censure others that do not as they do; I have nothing to say against them. But, as I told you, there are so many such like people in all Religions, that you must not imagine this is a thing peculiar to yours. And if they think they offend God, if they do otherwise, and if they condemn those that now and then innocently recreate themselves, and sigh over them as if they were lost; they trouble the World and themselves, to say no worse, a great deal too much with their *Superstition.*

N.C. You give liberty to your people even *to go to see Plays.*

C. Did you ever hear any of our Ministers commend Plays for a good Divertisement to their people?

N.C. No, But they do not discommend them, and shew how unlawful it is to use such pastimes.

C. How should they, when they never yet saw it prov'd that they may not be lawfully used? But they preach against all undue and inordinate use of lawful pleasures, among which they number this for one. And in this business, they are as faithful as your Ministers could be, were they in their places; and perhaps a great deal more discreet.

N.C. These *discreet men* have spoil'd Religion.

C. You should have said *indiscreet men*, for that is the truth; who declaim so violently against innocent things, that they are not at all regarded when they speak against things Sinful. Their Zeal is equal against things indifferent and things unlawful; and so the people easily imagine; there is no more reason against the one than against the other. Besides, they lay Burthens upon men which are not necessary, and make *Christ's* Yoak heavier than indeed it is, which is a great Discouragement and Hindrance to some, making them unwilling to submit themselves to him. And again, they intangle Religious People in a world of Scruples, which make their lives very uncomfortable.

N.C. Then your Ministers, belike, allow your Religious people to go to a Play.

C. You have put a good word in my mouth; they do I believe, *allow* it in due measure; Incourage them to it they do not; but yet cannot say, if they be ask'd the question, that they sin, if they do.

N.C. They might tell them, *they may be better imploy'd.*

C. What Authority have they to pronounce that in general terms? Sometimes they may, and

and sometime, perhaps, they may not. And beside this, if we be always bound to do that which is best, (which you suppose) we can never tell whether we please God or no; but shall be ingag'd in endless Doubts. For it is an hard matter sometime to discern which is best: and one thing may appear best, when I consider such and such things; and another will seem best, when I reflect upon other matters. And I may verily be perswaded, looking but at a few things, that this thing is best for me to do, which indeed is rather bad, and should not be done. As, I may conceive it best to wear no Lace, no Ribbans, no fine Cloth or silk, but give all the money I spend in such things to the Poor: whereas this may prove very pernicious, though it have a shew of great piety; and maintain many poor in idleness, that love not Work; and spoil the Labors and Trade of many others, who would not live idlely. Farther, how much time must we pass in resolving which is best in every action we do? as whether it be best to eat now, or stay a while longer; to drink this Cup of Wine which is offered me, or refuse it; to talk with a Friend or to part with him: to visit a Neighbour, or to stay at home? And while we are deliberating in this fashion, the thing might be done which we had a mind unto; and we might be return'd to that which

poſſibly we thought would be beſt. It is ſufficient, therefore, that we be well imploy'd; and we ought not to torment our ſelves, and miſpend our time in fears, leſt we have not done the beſt. Let us but conſider, whether no neceſſary Duty toward God or Man, that we are capable of, will be neglected, when we go to divert our ſelves; and then we ſhould not ſpoil our innocent Delights with needleſs Jealouſies.

N.C. But ſurely this liberty you give, will do people hurt, for they are apt to take too much of it.

C. Many will take it, whether we give it them or no. But I can aſſure you there are many excellent perſons of extraordinary piety (whom I know) who will not take it, though we give it. Not that they think it an unlawful thing, as you do; but they have no uſe for that Liberty. They are above ſuch pleaſures, and can find imployment or ingenious Divertiſement that is far more ſweet to them. I know others that ſcruple not the thing at all, and yet judge it not ſo expedient for them in their place and relation; and ſo wholly forbear it: which is a far greater Vertue than that which you boaſt of; as much as it is more noble to abſtain from thoſe pleaſures we think lawful, than to be reſtrained only from thoſe which we think are ſinful. I am acquainted with others alſo that

go

go to Plays, but very rarely, only for a harmless Recreation when they are dull, or to accompany a Friend, that earnestly importunes their company. And these, methinks, are as much above those, whose Piety you so much admire; as it is an harder thing to abstain from the pleasures of which we have tasted, and find to be very agreeable to us, than to forbear those, to which we are strangers, and know nothing of. Besides these, I know others that go oftner; and yet I dare not say, they are not pious, because I see by all their actions that they love God and Man. And I have heard them say, that the time they spend on that fashion, doth not hinder them in any Christian Duty that they know of, (and yet they are not negligent to inform themselvs) and is a great deal better spent than in talking against ones Neighbours, or hearing others rail upon the ill management of Affairs, and find fault with the times, or such like things.

N.C. None of those things need be done neither.

C. It is true. But they want company, & they can find little of any sort, where those things are not their entertainment. And it is very considerable, that such people pass for Godly among you, who spend many hours in talk of that nature now mention'd; and therefore we would fain know why we may not with better reason call

call those Godly that go to Plays, and otherways are unreproveable. I say with better Reason; both because this is at least more innocent (if it be not perfectly blameless) than backbiting ones Neighbours; and our Godly do nothing but what they allow, whereas yours do that which they cannot but condemn. I am also of the opinion, that our Ministers speak as often (if not more frequently) against the excessive use of that Recreation; as yours do against all Bitterness, Wrath, Anger, Backbiting, and Evil-speaking, which are altogether unlawful.

N.C. I did not think you would have justified these things so far as you do.

C. You need not have a worse opinion of me for that, because I do it not to justifie my self. For I am one of those that never saw a Play in my life, nor ever intend to see one. I could wish also there were not so many acted, because they invite men, perhaps, too often to them. But tell me, I pray you, why one may not as well look upon a Picture, as upon the man himself whom it represents? or, why a Painter should be commended, and a Player condemned?

N.C. I understand you not.

C. A Play doth but present mens Actions before you, as a Picture doth their Faces. And since you see such things done every day as they there

there represent, why may you not see both the things and the Representation of them, if you have a mind? Nay, tell me why they that do, should not be thought to spend their time as well as you, that can hear long Stories of the Bishops, or of such and such a Parson, (as you in scorn, though very foolishly, call our Ministers; for some of them are but Vicars, and you your selvs would be glad to hold a good Parsonage, as many Lay-men do) or of some of your Neighbors; whose Life and (perhaps) domestick and private Affairs, you having pry'd into, can be talking of half a day together? This is, in truth, no better than hearing of a Play; only you do not see it. That is, you hear the same things, that others both hear and see acted in a Play; and there is a great deal of Art, and Wit, and Fancie, and you have none.

N.C. I think our time ought not to be spent in either of these, as I told you before.

C. I am well content it should be so. But let our people be as Godly as yours, (if this be all you have to say against them) since you confess they do both alike, or are not much different. Do not cast them out of the House of God meerly because they go to a Play-house: But hope, that though you are gilt more gloriously, yet they may be as good Metal as you. And therefore let them stand upon *God's Cupboard* no less than your selves.

N.C.

N.C. How come you to talk thus *Metaphorically*, and indeed obscurely? For though I guess at your meaning, yet it is not so plain as you pretend to speak.

C. A great deal plainer than *W. B.* speaks; who, in one of the *Ten Sermons* I told you of, informs us, that God is departed from the Nation, but will return again, because he hath left a great Cup-board of plate behind him. *Believe it Christians*, says he, *God hath a very great Cup-board of plate in this Nation, Christ hath much plate in* England, *as much as in any Nation in the World; and he will not lose his plate.* But he will not tell us how he is gone, nor when he went, nor what drove him away, nor what his Return will be, no nor what mark there is upon the plate, whereby we may know it. And I doubt you would not be well pleased, if I should go about to guess what he means by all this.

N.C. Nothing but what is good, you may be sure.

C. Let the *King* look to that, and get it expounded; for I believe he is concern'd to know, whether the time when God went away was not when he came into *England* last, and so whether he must not be gone and pack't away, when God returns again to you.

N.C. I do not like this Discourse.

C. Do you mean of mine, or of his?

N.C. Of neither.

C.

C. It's well you do not approve of his; but why you should dislike mine, I know not. For if you your self was *a King*, you would look upon them as dangerous people, who should suppose God had forsaken your Kingdom since you came to it.

N.C. He means, perhaps, no more but that God hath deserted *them*, who are his people, and once enjoy'd more liberty than now they do.

C. You cannot excuse him so; for the Title of his Sermon tells you that it relates either to a Soul, or to a Nation. And in the body of the Discourse (if it deserve that name) he often applies it to *this Nation*, saying, *What shall we do that God may return to this Nation?*

N.C. He would not have you think that he is quite gone, for he only saith, *God is much departed, and gone in great measure.*

C. True: But his meaning is plainly this; that he would be quite gone, but that he and such like are here. Were but they removed, God would have no dwelling among us. It's they that lay hold on him, and will not let him totally depart. They are his Plate, and as long as that remains, he hath something to ingage his affections, and so will not perfectly abandon the Nation. But for all that, he complains sometimes, as if the Lord had abhorred and cast us off; telling us, *that Christ is offended, his Gospel*

pel-Institutions trampled on, and that it is not an easie thing to bring him back. And it is very likely, if he had thought of it, he would have told you, *That the Plate upon the Cup-board is thrown down, the Plate is batter'd and bruised, the Plate is abused and soil'd.* For he tells his Congregation, *You are in a suffering day*, p. 478.

N.C. What if he had said so?

C. Then, to make the Play compleat, one need only have added this, that the *Plate must be at least well scoured, if not a little beaten.*

N.C. That is, you would have us persecuted.

C. Not I; but since you fansie you are persecuted, when you are not, it would not be amiss if your Folly were a little chastised, in order to make you thankful for the Liberty which, even by Law, you enjoy.

N.C. To me your words are as bad as a Persecution, which compare good Sermons to a Play.

C. Why! that Sermon hath more of Fiction in it than many of the Plays. For they are sometimes grounded upon an Historical truth: but he entertain'd the people in his Theatre with a pleasant piece of his own pure Invention; telling a Story of God's Departure, and of his coming back again, & their excelling other men as much as a Cup-board of Plate doth common Furniture and of their remaining here as a pledge of his Re-

Return; when as there is no such thing, but only in his and their Fancy. Only one thing, I observe, he very wisely conceals, lest it should happen to prove in their conceit a plain Tragedy. For having said, in order to assure them of God's Return, *that if a man have left Plate and Jewels in his House, he will either come back to them, or send for them away to him*; this pleasant Gentleman, supposing his Hearers (together with his *Truth* and *Worship*, *i. e.* their Opinions and way of serving God) to be the Plate; would not disturb their Fancies by telling them that, according to the state of that Resemblance, God will either return to them, or send for them to him, but tells them absolutely, he will return again to them. Read his words, (*p* 477.) *Such Plate the Lord hath much of here, and he will not lose his Plate; therefore he will return again, though he may afflict, and afflict sorely, yet he will return again. And a little after* (p. 482.) *As sure as the Morning is after the Night, so sure will God return. His going forth is prepared as the Morning: as certain he will return as the Morning doth.* This I must needs say, was kindly said, and like a Poet; who can invent what he pleases, and leave out what makes not for his turn.

N.C. Methinks you invent what you please. And since you are so good at it, I pray let me know what invention you have to excuse your

Plays

Playes, which have so much Obscenity in them.

C. It's more than I know if they have any at all. And should there be any, assure your self, the Ears of those whom we esteem Godly, are no less chast than yours, and would not endure it. But did you ever hear that any of our Ministers spoke things so nearly approaching to immodesty as *W. B.* doth?

N. C. I shall stop my ears, if you offer to rake into such matters.

C. I did not intend it, were you never so willing to hear it. I would only have you know, that if I should present you with all the filthy Expressions and Allusions that I have met withal in such Books as his, I should make you repent that ever you led me to this Discourse.

N.C. I cannot conceive that they should fall into such Errors, since they are *the strictest sort of men*, as you very well know, and love *to preach very plainly*.

C. Now I understand what you mean by *plain preaching*, (which you so much talk of) *viz.* to use rude and broad expressions. As when *W. B.* saith, *a little Estate is but a Mess of Pottage, and a great Estate, a great Bowl of Pottage.* Have I not hit your meaning?

N. C. No.

C.

C. Then it is very hard to know what it is. And, indeed, the Assembly of Divines, when they direct men how to perform their Ministry, and among other things tell them they must preach *plainly*, do not speak plainly themselves in their Directory, *i. e.* not so as to be understood. For these are their words, *pag.* 17. *The Servant of* Christ *is to perform his whole Ministry*, &c. *Plainly, that the meanest may understand, delivering the Truth, not in the enticing words of man's wisdom; but in Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power, lest the Cross of* Christ *should be made of none effect.* Now since you acknowledge they cannot prophesy, nor speak with Tongues, nor Demonstrate their Doctrine by Miracles, as the Apostles did; I would gladly know what they mean by the Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power. I am apt to think it would puzzle a new Assembly, to tell us in plain words, what they intended by that Phrase.

N.C. If you *were taught of God*, as they are, you would easily know.

C. We are all taught of God by the Apostles, who have revealed his Mind to us, and that in a Divine manner. And therefore by pretending you are taught of God more than we, when you cannot prove it, you only shew that you are taught to Cant in Scripture-phrase. Pray let's see if you understand any better, another Direction of theirs, which is,

to *preach painfully, not doing the work of the Lord negligently.* Whom do you account a *painful Preacher.*

N. C. One that takes a great deal of pains.

C. It is just as plain as it was before; and you give me a very good demonstration how well you are bred to a clear and plain understanding of things. But that which you mean, I believe, is, one who preaches often.

N. C. Yes.

C. That's the way to do the work of the Lord negligently, as common experience hath taught us.

N. C. Not, if they take pains to consider what they say.

C. But you would see them so often in the Pulpit, that you do not allow them time for that, and other Ministerial Duties. Hence it is, that upon all occasions they apply the Holy Scriptures, very impertinently, and interpret them negligently, and alledge that for a Proof, which is nothing to the purpose, nay, quite contrary to that which they maintain. Witness *W. B.* who from that place in *Hosea* 6. 3. (*his going forth is prepared as the Morning*) would have his people believe, that God will as *certainly* return to them, as the morning is after night. Whereas that is only spoken to the Ten Tribes, and the Prophet doth

not

not give them an absolute assurance that they shall return to their own Land; but only invites them to Repentance, and on that condition promises; God in a little time will revive them. Nay, he requires not only that they should begin to *know God* whom they had forsaken; but that they should *continue and persevere to know him*: and then, saith he, *his going forth is prepared as the Morning*, *i. e.* he was ready to comfort them, as the Morning-light doth those that wait for it; *and would come upon them as the Rain*, which quickens and calls back the Corn to life, which otherwise would have lain dead in the Earth. It is true, *W. B.* saith a little before, *if you desire God should return to you, return you to him*; as if there were some condition in the business. But this is only his usual way of saying, and unsaying; of granting promises to be *Conditional*, which he would have his people believe shall be performed *absolutely*. And, indeed, so much he had told them before this, that they might not be discomforted, though they did not return to God. *Friends*, saith he (*pag.* 478.) *there is a time when God will deliver his people for his Names sake, and with a notwithstanding*, *i. e.* notwithstanding all their Sins, and notwithstanding all his Displeasures, as he explains himself. Now if you would know when that time is, he tells us, *When a people suffer for God's*

Name's sake, then God will deliver for his Name's sake, then God will deliver with a notwithstanding, And this he would have them believe is their present state and condition. *How is it with you now?* (they are his words) *you are in a suffering day; but are not all your sufferings for the Name of* Christ? *Be of good comfort then; though God may be departed, and your City destroyed, yet he is not quite gone, but will return again*: that is, notwithstanding all their Sins, he would not leave them. Do you not see how confident he is? This it is, for men to fansy themselves *at the Fathers knee, and to be in his arms, and held in his Embraces, held in his Smiles,* (as he speaks, *p.* 469.) They say even what they please, when they are full of this conceit; and think it is the Oracles of God. They tell you their own mind, and believe it is the mind of the Lord. And when they tell it you in such delicate Expressions as these, or such rude and gross ones as those before mentioned; you call it *plain Preaching*, and *powerful Preaching*.

N.C. The Assembly told you (if you would have observ'd) what *plain Preaching* is, in that very place which you quoted; where they require Ministers to forbear unprofitable use of unknown Tongues, strange Phrases, Cadences of Sounds and Words, and to cite Sentences out of Writers sparingly, though never so Elegant.

C. By

C. By your favour, this is only one part of that which they call plain preaching. For first, they say a Minister must preach in the Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power: and then it follows, *Abstaining also from an unprofitable use*, &c. So that still we are to seek what that *Preaching with Power* means. And as for this sort of plain preaching now mention'd, either your Ministers do not understand it, or do not mind it. For who hath more *strange Phrases* than *W. B.*? Or, (to pass by him, who it's like regards not the Directory) who is there that stuffs his Sermons with more Shreds of Authors, and more affects little Sayings and Cadences of Sounds and Words, than *T. W.* As for his *Power* in preaching, I shewed you before how unable it is to Rouze and Shake an Hypocrite, and bring him to Repentance. For he studies rather to please him with the enticing words of mans Wisdom, (though after a poor fashion) than to make a plain Representation of his Wretched State and Condition to him. If many of those, whom you despise, had had the handling of him, they would have turn'd his inside outward, and set it before his eyes: They would have ript his very Heart, and discovered his Entralls; that he might have beheld how he stands divided between God and the World. He should have seen how many secret Sins he

ſuffers to lurk in his Breaſt: Nay, in what a deteſtable manner he reſerves a kindneſs for many of the vileſt Sins; ſuch as are Covetouſneſs, Oppreſſion, Hard dealing, Unmercifulneſs, Malice, Revenge, Bitterneſs, Wrath, Implacableneſs, and ſuch like; which are the Sins of too many Religious people, that is, of Hypocrites, that are not intire and uniform in their Religion. For an Hypocrite is not a *meer Player* in Religion, as *T. W.* fanſies: but one that concerns himſelf with a mighty Zeal for ſome good things, and, perhaps, would rather die, than not do them, but hath no Affection for the reſt of *Chriſts* Commands. He doth not only put on a Garb of piety to deceive others; but there are a number of men that love ſome part of piety, and by that means deceive their own Souls. And let you and I, my good Neighbour, look to it, that we be not of that number.

N. C. Our Miniſters, you may well think, give us ſuch Cautions. For you muſt acknowledge, as I intimated before, (but you would paſs it by) that they are the *ſtricteſt people in the World*, and teach us ſo to be.

C. So were the *Phariſees*: For that Sect was more curious and exact in many things than any of the reſt. But theſe two things among many others you ſhall obſerve of them. *Firſt*, that they were very deſirous of the

the peoples Favour and Esteem: the desire of pleasing, whom I doubt sometimes betrays your Preachers into such rude and unhandsome speeches, as I have heard and seen from them. And *secondly*, the best of them (as appears in S. *Paul*) were carried with a blind prepostorous Zeal, even against the Truth of *Christ*; which arose from their high Esteem of themselves, and a Confidence they were very dear to God above all others. I wish the like Heat, and Conceit of your infallible spirit do not now make you violently oppose many things which have *Christs* Stamp upon them. And then you had best examine whether you are not *strict people*, just as they are *plain Preachers*.

N. C. Your meaning.

C. I mean, *not strict*. For as to me those are very obscure Speakers, and hard to be understood, whom you call *plain*: So it is possible those may take too much Liberty, especially in their Tongues, whom you call *strict*.

N. C. O, Sir, there *are no people so serious* as they.

C. If you mean that they look solemnly, and will not laugh, nor be merry; it is like it's true of some of them. But whether this be the effect of their Religion, or their Natural Temper, it is no great matter, for it doth not much commend them. Otherwise,

if you mean, that they long consider things, and come not to a Resolution till it be late; that they ponder all their words and actions, and weigh well what they are going about; I doubt you will find but few of these *serious* persons. For to me, the Zeal of most of you seems to make you heady and rash. I have observed, for instance, that they are apt presently to condemn those that are merry, or at least to shake their Heads, and express their fears as if they were *too vain and light-Spirited.* This, Censure hath a shew of Seriousness, but in truth, proceeds from a want of it. But if you mean, that they are *in good earnest in their Religion*: So are many of the *Nuns* and *Friars*, and other devout people among the *Papists*, who *seriously* say their *Ave Maries* and *Pater Nosters*, and would not omit them for all the World. And so were the *Pharisees* a very *serious people*, especially upon a Sabbath, and would not neglect their Devotions, in which they were earnest and long, for any good. And assure your self, a man may be serious in Religion, and yet be an Hypocrite: That is, he may in good earnest do many Duties, and love to Pray, and Hear, and Repeat Sermons, and the like; And all the while he may in as good earnest love the World very much, and (to say no more) love the praise of men, and Desire to be better thought of than his Neighbours. In short, he may love Money and

Esteem,

Esteem, being Covetous and Censorious as the Pharisees were.

N.C. You love to compare us with the Pharisees. Were they such a *tender-conscienc'd people?*

C. Yes indeed were they, in many things. They would rather dy than break the Sabbath: They made a great Scruple of walking above so many Paces upon that day, and had infinite Ceremonies and Superstitions about its Observation; of which they were so tender, that they could not endure any body else should break them. The like Tenderness they had about Idolatry, and many other things. But yet they made no bones (as we say) of a Widdow's house, which they could devour at one bit as soon as the Sabbath was done: They were horribly Covetous and desirous of Riches: They made no Conscience of Oppression and Extortion: They were monstrously Uncharitable and Proud: They thought themselves the wisest and the best men in the world, and despised all others, as men that knew not what Religion meant. And lest you should think they wanted Zeal to increase their party, (which they called Love to pure Religion) *they compasse Sea and Land* (as *Christ* tells you) *to make a Proselyte*, who, when he was gain'd, *became twofold more the Child of Hell than themselves.* Which thing I would have you observe

ſerve, becauſe it ſhews us that men may be converted from groſs Prophaneneſs to Sins of a more Spiritual and inviſible nature; to Diabolical Pride, and Malice, and rage againſt all that oppoſe their Sect. And therefore you would do well to conſider again, whether there be not many ſuch Converts now that hate us as much as they do Common-Prayer, and are zealous for little elſe but to make men Non-Conformiſts, and to diſgrace thoſe that are not.

N.C. I did not think you would have pleaded ſo hard for all the Superſtitions and Superſtitious people of your Church. And, to tell you all my mind, I ſhould love your Miniſter better, if he did not ſeem to love the Common-Prayer ſo well. For he reads it with as much Devotion as he expreſſes in his own prayers; and beſides, he maintains the Uſe of it, and the things appointed by it, (as you do) in his private diſcourſes.

C. In my mind, you ought to like him the better for this, becauſe he is not an *Hypocrite*, and doth not that to get a Living which he inwardly diſlikes, nor approves that by publick practice, which he diſallows or diſcommends in private talk. And methinks it argues too much inſincerity in your ſelves, that you could be content, nay glad, that another man ſhould do contrary to his Conſcience and Profeſſion; either in uſing thoſe Prayers which

which he inwardly disaffects, or in speaking against them (at least silently hearing them reproached) when he is convinced of their goodness. Above all, I wonder how any honest-hearted man can endure him that mutters over the publick Prayers (which he pretends by his use of them to like) without any Spirit or life, on purpose to disgrace them and bring them into contempt; at least to make his own prayers better accepted, and preferr'd before them.

N. C. Well, but what need he justifie and maintain the use of Common-Prayer, whereever he hears it disputed of?

C. He thereby doth but justifie himself and his own practice. It seems you would have him stand like a Fool with his Finger in his Mouth, Meerly to Humour you. And withal, you would fain have it thought, that all Consciencious men are of your mind; if they had but Heart and courage to profess it.

N. C. Well, Neighbour, I think we had best leave of this Trade of talking one against the other, and finding out one anothers faults: which I see is the business both of you and us.

C. To say the truth, it would be more for the Interest of Christianity, if we did. But though you seem very desirous, in a good mood, that we should cease to undermine each

each the other, and both joyn together to promote ſound Religion and true piety; yet this Fit holds not long. For commonly you labour nothing more than to overthrow the Religion eſtabliſhed; nay, many of you glory in your hopes of this: as if it were a mighty matter to pull down a Building, and bring things to Ruine; which is the eaſieſt thing in the world; the work of Ignorance and Confidence, and, as one of our Miniſters ſaid, *the Paſtime of the Devil, and the Imployment of his Children*; of whom we may ſpeak in the Apoſtles words, *Rom.* 3. 16. *Deſtruction and miſery are in their wayes, and the way of Peace have they not known.* In order to this, you diſgrace the Biſhops; undervalue, if not deſpiſe, all our Miniſters; revile the Common-Prayer; accuſe us of Superſtition, Popery, Anti-chriſtianiſm, and what not? You everywhere divulge and ſpread abroad the Faults of any of the Clergy; and rejoyce to hear or tell a Story of any drunken *Parſon*, as you are wont to call the beſt of them by way of deriſion. Nay, you have more Favour and kindneſs for wild and Phanatick people, who undermine the very Foundation of Religion, than for us.

N.C. No more of this, I pray you.

C. I should rather say to you, Let us hear no more of this: and I shall rejoyce and be ready to correspond with you in all offices of Love and Kindness.

N. C. Belike, you can love one of our way.

C. Yes, very heartily. And therefore I would not have you expound any thing I have said, as if it were meant against the humble, the modest, the charitable, and such as are afflicted and mourn for our present Differences: but as intended to check the pride and presumption of many among you, who, though full of Folly, think they know the Mind of God more than all the Bishops and Priests in the World; and by their Confidence and bold pretence of the Spirit would over-bear all sober Reason, and impose all their fond Opinions on us; making the poor people believe that they are God's only Favourites, and fit to teach and rule the whole Nation. These we cannot well suffer to strut as they do, and not endeavour to display their Vanity: Nor can we approve of those who for the sake of their party, are content to dissemble it, if not favour their impudent pretences. For we know well enough how like they are in many things to S. *Paul's* formal Christians; especially in this one part of their Character, that they are *Despisers of those that are good.* A thing I would by no means be

be guilty of, and therefore hope you will not suspect my esteem of you.

N.C. I am glad you are so charitably disposed; and am the more pleased, because I thought you had look'd upon us with the greatest Detestation in the world.

C. I have already told you, that we do not think you all of a kind, though now you flock together. There are some (of your Ministers for instance) who I believe are of an humble Spirit, quiet and peaceable in the Land, desiring Unity and Accord, grieving for the Breach of it; and are so far from condemning those, that are satisfied to do what the Law requires, that they are sorry they cannot contribute to the common Peace by doing the same. Upon which account they go as far as they can, and conform to publick Order in all things wherein they are satisfied, and are tender of breaking any Laws; and when they cannot obey them, do not rail upon them and their Makers, but silently and without any noise omit to do what they enjoyn. These we cannot but love; and are sorry that in so great a number we can find so few of this good temper. For there is a *second* sort (with which the Kingdom swarms) who are of an haughty Humour, of a furious and factious Disposition, puft up with a conceit of their Gifts to such a height, that they will scarce allow any man to know any thing of God,

God, who is not of their Party. Sowr and crabbed they are above all other men, crosse and peevish beyond all expression: they never speak well of our Governors or Government; they are always reviling Bishops and Common-Prayer; and talking like men inspired: it is an easy matter for them to disparage all our Ministery, and beget an ill opinion of them in the minds of their credulous Followers. Which we conceiving to be their Business, no wonder if our men seek to preserve themselves, not by disgracing, but by rightly representing them to the World. They ought not to betray the Church wherein they live, by a base and unworthy Silence. Even the meanest Child of us ought to speak, when you are about to kill our Mother. Your long Nails wherewith you now scratch her Face must be shewn the people; who see them not, while they behold your hands lifted up to Heaven. But besides these two, there is a *third* sort between both, who are dissatisfied only with a few things; allow our Ministers to be good men, and wish for Peace, but yet for private respects hold fair correspondence with the Furies now named; keep up the Separation; hold Conventicles; suffer the people, without reproof, to be fierce and violent against us; connive at a great many of their false and absurd Opinions, let them alone in their rude and insolent behaviour;

viour; take not sufficient care to instruct them in the Truth, to bring them to a modest and peaceable temper; In short, to qualifie them for Compliance with us. Do not smile at the word, for I can demonstrate it might soon be brought about, if they pleased.

N.C. How, I Pray? Can you do more than all the men in the Kingdom?

C. Let them perswade their people but to be of their mind, and the business is done.

N.C. Do you think they do not?

C. No, I warrant you. If they did, the people would conform, though they cannot. For that which keeps this sort of Ministers from Conforming, is not any thing to which the people are bound, but something particularly required of them.

N.C. You have revealed a Secret to me.

C. It is easy for any body to find out, that hath a mind to it. There being nothing plainer than this, that they would have read those prayers which I would have you hear, if something else had not been in the way, which you are not concerned in; and that is, renouncing the Covenant. Let them then but perswade you to do all that they can do themselves, and in order to that give you Reasons why it should be done; and then I may hope to see you and I go to the same

Church

Church together : And for them that do not stand upon the Covenant, (for there are some such) they have the greater reason to exhort you to come, nay, to come themselves, and bring you along with them. But lest they should not do their duty, give me leave to speak to you in those very words which they have writ to others; and, if you think they have now any weight in them, (as I believe you once thought they had) we shall not be long separated.

N. C. What have they writ?

C. In a Book call'd *A Vindication of the Presbyterial Government*, &c. You will find a speech of your *Ministers and Elders in the Province of London*, to those that had left their Communion, and stood in divided Congregations from them : Which if it had any force then in your opinion, ought to prevail with you now to come and joyn your self again to us, whom you have forsaken. I will cite you some Passages of it in their own words. And let me begin with those which you find *pag.* 130. in a distinct Character, (as the strength, I suppose, of what they had to say) *If we be a Church of* Christ, *and* Christ *hold Communion with us; why do you separate from us? If we be the Body of* Christ, *do not they that separate from the Body, separate from the Head also?* "We are loath to speak any "thing that may offend you; yet we intreat

"you to consider, that if the Apostle call "those Divisions of the Church of *Corinth*, "(wherein Christians did not separate into "divers formed Congregations of several "Communion in the Sacrament of the Lords "Supper) *Schisms*, 1 Cor. 1.10. may not your "*Secession* from us, and *professing* you cannot "joyn with us as Members, and setting up "Congregations of another Communion, be "more properly called *Schism?* Thus they plead for Unity and Uniformity in those dayes, (1649.) And we say the very same now. Be just, I beseech you; and either pronounce that they had no reason on their side when they wrote those words, or that we have reason too, who use the same to you. Hear also what they say a little after, and think one of us speaks it to you. *You gather Churches out of our Churches, and you set up Churches in an opposite way to our Churches; and all this you do voluntarily, and unwarrantably, not having any sufficient cause for it. For you acknowledge us to be the true Churches of* Jesus Christ, *and Churches with which* Christ *holds Communion.* This, I dare say, is the Judgment of every true *Presbyterian*, that the Church of *England* is a true Member of *Christ*'s Body, and that *Christ* holds Communion with her, and hath not cut her off (because of any Ceremonies she uses) from him the Head of the Church. If so, consider, I beseech you, as they

they intreat their Brethren of the Separation, How dare you refuse to hold Communion with those, whom *Christ Jesus* holds Communion withall? How can you with a safe Conscience thus separate your selves from those who are not separated from *Christ*? Is it nothing to make a *Schism* in his Body? Do you not rend your selves from him, when you thus rend your selves from it? Think seriously on it, before you sleep; that you may, at least in purpose and resolution, presently unite your self to us, from whom you have departed.

N. C. But I am told *that every Separation is not a Schism.*

C. To this they answer in that Book, and pray mind it: *The godly Learned say, that every unjust and rash Separation from a true Church (that is, when there is no just, or at least no sufficient cause of the Separation) is a Schism: And that there is a negative and a positive Schism. The former is, when men do peaceably and quietly draw from Communion with a Church, not making a head against that Church, from which they are departed: The other is, when persons so withdrawing do consociate and withdraw themselves into a distinct and opposite Body, setting up a Church against a Church*; (which let me tell you by the way, is your Case, my good Neighbour) *which* Camero *calls a Schism by way of eminency; and*

farther tells us, there are four Causes, that make a separation, from a Church, lawful. First, when they that separate are grievously and intolerably persecuted: Secondly, when the Church they separate from is Heretical: Thirdly, when it is Idolatrous: Fourthly, when it is the Seat of Antichrist. And where none of these four are found, there the Separation is insufficient, and Schism. Now we are fully assured, that none of these four Causes can be justly charged upon our Congregations; therefore you must not be displeased with us, but with your selves, if we blame you as guilty of positive Schism. What say you now, my Neighbour? Was this good Doctrine then, or no? If it was, it is so still; and I beseech you, make good use of it.

N. *C.* Some think it is a sufficient cause to separate, in that there are such sinful mixtures tolerated among you; and that your Congregations are miscellaneous Companies of all Gatherings, and all sorts are admitted even to Sacramental Communion.

C. That's the very Objection which your Ministers and Elders saw framed against them by the Separatists. And what they answer to them, we return to you. First, That this Charge is not true; the Rule of the Church of *England* being as full and strict for Church-Members, that shall come to Communion, as that of the Assembly there cited,

pag.

pag. 133. which is this: *That they must be visible Saints, such as, being of age, do profess Faith in* Christ, *and obedience to* Christ, *according to the Rules of Faith and Life, taught by* Christ *and his appostles.* Secondly, *Suppose there were some sinful Mixtures (say they) at our Sacraments; yet we conceive this is not a sufficient ground of a Negative, much less of a Positive Separation. The Learned Author forementioned tells us, that Corruption in Manners crept into a Church, is not a sufficient cause of Separation from it. This he proves from* Math. 23. 2, 3. *and he adds also this Reason for it; Because in what Church soever there is Purity of Doctrine, there God hath his Church, though overwhelm'd with Scandals. And therefore whosoever separates from such an Assembly, separates from the place where God hath his Church; which is rash and unwarrantable. The Church of* Corinth *had such a profane Mixture at their Sacrament, as we believe few (if any) of our Congregations can be charged withal; and yet the Apostle doth not perswade the Godly party to separate, much less to gather a Church out of a Church.*

N. C. What do you tell me of the Doctrine of a Forreign Divine?

C. They have made it theirs, by approving what he says, in their Book. And besides they tell you, *there were many Godly and Learned Non-conformists of the last Age, that were per-*

swaded in their Conscience they could not hold Communion with the Church of England *in receiving the Sacrament kneeling, without Sin; yet did they not separate from her. Indeed, in that particular act they withdrew, but yet so, as that they held Communion with her in the rest; being far from a Negative, much more from a Positive Separation from her. Nay, some of them,* (mind the words) *even then, when our Churches were full of sinful Mixtures, with great Zeal and Learning defended them so far, as to write against those that did separate from them.* Who these Good and Learned men were, they tell you in the Margin; Mr. *Cartwright*, Mr. *Dod*, Mr. *Hildersham*, Mr. *Bradshaw*, Mr. *Ball*.

N. C. Then we shall communicate with men in their sins; and we must not be led to that by the greatest Examples.

C. To prevent that, they will advise you, that if any Brother offend you; you are not to separate from him, (for this is not the way to gain, but to destroy his Soul;) but to tell him of it privately, and in an orderly way to bring it to the Church. *And when you have done your Duty, you have freed your Soul, and may safely and comfortably communicate in that Church without Sin.*

N. C. I perceive you are read in our Writers. And, truly, you have now told me so much from them, that I shall not have so hard

hard an opinion of you, as I had before. And I hope this will preserve me from being guilty of the sin of Schism, because the Nature of that consists in an open breach of Christian Love.

C. This will not serve your turn, but you must come and joyn in Communion with us again. For they tell you, *that as he, who denies a Fundamental Article of the Faith, is guilty of Heresie, though he add not Obstinacy thereto, to make him an Heretick: So he that doth unwarrantably separate from the true Church is truly guilty of Schism, though he add not Uncharitableness thereunto, to denominate him a compleat Schismatick.* You may read the words, if you will, *pag.* 137. *And afterward they tell you that to make a Rupture in the Body of* Christ, *and to divide Church from Church, and to set up Church against Church, and to gather Churches out of true Churches, and because we differ in some things, therefore to hold Church-Communion in nothing; this, we think, hath no warrant out of the word of God, and will introduce all manner of confusion in Churches and Families; and not onely disturb, but in a little time destroy the power of Godliness, Purity of Religion, Peace of Christians, and set open a wide Gap to bring in Atheism, Popery, Heresie, and all manner of wickedness.* Thus they. And how fast all this is a doing by your means, who now will have no Communion

with us in any thing, becauſe we differ in ſome things, is apparent to all the world. For the love of God, and of the Church, nay, of your own Families, conſider of it in time, and repent; that ſo they may not be brought to utter Confuſion, but the Gap may be ſtopt, which you have opened too wide already, to Atheiſm, Irreligion, and all the reſt of the Wickedneſs which comes, powring in it ſelf upon us. Do not continue that Separation any longer, which you have raſhly begun; leſt you be found guilty of that very thing your ſelves, which you condemned ſo much in others, and profeſs *is by all good men to be abhorred.* Read what I have now ſaid over and over again, and ſeriouſly lay it to heart: leſt your own Books be opened at the day of Judgement, and Sentence be pronounced againſt you out of them. Nay, deſire your Miniſters to read it, and to expound the reaſon to you, why they ſhould ſeparate now more than Mr. *Dod*, Mr. *Hilderſham*, Mr. *Ball*, and ſuch like, did heretofore. Intreat them to let you know, how they excuſe themſelves from the guilt, not only of withdrawing themſelves from our Communion, (which they call *Negative Schiſm*;) but alſo of making an head againſt us, and drawing themſelves into a diſtinct and oppoſite Body, and ſetting up a Church againſt a Church which they call *Poſitive, and Schiſm by way of Eminency*, Ask them which of the four

four Causes of Separation they alledge to make their Departures from us necessary: What we have done that should make it unlawful for them to communicate with us; or rather, How we have separated our selves from *Jesus Christ*, and made him disown us. If they be not able to give you very good satisfaction in this, and in all the rest, I hope, you see what you are to do, according to their own Advice and Counsel.

N. *C.* I suppose they will say that they are persecuted, which will justifie their separation.

C. I cannot imagine what they should pretend, unless it be this. But bid them shew you what hath befalen them, that should deserve that name. And likewise shew, that the Persecution is grievous, nay, intolerable, (for else they have told you it will not warrant a Separation:) and one thing more desire to learn of them, which is, whether those things that any of them have suffered, be not the Effect and Punishment of their separation, and not the Cause of it. As for any Restraints the Law hath laid upon their Liberty, they are nothing comparable to those that were laid on us, when they were in Power: and yet they will take it ill if they should be called Persecutors. For if you look into an *Ordinance of Parliament* of 11. *August* 1645. *for putting in execution the Directory*, you will find

find these words: *That if any person or persons whatsoever, shall at any time or times, hereafter, use, or cause the aforesaid Book of Common-Prayer to be used in any Church, Chappel, or publick place of Worship, or in any private place or Family, within the Kingdom of* England, *or the Dominion of* Wales, *or Port and Town of* Berwick; *every such person so offending therein, shall for the first offence, pay the sum of five pounds, of lawful* English *money; for the second offence, ten pounds; and for the third, shall suffer one whole year Imprisonment, without Bail or Mainprise.* Can you name me any Law now extant so severe and cruel, as this was? Do we abridge the poorest Tradesman so much of his liberty, as then they would have abridg'd all the Nobles in the Land, nay (for any thing I see) the *KING* himself, at least his Family, which were forbid the use of Common-Prayer under such great Penalties? Are you not all allow'd to worship God, just as you please your selves in your own Families? Nay, may not some of your Neighbours joyn with you, if you and they be so minded? For shame do not complain of Persecution, when you are so kindly used, who endeavoured in such a manner to oppress others. And blush to think that you should separate upon this account; which yet is all that you can have the face to pretend, to excuse the Schism you have made. *The Com-*

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mon-Prayer you see was never imposed with such rigor, as your *Directory* was And whereas you now take what liberty you list to preach, and Write, and print what you think good against the Common-Prayer; it was then ordain'd, *that none should do so against the Directory, or any thing contain'd therein,* (which is a great deal more; and in case any man was so bold, *he was to forfeit such a sum of money, as should be thought fit to be imposed on him, by those before whom he had his Trial; provided it was not less than five pounds, nor more than fifty.* Who should try him no body knew; but he was sure to meet with little favour, if the *Directory-men* met with him, and were to handle him; who would tolerate no Dissenters from them. And their reason is given, (in the *London* Ministers Letter to the Assembly) because they were *bound by the Covenant to extirpate all Scism*; and *to indeavour the Lord should be one, and his Name one, in the Three Kingdoms*, i. e. that all should subscribe to the Directory. And there is another thing which to me seems something hard, (I am sure you ought to judg it so) *viz.* an Ordinance of 2. *June* 1646. requiring, *that all people who were come to reside in the Parliament-Quarters, should take the National League and Covenant, and the Negative Oath, notwithstanding any Articles that had been made by the Souldiery.* Why should you

you complain of the late *Oxford* Act (as it is commonly called) who could endure heretofore that men ſhould be uſed ſo ſeverely? Compare that and this Ordinance together, and tell me which of them is moſt moderate; that which baniſhed men out of many Counties, or that which only prohibits their near habitation to a Town or two? that which made void the promiſes which their own Officers had made, or that which was againſt no ingagements at all? I wiſh you would conſider theſe things, with a great many more of like nature; for, though your prejudices are ſtrong, I hope ſometime they may ſerve to convince you. And the mention of the Covenant, juſt now brings a conſiderable thing to my mind; which if it would not be tedious, I would willingly propound, and deſire you to enquire about it.

N. C. I pray, ſay on; for your diſcourſe begins to be pleaſant to me.

C. I wiſh you would ask your Miniſters, why they themſelves heretofore not onely approved of certain Ceremonies in the Worſhip of God, but alſo were well pleaſed they ſhould be enjoyn'd; and yet now cry out upon our Ceremonies, or, at leaſt, would have them left at liberty.

N. C. What Ceremonies and Worſhip do you mean?

C. Was

C. Was not the taking of the Solemn League and Covenant a piece of Religion?

N. *C.* Yes; it was an Oath.

C. Read then an Ordinance of 2. *Febr.* 1643. and you will find it is ordain'd, among other things, that during the time that the Minister read the whole Covenant to the people, *the whole Congregation should be uncovered*: There is one Ceremony, which now you will by no means indure should be impos'd on you at the hearing of Sermons. Then, at the end of the Reading it, they appoint that *all shall take it standing*: There is another Ceremony. And, lastly, that *they should lift up their right hand bare*: That's another, if not two Ceremonies more. For they enjoyn them to lift up *the right Hand*, not the *left*; and that it should be *bare*, not covered with a Glove. And this very Ordinance touching the *Manner of the taking* the Covenant, they desired might be confirm'd by Act of Parliament; as you may see in the *Propositions sent to his Majesty at* Newcastle, *July* 11. 1646. Pray tell me, if you can, or else make enquiry, why they did not leave men to their way and manner of doing this Religious Act; seeing they would have no body tied to a Posture now in the Worship of God.

N. *C.* I will enquire; For I know no reason of it.

C. If

C. If you please, ask them another thing; which is, why they do not take their own Advice which they give about the Covenant? For if they would, the Covenant need not keep them from doing that, which otherwise many of them profess they could do.

N. C. You must be at the pains to interpret your self; for I know not what you intend.

C. The Parliament, in the Ordinance now mentioned, desire the Assembly of Divines to prepare an Exhortation for the better taking of the Covenant, which should be read together with it. Now in that Exhortation (which was voted to be printed, *Febr.* 9. 1643.) the Assembly intreat the *Episcopal Clergy*, (who said they could not take the Covenant, because it was against their former Oaths) to consider this, which is the thing I would have them consider now; *That if any Oath be found, into which any Minister or others have entred, not warranted by the Law of God and the Land, in this Case they must teach themselves and others, that such Oaths call for Repentance, not Pertinacy in them.*

N. C. I know what you are going to infer. But they will not yield that this Covenant was unwarrantable by the Laws of God and the Land, and therefore they will not repent of it.

C. It

C. It was plainly against the Laws of the Land, and those reasonable and good Laws: from whence I conclude, it was against the Laws of God, which would have us obey humane Laws, (that do not contradict them) and not combine together to destroy them.

N. C. They will never grant, it was against the Laws of the Land: and I think you cannot prove it.

C. Did they not Covenant to endeavour to preserve the Reformed Religion in the Church of *Scotland* in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government?

N. C. Yes, its the first Branch of the Covenant.

C. And did they not next of all Covenant to indeavour to reform Religion in these Kingdoms of *England* and *Ireland*, in all Points according to the Examples of the best Reformed Churches?

N. C. Yes.

C. Then they were bound to reform us according to the Pattern of *Scotland*: For that Church must needs be the best Reformed, which needs no Reformation; as it seems the Church of *Scotland* did not, being to be preserved by them just as it was.

N. C. What of all this?

C. Then I will prove they bound themselves in an Oath against the Laws of the Land. For our Laws make the King *Supreme Gover-*

Governour over all persons and in all causes: But the Presbyterial Government as it was in *Scotland*, (and was intended to be here) though it allow the King to be Supreme Governour over all *persons*, (as they are *his* Subjects) yet will not subject all *Causes* to his Government; because Christ according to the Discipline, *is the only spiritual King and Governour over his Kirk*. As much as to say, they are subject onely to Christ in some things.

N. C. This is onely a Collection which you make from several things compared together, in which you may be deceived. Sure they never intended to set up such a Government here.

C. That you may not be left therefore to my uncertain Reasonings (as you will esteem them) in this particular; You may be satisfied about the Mind of the Assembly, if you be at all acquainted with the History of the late Times. By that I am informed, they intended to bring the same Government among us that was in *Scotland*: And, Secondly, they thought the Parliament was obliged to set it up by vertue of the Covenant. When these two things are proved, I believe you will be of my mind, that they took an Oath against the Laws, and therefore ought not to persist in it, but repent of it.

N. C. I shall be glad to hear them proved.

C. You must know then that the Parliament declared for Presbyterial Government, and passed most of the particulars brought them from the Assembly without any material alteration; *saving the point of Commissioners*; as they tell us in a Declaration of *April* 17. 1646.

N. C. What's the reason it was not set up?

C. Have patience, and I will tell you. *These ugly Commissioners* stood in the way, which the Assembly would not admit of; as the Parliament would not admit of their Arbitrary Government.

N. C. Why do you call it so.

C. The title of the Declaration tells you, that the intention of it is, among other things, to secure the people against *all Arbitrary Government, viz.* in the Church, which they spoke of before. But that you may be sure of it; they let you know, when they come to that part of it, which concerns *Church-Government*, that the Presbytery challeng'd an *Arbitrary Power*, which they could not grant. The reason was, because they would have set up *ten thousand Judicatories within the Kingdom* which should have had a supreme Authority over us in many things. *And this was demanded in such a way* (as they proceed to tell us) *as is not consistent with the Fundamental Laws and Government*

of the same, and by necessary consequence excluding the Power of the Parliament of England *in the exercise of that Jurisdiction.* This was the very cause (as they farther inform us) why they had settled no Government since their sitting, because *they could not subject themselves and the People of the Land,* to so vast a power as the Presbytery challeng'd; *which,* they tell us a little after, *would have been for the Civil Magistrate to part with some of his Power out of his hands.* Now before we go any farther, I pray tell me, who was the supreme Civil Magistrate then, but the *KING?* And how will you excuse these men from going about to rob him of a part of his Power, and wrest it out of his hands?

N. C. Sure they did not Covenant to do this.

C. We shall try that by and by. But that you may better know how they meant to go to work, and to over-rule the Supreme Power in many Causes; you must understand these things. That it being resolved by both Houses, that all persons guilty of notorious and scandalous Offences should be suspended from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; the Assembly likewise resolved, that these two Powers lay in the Eldership or Presbytery, and only in them. First, *the Power of judging and declaring what are such notorious and scandalous offences, for which persons guilty there-*

thereof are to be kept from the Lords Supper: And then, *the power of conventing before them, trying and actually suspending from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, such offenders accordingly.* Whereupon the *Commons* desire to know *what certain and particular Rules expressed in the Word of God the Eldership or Presbytery had, whereby to direct themselves in the exercise and execution of those powers aforesaid*; as you read in the Questions propounded by them to the Assembly, *April* the last 1646. Next, they desire to know, *why the Supreme Magistrate may not so judge and determine what are the aforesaid notorious and scandalous offences, and the manner of suspension for the same*; and *in what particulars, concerning the Premisses, the said Supreme Magistracy is by the word of God excluded.* And lastly, they would be resolved what should hinder them *to appoint Commissioners to judge of Scandals not enumerated, (as they are authoriz'd by the Ordinance of Parliament,) and whether to make provision of such Commissioners was contrary to the way of Government, which* Christ *had appointed.* By these Questions I believe you clearly see what Authority the Eldership intended to assume, if the Parliament would have suffered them. But nothing more declares their meaning than their refusal to receive such *Commissioners* as were now mention'd; in which they were so per-

tinacious that it hindred the settling of the Government, which else might have been set up long before ? as the *Commons* there tell us. This was a notorious argument, that they took themselves to be sole Judges in some Causes; which, in the judgement of the *Commons* was to exclude the Supreme Power, and to overthrow the antient and Fundamental Laws of the Realm, about which they express their true intentions in this Declaration, as they tell us in the title of it.

And now, I have but one thing more to prove, which is briefly this; That they would have had this Authority set up by virtue of the Covenant, which any body may understand by what the *Commons* there declare; *that they will not suffer any one to impose an interpretation of the Covenant upon them, other than they themselves think to be suitable to the just ends for which it was agreed.* And withal, *they desire the Nation not to receive impressions of any forced Constructions of the Covenant, which in case of any doubt arising, they say, is onely to be expounded by them, by whose Authority it was established.* This doth plainly enough inform us, that the Assembly urged the Parliament to settle that Arbitrary Government in pursuance of the Covenant. And if so, then their Oath, (as they took it) was contrary to the Laws of the Realm, as their very Masters declare; and would force the supreme Magistrates Power,

Power out of his hands, which is contrary to the Law of God: And therefore they ought not any longer to hold themselves bound by it; but rather should repent, as they advise others to do in that case. To sum up the whole business. An Oath that is not warranted by the Laws of God and the Land ought to be repented of. Your Ministers took an Oath not warranted by the Laws of God and the Land, but contrary to them. Therefore they ought to repent of it. The former Proposition, is their own. The latter is partly theirs, and partly the Commons of *England*. For your Ministers expounded the Covenant as it obliged them to set up the *Presbytery* in an absolute *Power*; and the Commons declared the exercise of such a power to be against the Fundamental Laws of the Realm, and the *Authority* of the Supreme Magistrate. (I might add, but that you little regard, that, His *MAJESTY* in his Proclamation declared it an unwarrantable Oath, *October* 9. 1643.) And therefore do you and they see, whether the Conclusion do not unavoidably follow, and make a good use of it, I beseech you before it be too late.

N. C. As *Paul* said to *Agrippa*, that he almost perswaded him to be a *Christian*; so I must say to you, that you almost perswade me to be a *Conformist*, and come to Church.

C. I wish, as S. *Paul* said then, that you were not almost, but altogether, such as I am. I mean, that you would not only come thither, but with such reverence and seriousness as becomes the Service of God. But to come and sit, or loll, or look about, or whisper and talk, as many do, methinks is as bad as staying away. Nay, it seems to be far worse, because it is a more publick Affront to God, even while we are in his presence; an open Scorn of his Worship, and a Contempt of all his people that devoutly joyn in it. Therefore, for the love of God, never involve your self in this guilt, as I see too many, even of the Great ones do; who shew not half so much Reverence before God in the time of Divine Service, as the people do before the meanest Justice of Peace, Nay, in his absence, before his Country-Clerk. *Lord, lay not this Sin to their charge.* And as I would desire you to pray with Reverence, so to hear the Sermon also with due Attention, and without any Prejudice or Passion. Lay aside all naughty and corrupt Affections, which blind the Understanding, and will not let it discern the clearest Truth. Witness the Pharisees, who could not see the most necessary things concerning everlasting Salvation, though manifestly delivered in Holy Scripture, and plainly proved by many illustrious Miracles: and all because they were Covetous, Proud, Self-conceited,

ceited, *and loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.* For what was more clearly set down in their Books than the time of *Christs* Coming; together with the Characters or Marks of his *Person*, when he should appear? And what was more necessary to be known than him when he came among them? In what were they so much concern'd every way, as to receive and acknowledge him? And yet, notwithstanding, they could not see him, even when they saw him. They resisted the Holy Ghost it self, in the Prophets both old and new. They could not endure such a *Christ* as taught them to be humble, and pure in heart, and heavenly-minded, and meek, and merciful, and peaceable, and patient under all injuries, and obedient to Government; and that would not oppose *Cæsar*, and advance them to *Power* and Dominion. From whence you see how necessary it is to follow the Counsel of S. *Peter*, 1. *Ep.* 2. 1, 2. *and laying aside all Malice, and all Guile, and all Hypocrisies, and Envies, and Evil-speakings; as a new-born Babe desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.* Do not think I take too much upon me thus to instruct you. I do but repeat what I have heard from some of my Instructers. And our Minister told us the other day, that some render the last words thus: Desire the *reasonable* (or rational) *Milk*, *with-*

out mixture; it being the same expression, which is in *Rom.* 21. 1. where we read of *reasonable service*. But that I find is a thing few care for: As little reason as you please will suffice them. So their Fancies or their Affections be but tickled, they care not whether it be with Reason or without. Any little Toy takes them; and if the Exposition of Scripture which is given them be but pretty, they never mind whether it be solid or no. Now this, I have been instructed, proceeds from a Vicious Affection; from a lazy, slothful, disposition of mind; from a lothness to be at any pains to understand the Truth; nay, sometimes from all evil Affections; from a love of the Flesh and Sensual things, and a too great strangeness and averseness to all the Concerns of a Soul. And assure your self, there is no ignorance so black and dark as this which proceeds from corrupt affections. That which is the effect only of Weakness of Parts; want of Opportunity, ill Education, or bad Instruction, may find some help, and be in great measure cured. A man of very mean natural parts, that hath an honest Heart, may come to understand much. But this that I am speaking of, being chosen and affected, is in a manner incurable. Men love it and are concerned to maintain it; and will not understand the clearest Reasons, but shut their eyes against them. And therefore

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if you would profit by any Sermon, come with a free and unprejudiced mind, with an upright and true heart; and so you may be convinced of your errors, or grow in wisdom and understanding, and, finally, think your self as happy in our Company, as any where else.

N. C. You speak very reasonably and discreetly. But if I still remain unsatisfied, I hope you will love me, as one Neighbour should do another.

C. Make no doubt of it. And the greatest act of Charity I can express to you is, to advise you how you should behave your selves while you continue to dissent from us. You were wont in the beginning of these Differences, to call your selves the *weak Brethren*, This was the Language of your Fore-fathers, who begg'd that they might be forborn, and treated gently, and, like the *tender Children* of *Jacob*, driven no faster, than they were able to go. But now none drive so furiously, as you. Nothing will serve your turn but to be the foremost, I mean, the Leaders of all: You would be Masters of the Law; you would Rule and Govern, as if you were the wisest and strongest Christians, nay, illuminated with a more singular degree of Knowledge, than any body else. It doth not suffice you to let alone what is enjoyn'd you, but you arreign it before all your Neighbours; you judge

judge and condemn it; nay, you thwart and oppose it; you would fain do Execution upon it, and having pull'd it down, set up your own Fancies in the room. And so far hath this Confidence carried you, that you would fain set up your Fancies in all the World, if you were able. For you know very well where you invited all Reformed Churches, and that in a way of Prayer, that they would associate themselves with you in your, or the like Covenant. I must desire you therefore, as you love your own and the Kingdom's Peace, to have a lower opinion of your selves and Gifts; and so to abate of your Confidence, and your Forwardness and violence to impose upon others. Set not so high an esteem upon your own Models and Draughts of Government. Be content to obey, rather than rule. Let nothing of Pride, Ambition, Vain-glory, and love of popular Esteem, bear sway in your hearts. And oh that we could see all these evil spirits cast out by your Prayers and Fastings! Approve your selves to be Tender-conscienced, by your tender care in all your actions to be void of offence to God and Man. Shew that nothing in the world but your fear to displease God keeps you from us, by your humble carriage; by your speaking well of all, as near as you can; by saying nothing against the establish'd Religion; by honouring your Superiours; by meet-

meeting very secretly, (if you must needs assemble in greater Companies, than the Law allows) that so you may not give a publick Offence. And I beseech you never meet in time of Divine Service. Pray your Ministers to search and examine, as much as they can, whether none of their Auditors come to them only out of humor and love of Novelty; and that they would exhort all that can, to go to the publick Ordinances. For which end let them acknowledge in plain terms, that the Worship of God among us is lawful, and far from being Anti-christian; that there are many godly men among us; that they themselves have received benefit from their Labours. Let them express their sorrow, that they are not enlightned enough to see the lawfulness of using some Ceremonies; and desire the people not to follow their Example without their Reasons. Speak well of your Governours, and reprove those that do not. Believe not Rumors and Reports, and take care you be not the spreaders of them. Keep a day of Humiliation for this Sin among others, that you have been the Authors or Abettors of so many false and scandalous Stories concerning the Bishops and others. And do not excuse your selves by saying that some Stories are true; for I can demonstrate, if need be, that it is not the manner of your people to examine carefully whether things be true or no, before

before they divulge them, but presently they run away when they have got a Tale by the end, and carry it about the Town. By which means, right Reverend persons (which is a horrid shame) have been openly charg'd in publick Assemblies with things notoriously false, without any ground at all. All which proceeds from your unmortified Passions of *Anger*, Hatred, and Uncharitableness; which make you hastily believe any thing that's bad of those you do not like. Let these things therefore be bewailed and reformed: *As* also your wresting of the Scripture, and bold, but vain, pretences to the Spirit; in which, I beseech you, hereafter shew greater Modesty. It would do well also, if you thought upon all the Contempt which hath been poured by you, or by your means, not only upon the Bishops, but their Order and Function; and consequently upon all the *Antient* Churches, who flourished so happily under that Government: upon all the present Ministery also, for whom no name could be found bad enough: nay, and more than this, upon all Civil Governours, for whom there is scarce left any such thing, as Honour and Reverence. *And* now I speak of them, let me again intreat you not to oppose their Commands, if you cannot obey them; but only let them alone, and forbear to do them. *And* let this Forbearance, be with much Modesty, Humility, Silence,

Silence and apparent trouble, that you cannot comply with the publick Orders. Intreat the Forbearance also of your Governours with much Submission. Live peaceably with your Brethren. Let as few as may be observe your dissent. Labour to hide and cover it, as sure you would do, if you thought it a weakness. Do not seek to make or keep a Party. Endeavour not to draw more company to your meetings. Let not those be flattered who are wont to come there, as if they were *Christs Jewels*, the *Garden of God*; intimating that others are but the Pebbles in the common, or the High-ways. Suffer them not to believe that they are *the little flock*: or to fancy themselves *under Persecution*; and that they are bearing *witness and testimony to Jesus*. And be sure to disown those who abuse the people with such tales as these, that the *Gospel is in a manner gone*, and *God departed* from the Nation; onely he hath left them behind as his *Agents and Ambassadours*, whom you must keep as a pledge of his Return: For if he call them home, then he is *quite gone*. These are the subtile devices to keep up the Faction, and bring back our former troubles, which they call *Gods return to the Nation*. These are the crafty Arts whereby they ingage the hearts of the people to *them* (being *Gods Agents*) and draw them from their *Governours*. These are the Mountebank-tricks, whereby poor

souls are made to believe, that all but they are Physicians of no value; and that healing must come by their means. *Let not* your *Soul come into their Secrets; be* you *not united unto their Assembly:* But heartily acknowledge that we are still God's people, and that he is among us. This is the way to be approved of God, and to win favour also in the eyes of men; who will then be convinced you have tender Consciences in those matters wherein we differ, when you are exactly conscientious in all other things. But if your Consciences be so brawny as to be insensible of those spiritual Wickednesses now mentioned, you must blame your selves, if your Governours be severe towards you.

N. C. That which you propose, I must confess, seems very reasonable. But *I* pray, where did you learn all these things?

C. There, where you may learn a great deal more of your Duty, than *I* believe you have heard in other places; even at our own *Parish* Church: Where we are not flattered presently into a conceit of our Saint-ship, nor hear perhaps every day of the priviledges of the Saints, but we are taught how to be Saints, and how to live like good Christians, and to value this as a singular priviledge, that we have the Gospel so plainly expounded to us, as to see how *Blessed they are, who not only hear the Word of God, but also keep it.*

N. C. Truly

N. C. Truly, Neighbour as long as you live well, *I* shall alway desire to maintain a Familiarity with you, though you be not of my mind; believing that you are a Christian, though of another way. And *I* hope you will do the like with me.

C. I assured you of it before. But let me enter this proviso, that you talk no more about matters of Religion; for unless you be changed by this Discourse, we disagree so much, that it will be irksome to us both.

N. C. Not so; for *I* have learnt something of you; and if I can teach you nothing, yet *I* may learn more. Therefore *I* pray let us not cease to talk of the best things. What? would you have us converse together as meer Heathens?

C. No. *If* you will consult how we may do most good in the *Parish* wherein we live, and be a means of our Neighbours Benefit and Comfort; *I* shall be right glad of it. But to dispute *I* see is bootless; and so far from doing good to most, that it, rather doth them harm.

N. C. Why did you enter into a Dispute with me?

C. There are here and there some well minded, honest hearts, who have left one Ear open to hear the contrary party, and are resolved to weigh all things without prejudice. With such there is some pleasure and profit

profit to reason: and I took you for one of that stamp. If I was deceived, pray pardon me this attempt, and I shall not trouble you so again.

N. C. I hope I shall not deceive you; for I intend to consider these things better when I am alone; and so bid you farewell.

C. I pray God be with you.

FINIS.

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after the Restoration the Uniformity Act imposing the Prayer Bk ceremonies and the Ejectment of the Presbyterian divines followed in 1662. These Debates are addressed to the Presbyterian Non Conformists as distinguished from the Independent dissenters, who are regarded as furnishing what Each should recognize as "awful examples."

It deals mostly with the question of fixed forms and specifically with the Presbyterian objections to the Bk of Common Prayer.

The only connexion with